

note the *inflection* of voice in various schools. I knew one, not long ago, where every boy ended every sentence he uttered (excepting only the reading lesson,) and every answer to every question, with the *rising inflection*; and what is more curious still, the habit was exclusive to that school, though it was only one of many, and the children of all always mixed together at play. Another very peculiar habit is the ending of an answer in the *minor* key, rather than coming down fair and square in the *major*. In music the *minor* is very sweet and impressive, filling the soul full of tender thrills; but when it comes to a wide-awake recitation, where you want the knowledge, and the expression of it, clear and determined, there is no merit in it; it savours of weakness and indecision. I wish it were possible to give an illustration of sounds in words, but as I cannot, I would like to ask you to pronounce any word of two syllables, pitching one syllable on *do* and the other on *la* of the key of *A sharp*, and you will get at my meaning.

Give out tables in arithmetic, and it is next to impossible to induce a conversational tone; but stop a child in the midst of it, and ask him the same question, instantly his voice descends in the gamut the number of tones requisite to put it on a par with your own, and his answer is everything you could wish as to quality of sound—gentle and smooth, but manifestly arriving at it at the expense of a good deal of breath stocked up for his effort! But that accomplished, at it he goes again, and this time the contrast is the greater, because you have had a glimpse of what he is capable of! Of course, this is coloured somewhat highly, but it has to be so to arrest the attention, though all will bear me out in the main facts. It is all wrong, and there are many reasons why. Even if it were agreeable and pleasant to the teacher,—which the saints forbid! for I should dislike much to find one whose ear is so attuned to harsh sounds that she is thus satisfied—it is injurious to the child; the voice is really injured in its quality by the artificial strain upon it; the delicate organs of the throat are not made for such a use, and it wouldn't be too much to suggest that this laborious and unnatural exertion has something to do with the throat difficulties and affections to which all school children are so liable. But even if it does no real harm even if the teacher is indifferent to it as far as she herself is concerned; and even if the children like it better themselves, which I can't believe, notwithstanding it is so universal, it is yet detrimental to the school as a school; it makes things look as if they ran as in ruts,—as if it was the same thing over and over again all the time, and as if there neither was nor could be any progress. Now, as this is the age of progress, an improvement in this direction is very much to be desired and hoped for. The voice should not be raised so fearfully beyond its natural inclinations; and, while I do not indorse low and guttural utterances, I do not believe in shouting. A child's voice has not the power or strength of an elder person's; it is finer, more like the vibrations of a silver thread, and to try to give it maturity before nature herself intends it, is wrong; it is unphysiological and vitally harmful. One of the prettiest features of a class in singing is softness, thus bringing out the sweetness of the young voices. There cannot be purity of tone when the organs are all stretched out in the throat, wide open for a stentorian shout. Fatigue will ensue much more quickly in this state of things, and then you will wonder what makes your little fellows seem so tired. Their out-of-door shouts belong to another order, but do not let them be transferred to the schoolroom. There is a fitness in things, and the

schoolroom in eminently the place for gentle words and sweet, pure tones. How culpable we all are in this respect! I believe much of this is engendered by frequent concert exercises; it is so easy to drift into a sing-song, where many voices are united, each unconsciously attempting to attune itself to every other. Such are valuable for many things, but too much of even a valuable exercise is detrimental. Let the recitations, as far as may be consistent, be conversational, and insist upon all answers being given as *naturally* as possible. That this is a task, I know full well, for I have two or three whom I can scarcely ever make put the voice down at a period without calling the child's immediate attention to myself, and indicating the downward inflection by a motion of my head and hand. There is a theory in all this, but, it is not all theory; the practice is possible, and if each teacher would attend systematically to the quality of the tone with which the little ones answer *all* questions, whether in spelling, numbers, or conversation, as they advance up through the grades, this harshness and unnaturalness will become less and less a noticeable feature.—*New England Journal of Education*.

Girls at School.

Take the case of a girl of fifteen, conscientious and anxious to improve herself. She rises long before it is light in the morning, before, perhaps, even the early hour appointed. She struggles with a feeling of oppression and languor occasioned by sleeping in the same room with several other girls, and breathing all night a vitiated atmosphere. The gas in the room does not improve the state of the air, and there are no ventilators; perhaps even the register of the grate is shut. In all probability there are not adequate tubbing arrangements; certainly no hot water is allowed. The poor victim breaks the ice in her jug, and uses as small a quantity as possible of the hard water. It is not improbable she has inflamed chiblainis, which have kept her awake during half of the night. Hungry, sleepy, and languid, she begins her piano practice in a room without a fire. At the end of an hour she is stupid with cold and has a violent headache. There is no use in complaining, for several of her companions are in a similar condition, and they sit down to breakfast shivering in the dreary gray dawn. After breakfast comes the monotonous half hour walk which is supposed to be good for the health, but seems only to have the result of fatiguing the children before their day's work has well begun. Then comes a long morning, in which class succeeds class with scarcely any intermission Latin, French, German, music, drawing, have all to be squeezed in as well as the other lessons which belong to a good English education. These of themselves would be enough to fill up the whole time. After an early dinner, if the day is fine, there is an other dreary stroll; but everyone rejoices if the weather is wet, for then there is a little time for idleness or play. The classes begin again in the afternoon and last until tea-time; perhaps, even after that, the preparation for the next day must be got through. If there is no hour before bedtime in which relaxation is insisted on, the industrious girls will work up to the last moment, and then dream half the night of unprepared lessons or problems they cannot solve. Their feverish restlessness is the natural result of overstraining young brains, and not giving the muscles vigorous, healthy exercise. Not that much is accomplished after all in the way of learning; far from it: