

CALVERT COUNTY.

The Schools existing at the time of our appointment were organized under the laws of 1860 and 1862.

Although this was an improvement on the system which preceded it, yet in some of the essentials of a good system, it was radically defective. I refer to School Houses, Teachers and Supervision, on each of which topics I would offer a few remarks.

SCHOOL HOUSES.

Of the 19 houses employed for School purposes, 9 were of frame, 10 of logs. The frame tenements, though substantial, were diminutive, and destitute of all pretension to good taste in their appearance. The log buildings were of the rudest construction. In one case a log barn had been purchased by the County at a cost of \$130, and devoted, without alterations, to the imprisonment of children.

The furniture of all the Schools was in perfect keeping with the exterior. It consisted of a single desk, extending along each side-wall, and a few rough benches, without backs. Neither Map nor Globe graced the room. Blackboards had indeed been introduced, but their untarnished surface evinced little use.

These School Houses, objectionable in themselves, were rendered still more so by their location, seated as they all were within a few yards of the highway, and subjected to the dust and the interruption of travel. If a triangular lot of barren land, bounded on each side by a public road could be found, it was selected par-excellence as a suitable site.

TEACHERS.

All those employed in the Schools at the time of our appointment, had been duly qualified by the former Commissioners. Many of these Teachers have been continued in the Schools under the present system by "Permits" from us until an examination be had; no reliable opinion can be formed of their ability; but my visits to the Schools under their charge have furnished proof, in too many instances, that a lifeless routine method marked the recitations.

The discipline of the mental faculties and cultivation of habits of independent thinking on the part of the pupil, occupied but little of the Teacher's attention, the chief object aimed at being the correct repetition of the *words* of the text-book.

SUPERVISION.

Here lay the chief defect of the old system. The important duty of visiting and examining the School, of noting the conduct of the Teacher and progress of the pupils, devolved upon the Trustees, who were not unfrequently selected without regard to their zeal or capacity. Need it be wondered, if, under such circum-