

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Hast thou daughters? Have a care of their body.
ECCLESIASTICI.

The inhabitants along the shore in the old Bay State, are becoming less robust and hardy than their fathers were. The present generation has less vigor and health than the last possessed. The causes are doubtless many—and not few of them are hidden.—But a hasty glance at society will disclose some departures of the present generation from the habits of the past age, which obviously tend to debilitate. The closeness of our dwellings, rendered desirable by the high prices of fuel, causes us to breathe a less pure atmosphere than pervaded the dwellings of the yeomanry in the times when the chimney corner would hold half a score of children; the extensive substitution of coffee and tea for milk, bean porridge and the like, have brought on a degree of feebleness;—the general use of fine wheaten flour instead of rye and Indian corn of former days has overloaded and weakened the digestive organs in many cases;—the fashion which excludes the thick shoe and boot, and exposes the foot to cold and wet, has helped to bring on many maladies;—the abandonment of wrestling and other games requiring great muscular efforts. (though perhaps the abandonment is wise.) may be a cause of the increase of feebleness. In short, less of hardship and more luxury in modes of living, have exerted their enervating influence upon our community for the last quarter of a century. And though we are still a vigorous, energetic and enterprising people; yet, as these characteristics are becoming less prominent, it is proper for us to enquire into the causes and help to stay their operations. We feel the duty incumbent, because we think that the intellectual, moral and religious character of individuals and nations, has a close and intimate connection with the health and strength of the body. The public good, (not its prosperity in money making merely)—the public good—in the highest, broadest, deepest sense of the term—is closely interwoven with the general health and strength of the people. Therefore necessity is laid upon those who would be faithful public teachers, to discountenance all customs which tend to bring on general feebleness.

We commenced with a quotation from a wise man of olden times—"Hast thou daughters? Have a care of their body;" and it was our purpose to say distinctly, that the physical education of those who are to be the mothers of the next generation, is the first duty of parents; yes, we distinctly put this branch of education first; for while we would have habits of truth and obedience early formed, we are persuaded that these and other good habits are of much less worth to the world when found in one of feeble constitution, than when connected with a healthy frame, that has power to act out the promptings of the soul. *Make the child hardy*; and to do this, the food must be simple, the clothing loose and comfortable, and exposure to the weather in all its states, must be habitual. The dirt, the wet and cold into which the child will rush with delight, are all contributors to its health and energy of character. There is much *imprudent prudence* in keeping children within doors—much *cruel kindness* in keeping them from exposure—much *weakening poison* in the *healthful delicacies* furnished for their feeble digestive organs. Let kindness to your offspring be far-sighted. Let it remember that health is promoted by vigorous exercise and pure air. Let it not forget that winter's snows and summer's suns help to harden and strengthen the growing body.

Preserve the child from immoral habits and exercise little more restraint than is necessary for this, until the foundation of firm health is apparently well laid. There has

been a tendency for a few years past to force the growth of the intellect in advance of physical growth; but this is a contravention, of the course of nature, and must in many instances bring either death or debility. He who formed the mysterious connection between the body and the soul, has obviously designed that the growth of the former shall precede that of the latter; and any course which shall prematurely develop the mind and call it into highly vigorous exercise in early childhood, is necessarily attended with danger of destroying the body.

But we designed to speak particularly of the physical education of daughters. Let them be accustomed to regular and vigorous exercise, and that too in the open air.—It is becoming almost barbarous to send the girls to the milking stool and to the lighter work in the field. We are no. without a share of the feeling on this subject which prevades this vicinity: and yet looking at the future and reasoning from the well known facts, the conclusion is irresistible that it would be better—far better—better for them & better for the next generation, that our daughters should engage in the out-door labors which their grandmothers performed. Then a fresher gloom would spread over their cheeks, and more healthful blood would flow in their veins. They would discharge their household duties with more despatch and less fatigue. Their spirits graduated by their health, would diffuse more life into the family circle—and the mind, sympathizing with the body, would be clearer in its perceptions, more prompt in its decisions, more efficient in all its operations.

Looking forward to the future, we see not how it is possible for any other than a feeble race to be produced from the pale faced girls, of compressed forms, that are growing up in both city and country. The subject is that of delicacy, but it is so closely connected with human welfare, that some obvious truths connected with it should not be suppressed. We say that the same laws by which, in brutes, the offspring partake of the characteristics of the parents, operate in the human species; and no female can expect to be the mother of a healthy family of children, who has not a firm robust constitution. The weaknesses produced by the stimulants, by unwholesome food, inactivity, impure air, tight lacing, thin shoes, or avoidance of vigorous exercise, will be transmitted to their children. The sins of the parents are visited upon the children for generations. These truths teach a lesson that should be heeded. Could the young of either sex but be made acquainted with the facts which we have witnessed, they would learn that the marriage relation often—very often results in a family of feeble and insufficient children, and this too in consequence of such weakness in the parents that should have deterred them from entering into the married state. For we hold it to be wrong for an intelligent being to be voluntarily instrumental in bringing others into existence, when the probability is strong that the children will inherit such weaknesses as will render them unhappy or burdensome to society.

This subject of physical education is more closely connected with human welfare than almost any other that can be agitated.—We have not discussed it; but the hints here given may cause some of our readers to make it a matter of serious and useful reflection. Should we but feel it a duty to disclose all our convictions relative to this subject; and could our advice be taken, many of the young of each sex would go down to their graves unwedded and childless, and thus too, not oftener from any faults of their own, than from the faults of parents and of fashion, which have rendered them prematurely feeble.—N. E. Farmer.

Lazy rich girls make rich men poor, and industrious poor girls make poor men rich.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN AGRICULTURE.

In the *Phalange*, a Fourier paper published at Paris, Sept. 8th, a novel discovery is described, which if true, will work a great change in an important department of agricultural labor. It is communicated to the *Paris priat*, by Charles Poillard, and M. Bernard, who date their letter at Brest, August, 1841. It appears, that while they and some of their friends, who farm their own estates, were engaged in conversation on the subject of agriculture, it was observed by one of them, that that branch of industry was suffering more from the want of capital and enterprise, than any other, and that nothing was to be done without manure, which was every day becoming more scarce and expensive. This remark led to an inquiry into the properties of manure, and particularly as to what provision nature had made in those uncultivated regions where there seems to be a vigorous and luxuriant growth, without artificial assistance.

"In observing nature unassisted, or unthwarted, rather by the hand of man, in vegetable reproduction, it is found that when the seed is ripe it falls upon the ground, and then the plant which has produced it sheds its leaves, or falls itself upon it, in decay, and covers and protects it from the weather, until generation has commenced, and the young plant is able to grow up in health and strength, and full development, to recommence the same routine of seeding and reproduction.

"From this it follows that, in nature, every plant produces its own *humus*, and that the earth only serves to bear the plant, and not to aid or nourish it in vegetation. The nourishment of plants is thus supposed to be derived from *air* and *water*, *heat* and *light*, or electricity, in different proportions, adapted to the different varieties of vegetable nature."

With this general notion in their minds, and considering wheat to be, in present circumstances, one of the most important vegetable substances, they agreed to try experiments, and in October last, undertook the following operations:—

In a field which had been sown with rye, because the land was deemed too poor for wheat, a plot of 12 square yards, untilled and left without manure, was carefully srewed over with the grains of wheat, and wheaten straw was laid upon it closely and about one inch in thickness. In a garden, also, which has been neglected several years, a few square yards of earth were trodden over, and the surface being made close and hard, some grains of wheat were scattered on this hardened surface, and a layer of straw one inch in depth, was carefully laid over it and left, as in the former case, to take its chance without ulterior attention. And, in order to make doubt impossible concerning the mere secondary functions of mineral earth in vegetable reproduction, 20 grains of wheat were sown upon the surface of a pane of glass and covered with some straw above, as in the other case.

The germination of the seed was soon apparent and most healthy in development.—"The winter has been rigorous," says these correspondents, "for this part of the country, and the earth has sometimes been frozen in one solid mass to a depth of six inches in the garden where the wheat was sown, and this has happened several times during the winter, to the great injury of many plants, and even the entire destruction of some, while the spots protected by the straw were never thoroughly congealed, nor were the grains of wheat, though lying on the surface under the straw, at all affected by the cold. During spring excessive droughts prolonged, and several times repeated, have prevented vegetation on the common plan from flourishing in healthy progress, while our little spots of wheat have hardly felt the inconvenience of excessive dryness, for the earth protected by the straw has never been deprived entirely of moisture, and our blades of corn were flourishing, when all round was drooping and uncertain. To conclude, then, we have thoroughly suc-