

## THESIS.

Subject: *The Educative Influence of Environment.*

Name: *George B. Parker.*

Those who write the biographies of great men usually follow a definite plan. First there is held up to our view the lives of the ancestors of the hero; his grandparents and finally his parents themselves are fully discussed and their prominent characteristics brought before the mind of the reader.

In the second place the surroundings of the individual are fully treated; his home influence, the school he attended, the neighbors, the church, the scenery, and finally the moral tone of the neighborhood and of the times are fully presented and discussed. These two great influences operating upon the

mind, of the individual we are told have made him what he is.

Thus we are led to see that there are two great factors in all mental development; the hereditary traits, or inborn characteristics and capacities, of the individual, and the influence of his surroundings, or his environment. These two factors, heredity and environment, are often otherwise distinguished as the internal and external factors of mental development. Taken together these factors constitute all mental growth, and to properly adjust them to each other so that the greatest good may result, forms the most important part in the great

work of human education.

By the environment of an individual is meant his surroundings both physical and social, or, in other words, all those external influences which act upon the mind of the individual, and tend to form his character. It is a psychological truth that the materials for the development of mind are supplied by the senses, and as sense-impressions evidently depend upon external objects, or, in other words, the environment of the individual, it follows as a logical sequence that the nature of the environment shall determine largely the character of the mental growth. Again it is clearly seen that

our environments determine our different experiences. The man who has passed his life in the turmoil of the city will not have had the same experience in life as one who has been brought up in the country amid scenes of nature's loveliness. His environment has been different, consequently his experience has been different. Now our different experiences determine largely the manner in which we think, judge, and reason about matters. Imagine for example, Milton and Newton looking at the same starry heavens. To Milton it is a sublime poem, to Newton a mathematical problem, while to the tailor, "Day hath

put on his jacket and around his burning bosom buttoned it with stars."

From this it is seen that our physical surroundings, the sky above us, the hills, the scenery around, all play an important part in forming our education and character. How important it is, then, that the teacher should make the environment of the school-room as agreeable as possible. The teacher who makes the school life of his pupils pleasant by keeping the room neat and tidy and surrounding them with objects of beauty has sown in the young mind, seeds which will in future years, spring up beautiful flowers of thought to blossom for eternity.