

girls feel more pride and ambition in their school {work if we showed that we felt an interest in it?

This same want of interest in the school training of the boys and girls is farther manifest by the apparent indifference to the surroundings of our country school-houses. Go where you will, in any neighborhood, and can you find another half acre of ground that looks so God forsaken, and man forsaken, as the one upon which the district school-house stands? Can you imagine how they could be made to look more desolate and uninviting, not to say repulsive—and do we not in most cases find the inside a counterpart to the outside surroundings? Some one has said that our religion, our civilization and refinement are like the rings and layers of an onion, peel them away and you have at the core an unregenerate savage. Should we wonder that the boy shows traits of his origin when placed without the pale of civilized surroundings? Add to this that there are often 25 to 30 scholars shut in a room that has healthful heating capacity for *not more* than 8 or 10, and then place in the center of the room a stove with burning capacity to consume all the oxygen in a couple of hours, with no provision for ventilation, so that the vital force of the scholar and the teacher becomes stupified, and then we wonder that the scholars make such slow progress in their studies. But in spite of this indifference on the part of patrons, and these unfavorable surroundings, owing either to the fidelity and skill of the teachers, or the natural aptness of the scholars, or both, it is rare that we find anyone who has spent any considerable time in the district school but has learned to read and write, and to know something of arithmetic, and has so far learned the conjugation of verbs as to say sometime in his life I love, Thou lovest, We love. We beautify our homes and their surroundings; we do so because we think and say they have a civilizing and refining influence, and we say, "Well, they do." Would not the same hold good if applied to the school-house and its surroundings?

But aside from the knowledge acquired in our common schools the scholar is trained to the habit of systematic intellectual labor. We hardly realize how this habit of systematic mental application makes even *difficult* things *easy*. And then the scholars being