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## Original Communications.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN RELATION TO MENTAL DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL-LIFE.

By THOMAS MORE MADDEN, M.D., F.R.C.S.ED.

The respective claims of physical and mental training, and the evils arising from the neglect or abuse of either, are obviously questions of the highest medical as well as social interest. This neglect now presents itself in two different aspects—on the one hand, the children of the poor in England are compulsorily subjected at an absurdly early age to a forcing and injurious system of mental cultivation. Whilst, on the other hand, in the case of those of a better social position, the physical powers are not uncommonly over-trained at the expense of the mental faculties. Of these errors, the former is the most important, and to its operation is, I believe, largely ascribable the apparent

diminution of physical stamina observable in too many of the youth of the present day as compared with the physically more robust, if intellectually less cultured, generation of the pre-educational period. Looking at the overtasked and anæmic little children now chained to the desk by the School Boards, we might be tempted to believe

“ ’Twas not the sires of such as these  
Who dared the elements and pathless seas;  
But beings of another mould—  
Rough, hardy, vigorous, manly, bold ! ”

At the present time, a large part of the first ten years of life, which should be primarily devoted to physical and moral training, is given up to the development of the mental powers: the child, when a mere infant, being compelled to attend some school, where the immature brain is forced into abnormal and disastrous activity. On its return home, jaded in mind and body to prepare for next day's task, such a child is necessarily unfit for the enjoyment of the physical exercise which is essential for its bodily development and