

By-Laws, and appropriately furnished with good desks, maps, and cheap paintings, would exert a happy influence upon the minds of the children, and commend the system to public favor. Helvetius maintains that genius is not a natural endowment, but the offspring of culture. While we do not agree with his theory, we do hold with him that all objects are educators. The objects surrounding children in a School room exert an insensible yet powerful influence upon their minds. If the objects are agreeable, either in the shape of a vase of natural flowers, cheap landscape pictorials, specimens of art, minerals, shells, or such things as can be collected with little or no expense, they will prove silent but eloquent instructors, and may, in many instances, exert an influence which will shape the future calling and destiny of children. Very slight influences, or the presence of peculiar objects, may exert a formative power on the minds of youth. The ruins of the Coliseum of Rome, suggested to the mind of Gibbon the splendid work which made him immortal. The reading of a small poem, when six years old, gave direction to the mind and formed the character of Voltaire. Many other illustrations might be adduced which go to show the power of surrounding objects to call forth the slumbering energies of the youthful mind, and so mould and direct the outgoings of the mental energies that they will forever flow in the channel into which they were directed by such a small thing as a rose, a pebble, or a shell. If we can encourage our teachers to exhibit care and neatness in dress, and to manifest a taste for the beautiful by plucking a few flowers for their desks, or adorning their school rooms with a few pictures or other objects of interest, they will find all these co-workers with them, in exerting a refining and elevating influence upon their schools.

In regard to the intelligence of the citizens I would remark, that it will compare favorably with that of any other section of the State. Our County contains a large number of educated men and women. So far as my knowledge extends, there are comparatively few who cannot read and write.

In several localities in this County there is little zeal manifested in the cause of public instruction. There are instances where parents refused to purchase the books which we now use; in such cases we instructed the Teachers to use those which they had, but not permit the introduction or use of any new books except those provided by the State Board. I am happy to inform you that there are comparatively few who have acted thus, and these I doubt not will soon be won over to the system by patience, gentleness and firmness in carrying out the provisions of the law. We have, however, on the other hand, intelligent and firm friends of the new system. The Board of Commissioners are unanimous in the opinion that the School Law will work well, and when once properly understood by the people, and its superiority illustrated in the improved condition of the Schools, all opposition from thinking and honest men, must vanish as the vapor before the rising sun.