

[From Moore's Rural New-Yorker.]

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE.

As the winter term of our district schools has begun, let me ask you, parents and pupils, to take a glance at the schools of a year ago in your vicinity, some of which were good, others bad, and tell me what made the difference. Doubtless your ready answer is,—why, some were fortunate enough to secure *good teachers*, while others were not, either because they were afraid to open their purse strings far enough, or could not spend time to look up one. Are you, my friends, very sure that your answer is the correct one? Have you studied the matter carefully, and sifted it thoroughly? If you are right in believing that the teacher only is responsible for the reputation of your schools, will you tell me *why* we heard so many remarks like the following:—"I don't see *why* Jones can't teach just as good a school as Smith." "I should think Jones would keep first-rats order, he is so stern and unflinching in other places." "I haven't been to see, but *they say* the scholars do just as they please. I wish I had hired Smith, for *they say* that their school beats anything else in town." I would, but I didn't suppose Jones would fail here, though he hasn't had the name of keeping first-rats order."

As you don't seem to find the exact difficulty in Jones, let us look at the circumstances of the two, a little. You all consider Jones equal to Smith at anything out of the line of teaching. Each taught his first term in some out-of-the-way place, we never heard much about. The second term, Smith was engaged in a well regulated school, with a large number of earnest, intelligent scholars, and parents who were determined to have their children *know something*, and their school a *good one*. Jones taught in a tumble-down house, belonging to a district where education was below par, and school taxes a grudging investment, and, as a natural consequence, a lot of scholars that knew but little, and cared less about learning any more. That he failed to acquire the name of being a good teacher in such a place need not surprise any one. That Smith would have done any better in the same place remains to be proved.

The third term, Smith enters No. 4 with the reputation of being a good teacher, and keeping first-rats order, which his school of the previous winter, united with his own energy and perseverance, gave him, and a successful course is confidently expected by all concerned. And a successful course they have, not so much because Smith is a better teacher than Jones, as because all the component parts are ex-acting and therefore doing all in their power to make it a good one, and putting down the few fault-finding remarks of the dissatisfied ones until they, too, give it up, and go with the rest in saying Smith "can't be beat, nor equaled even." Jones, just as earnest and efficient, but with the reputation which *his* school of the preceding winter gave him still clinging to his name, enters *your* school amid shakes of the head, doubts expressed and unexpressed, and eyes opened wide to see if there should be the least bit of disorder. Some of the scholars are

for fun; others stand outside and wait to see if the school is to be a good one or not; others go inside, but instead of devoting their time to study, sit, watch the rest, and go away saying, "it was so noisy they couldn't learn anything, and the school was a miserable one."

Why was it a miserable one, I ask?—*You say*, "Jones is a fine young man, a first-rate fellow, but he *hasn't* the *faculty* to get along in the schoolroom." I say it is because he is almost the *only one* in the district ready to *work*—the rest of you are carefully watching for the failure that must *inevitably* come, if the teacher has *no one* to help him. You might as well expect the sculptor (with whom the teacher is so often compared,) to embody the beautiful designs which his soul creates, with his block of marble set up by the wayside, and every passer-by permitted to hack it as he pleased, as to expect even the most perfect of teachers to mold a character of beauty and symmetry during the short time the scholars are under his supervision, unaided by their own efforts and the hearty co-operation of their parents.

But you, scholars, are *not* blocks of inanimate marble,—you are immortal beings, like your teacher, and like him, responsible to yourselves, your country, and your Creator, for the use and improvement of those powers which He has given to your keeping. If you would have a good school the present winter, be ready to do your part, and believe me it is no *small* part you have to do, for you are just as much a factor of the school as your teacher,—it is just as necessary that *your* part should be well done as that *his* should be. And if you cannot each do quite as much towards forming the character of your school, you can do infinitely more towards forming *your own*. It is upon *your own* exertions that your advancement mostly depends. I do not wish to take one iota from the responsibility resting upon the teacher's efforts, but *I do say* that you *can* learn in *almost any school* if you *will* and if you *do*. I want it to be understood that I have reference to the *large* scholars, or *first classes*, in these remarks: the smaller ones seldom trouble any teacher.

To the parents I would say, when you catch yourselves in the act of finding fault with your teacher, *pause* and go to the schoolroom and compare *his* discipline with *your own*, and if he is not overruled any worse than you are, go away and hold your peace, leaving him to manage the school *unmolested* by your opposing influence, if you *will not* give him your support.

MAY MYRLE.

REARING CHILDREN PHYSIOLOGICALLY.

The following sensible remarks are found in the *School*:—

All the absolute evils of this world may be said to arise from ignorance and selfishness; perhaps all might be included in the word selfishness, if we give to that term its full and broad signification.—Even our parent affections in their manifestation seem often only a desire to please ourselves, without reference to any result beyond the present. There is through-

out the world a lack of perception of separate individuality, and of the consequences to that other being, of any course we may pursue. Among men the results of the acts of individuals toward each other and upon the community, have given rise to legislation and to laws.

In each separate family (sometimes indeed it is *not* a family) constitutes himself and his various moods, the law by which his household is governed; and in many cases his daily emotions of anger or pleasure, disappointment or success, render his rule benign and considerate, or harsh and tyrannical. Many again there are, who, by a steady, moral, unswerving mind, guide the household affairs, and the development of those youthful minds which God has intrusted to their care. To these, and to all, we address ourselves. It is impossible to instruct and develop correctly any two children by the same course of treatment; it is vain to make any system a *per se* system; it is inconsistent with the advances of humanity and with true individuality. While in morals there may be an absolute right and wrong, an unwavering adherence to the good and the true, the peculiar method of attainment to this rule is as varied as the minds upon the earth.

The natural faculties of each child are as plain to careful observation as the sun at noon-day; and it is only necessary to know the mental bias of a child to enable us properly to determine the situation in life to which his or her powers are best adapted.

Let every father, every mother, and all who hope to call themselves parents, forever fear this in mind. Watch the child at its *play*. Suffer it to play as it will, and note what sports attract it, wherein lies the chief pleasure.

Away with these horrors, infant phenomena. Let nature alone, and do you, ignorant man, keep your great, coarse finger out of the delicate machinery, which, working by and through nature, will, at the proper moment, indicate the course to be pursued, the development which is sought. Permit undisturbed to guide you in the treatment thereof.—Nature is a wise teacher.

At infancy, the healthy body, incapable of progressive motion, demands rest; give then perfect quiet. Man's early life is a mere vegetative existence; the brain, gently pulsating beneath the unformed base, is not yet the seat of reason, but of instinct; while nature then demands entire repose, or, at the most, passive action, why should a barbarous nurse and ignorant mother array the little form in thick embroidery; display it to the admiring multitude; dandle it with thumping vibration, or spin it like a boomerang in the air? Why seek the most noisy promenade to confuse it with the uproar? Why pound it up and down over hundreds of miles, and in the midst of smoke, effluvia, and all the rattle, noise and screams incident to railroad travel? Avoid those abominations called cradles; flee from the rocking of the crib, and all those swinging motions which cannot fail to produce, in a minor degree, those very agreeable sensations, that pleasant lethargy, which seizes upon one when he is taking his first lesson in drunkenness. What a ro-