

VOICE IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

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IT is very probable that some children are more susceptible to the influence of harsh tone than others, yet there are few, I think, upon whom different tones have no effect. We all know the soothing or irritating effect which the voice of this or that pulpit orator will have on us, old as we are, and capable, presumably, of self control,—how the full, rich, round, yet unforced voice of the one will reach us and compose our minds to thought as we sit tired, almost too tired, with the week's work to give our mind to the subject of his discourse, while the voice of another will, in common parlance, give us "the fidgets," so noisy is it, so harsh and penetrating, concentrating all attention on the preacher rather than on the thought preached. Voice is, in a measure, like type, a medium for conveying thought, and though capable of conveying by its changeful tones far more than the printed word, it still should aim primarily at giving *the* thought. It should be a clear means to this end and not a hindrance. What should we think of the value of the contents of a work printed in such style that we are obliged first to decipher the very words? What, on the other hand, is the value of a thought coming through the medium of a harsh, uninteresting voice?

The voice of the teacher in the school-room is, as a rule, pitched too high. I can remember, though it is years since I have seen her or heard her voice, the shrill, high tones of one to whom, as children, we were obliged to listen day after day, week after week. Never a moment's respite from those all-pursuing tones. It

took us weeks to grow accustomed to it, and I have no doubt that to many of the children of that class, now grown and themselves teachers, the memory of that voice has outlived and overshadowed all recollection of the many very excellent qualities of that particular teacher. Voices often can be more easily recalled than the lineaments of a face, showing, it would seem, that the effect of voice is very enduring.

In direct contrast with the preceding was the voice of our next teacher. So quiet was she that for the first weeks we had a new lesson to acquire, namely, how to listen and hear. We were so accustomed to having orders and even facts shouted into our ears that we knew, noisy or quiet, we should eventually hear them. In those first few weeks our new teacher would answer our plea that we didn't hear, with "But I am speaking now no louder than a moment ago, and you hear me now, do you not? It must be that the fault lies in you. I *can* speak louder, of course, but if I do my throat will grow sore, and you know how cross a person with a sore throat can be." She has since told me what was indeed evident, that she found her ability to discipline and to hold the attention of the class improve tenfold under the influence of a quiet tone. Having begun with the perhaps unconscious but none the less disastrous notion that one's voice in the school room must necessarily be loud, she had come to perceive quite the contrary. As she had hinted to the children, constant sore throat had taught her the value, first to herself, then to the children, of more quiet tones.