

## SPECIMENS OF NATIVE TALENT AND ATTAINMENT.

TOWARDS the close of every Term of the Normal School we are in the habit of presenting our readers with a few specimens of the powers and acquirements of the Students in attendance. These specimens are not got up for the occasion, or composed with the slightest intention of being printed.—They are part of the regular stated exercises of the Institution, and appear just as they were handed to the Principal. The following are all written by Young Ladies. We shall give a few specimens of the Young Gentlemen's capabilities in our next No.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

BY MISS E. B., YARMOUTH COUNTY.

Physical education is that branch of education which relates to the strengthening and developing of all the constituent parts of our physical nature. And as in practical education the teacher should adapt himself to the nature of the children he is about to educate, it is obvious that, in order to do justice to their physical nature, he should have an intimate acquaintance with Animal Physiology.

Physical education may be viewed both as a means and as an end, more especially as a means. In itself it imparts gracefulness of attitude, gives vigor and strength, and is a powerful preservative and supporter, or, rather, promoter of health. It is of immense consequence to the educationist, it arrests and keeps up the attention of the young, and thereby secures a greater amount of intellectual labor. The body may be viewed, concretely, as a whole; abstractedly, as composed of various parts or organs, so called because they perform certain functions or offices. These organs have been arranged as follows:—the nutritive, the supporting, the cutaneous, the muscular, and the nervous. We shall, as briefly as possible, consider each of these in its relation to education, and endeavor to show the connection between body and mind.

1st. *The nutritive system.*—Upon this system depends the ventilation and temperature of the school room, and is divided into the digestive, circulatory, and respiratory processes. By the digestive, the food we eat is converted into blood; by the circulatory, the blood is carried to every part of the system.—Now this blood is impure, and if not purified would carry disease and destruction with it; by the respiratory process, we inhale atmospheric air, which, coming in contact with the blood in the lungs, immediately a chemical change takes place, and that which before was a poisonous fluid is now converted into a source of life and health. How important, then, is it that provision be made for a proper supply of pure atmospheric air, which may be called our life; for we might live three weeks without eating, but life could not be sustained three minutes without breathing. The result of imperfect ventilation is but too apparent in its effects, mentally and physically, on teacher and taught. The children become mischievous and inattentive, the teacher fretful and exacting, and in many a one are sown the seeds of disease and premature death.

2nd. *The supporting system* consists of the bones, and the strengthening of these depends on the grading of the seats and desks. The bones are composed of earthy and animal matter. In children the animal preponderates, therefore the bones are more flexible and likely to be distorted than those of older persons. The great object is to keep them straight; in order to do this, the children should be made to sit and stand erect. The seats should be graded according to the size of the children, so that the feet may rest firmly upon the floor, and furnished with a support for the back. The desks should be made to correspond with the seats; if too high, one shoulder will be elevated and the other depressed, if too low, a stooping posture will be induced.

3rd. *The cutaneous system* has mainly to do with the cleanliness and order of the children at school. The human body

is subject to an unceasing process of waste and repair. The organs fitted for this especial work pass under the general designation of excretory or exhalants. The most important of these is the skin. The skin is composed of three parts. The first serves to protect the others, preventing too copious perspiration on the one hand and the absorption of poisonous vapors on the other. The second contains a peculiar kind of paint, which imparts color to the complexion. The third is the outlet through which a large proportion of the waste of the body passes through innumerable glands. In order to the preservation of health it is necessary that an equal perspiration be kept up in every part. The means to be employed for obtaining this end are bodily exercise, suitable clothing, bathing, and friction.

4th. *Muscular system.*—The exercise of the muscular system affects the nervous, and that the brain—the seat of thought. The muscles are made up of three parts;—the two ends called the origin and insertion, and the middle or fleshy part. As regards their working, they are divided into the voluntary and involuntary. The great law by which they are regulated is contraction and relaxation. For instance, when I stretch out my arm one set of muscles is in a state of motion, the other, of repose. A professional teacher will take advantage of this law to gain the attention of the children, and thus reach their intellect, for he may rest assured, if he do not make provision for the observance of this law, the children will take it themselves. Each muscle is furnished with a corresponding set of nerves, which are connected with the brain, and that with the mind, and the mind is affected by the will. This leads us to the last system.

5th. *The nervous system.*—The nerves have been divided into two classes; those by which our will shows itself, called *efferens*, and those by which the brain is affected by outward objects, called *afferens*. We have seen that the nerves and muscles are connected, therefore the same law regulates both. Then the strengthening of the muscles has the *anno-effect* on the nerves; this is done by physical exercise, and this exercise not only exerts a powerful influence over the muscles, but over every other system of organs. The greater the variety the more beneficial will be this exercise.

We have seen that all the organs of the body work in harmony, that each does its own work, and thus furnishes us with a good example of doing one thing at a time, and that there is an intimate connection between body and mind.

In concluding this vague and imperfect sketch of physical education, we would remark that, if any one has doubts on the importance of ventilation, &c. as regards education, he has only to contrast an old-fashioned school-house in which presides an old-fashioned teacher with the *Model Schools* of Truro.

We enter unperceived the first-mentioned school. After we have got inside, the first sensation is an alarming feeling of oppression which affects our heart as we contemplate the scene before us. Look at the children in all imaginable positions. See that poor little unfortunate who, because he is further advanced than others of his own age, is perched beside a boy as tall as his father, his brow contracted as if with pain, his little hand trembling with the effort to do the sum at which he has been puzzling the last hour, every moment getting more and more confused; presently the pencil drops and he bursts into tears. This arouses the teacher, who has been reclining in his easy chair in a state of dreamy unconsciousness except when disturbed by an unusual noise, he starts up and in a quick imperative tone demands the reason for all this noise; getting no answer he procures a large ruler and dents blows thick and hard indiscriminately upon innocent and guilty. We can scarcely repress a smile as we observe the mingled expression of terror and mischief in the faces of those three little urchins in the corner, who have been practising the art of carving on their desks. We hope they will escape, but no, they are *little boys*, and therefore must be whipped, however they content themselves with making faces at the teacher as soon as his back is turned. This uproar is succeeded by a calm; the teacher now calls up a reading class, we glance at the little creatures who slowly advance as