

The School And The Home

paper by Mrs. R. A. Jamieson Read at Session of Teachers' Institute Here.

The Times here publishes the text of paper read by Mrs. R. A. Jamieson, on the relationship of the parent and the teacher, at the recent teachers' institute here. It was very favorably commented on at the time. Mrs. Jamieson said:

The subject to be considered in this paper is of such magnitude and importance as to make the writer feel unworthy to deal with it. It is an axiom that church, school, and home are at the three most important points of influence upon the child, the sphere of their influence being without limit of either time or space, and we are asked to deal with the relationship which exists or should exist, between two of them.

Well, after all, it may be that this, the best approach to the simplest, most common-sense way, if only that way is not lacking in reverence.

Home, which sociologists tell us means "an enclosed place of rest and security," but which the child himself thinks of as the place where he "belongs," is, we think, the most potent force outside his own individuality in determining the sort of man into which a child shall grow up, but we admit the school to be a close second to it.

As school and home are the places in which, during alternating portions of his days, weeks, and years, the future

men and women of the race are trained, educated and developed, the relationship of the two institutions must, of necessity, be both intimate and influential. Would that it were also invariably sympathetic, understanding, and mutually helpful.

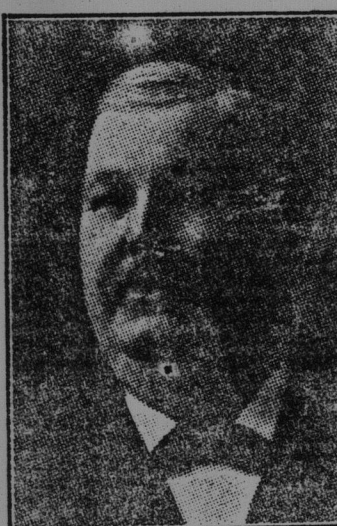
One sometimes feels that it might help matters a good deal if only parents and teachers alike would recognize that the real object of education is to build up character; that the foundation must be laid in the home during the very early years before school life begins, and that, if the structure is to be strong and beautiful, the builders must work together in harmony, each seeking to strengthen and to perfect the result of the other's labors.

Obedience.

Perhaps the first lesson a child has to be taught is that of obedience to recognized authority. For the child's own safety and well-being he must learn to obey before he is able to reason why. If parents taught this lesson faithfully from the first, what quantities of thorns and briars would be removed from the teacher's path! Then, all through childhood and youth, the teachers of our boys and girls should take every possible opportunity to foster in their pupils an instructive deference to home authority and to home ideals. (It is sad to know that some children come from homes which seem to be devoid of ideals, but these are the unfortunate exceptions, not the rule.)

When parental authority, or, perhaps, parental lack of authority, interferes with regular attendance at school, proper preparation of lessons, far better appeal to the mother on the ground

COAL CHIEF OF ALBERTA.



W. H. Armstrong, director of coal operations for Alberta, post somewhat similar to that of "Fuel Controller."

of her child's best interests, than to tell your pupil, by your manner if not by your words, to honor her father and mother only when they are particularly deserving of honor, which is a very pleasant, and much too easily learned, revision of the Fourth Commandment. And even when parents fail to respond to the teacher's request, the teacher should, through their children, to "vex your soul daily," let nothing tempt you, young teacher, to make contemptuous remarks or impatient criticisms upon them in the presence of their children, not only because such a course is decidedly wrong, but also whatever tends to weaken a child's respect for parental authority, will likewise prove subversive to discipline in the school room.

I believe that most teachers will support me in the statement that they have far less trouble with pupils whose parents insist upon their authority being recognized, even though their opinions are not up to the latest lights, than those whose parents, by reason of moral laxness, lack of conscience, or an appallingly wrong conception of what is desirable for human beings in the formative period, exert no authority and maintain no discipline in their homes.

This indolent, irresponsible and irrational mode of procedure, many such parents seek to justify by telling us in swelling periods which they deliver with a rapt expression of countenance, that corporal punishment is a relic of the dark ages, that children should be ruled only by the gentlest and most loving moral suasion, that the development of their individual personalities should be perfectly free and untrammelled, and so on, until the listener, if he be at all conversant with the results of this system, sympathizes most heartily with the charwomen who said of the incorrigible young son of one of her employers, "His mother says she's bringing him up by love alone, and you take it from me, love's made a hash of it."

Now, at the risk of being classed as a stupid, old reactionary, and much better than Solomon, whom these advanced thinkers regard as a reprehensibly brutal old man, whose views on child training are simply beneath contempt, I submit as my humble opinion that certain faults in certain kinds of children can be dealt with more effectively, may even more kindly, by means of a little judicious corporal punishment administered not in anger, but like a nauseous medicine, with kindly intent to cure, than in any other way yet known to mortals.

Furthermore, the greatest and most unselfish kind of life is not that which supinely permits its object to destroy itself, but that which bravely faces the pain of giving pain to the loved one, if he can thereby be greatly benefited. If a mother allowed her child to go through life a cripple rather than compel him to undergo a surgical operation to which he strenuously objected, you would call it love but idiocy. Will the person who decries Solomon because he lived before the Christian era please note that in the New Testament, which tells us that "God is Love," we are also told that "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." All of us (and I am sure we could include both Solomon and St. Paul, if they were present) are heartily agreed that if reformation can be brought about by an appeal to a child's nobler qualities, such is the ideal method; but, failing that, let him learn that retribution follows swift and sure upon the heels of evil doing. This will be of immediate benefit to the unfortunate victims of the untrammelled expression of his individuality, and he himself will at least be benefited gradually by the establishment of better habits, and will be far more likely to become a decent citizen instead of an anarchist. And, in nine cases out of ten, as the child grows older and his reasoning powers are developed by the study of mathematics, and his imagination is stirred by the glorious examples he meets in history and literature, he will desire to be a noble character and a useful member of society, and having learned, albeit perforce, to submit to discipline, he will be able to discipline himself in order to improve himself.

But discipline is far from being the only point in which Home and School, if parent and teacher should co-operate, the best results are to be obtained, they must work together faithfully and perseveringly to produce in their young charges the habit of intelligent observation, the power to think clearly and logically, the taste for "whatever things are pure, lovely and of good report," the faculty of remembering the really worth while things, and "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control."

Now few are mothers and teachers to occupy such relations to each other as will make their work of character building fit solidly together, in a strong and beautiful edifice, instead of being only a shaky structure the parts of which fail to correspond.

Working Together.

The solution would seem to be that the teacher should strive after a truly parental attitude to her pupils, while the mother should never forget her responsibility as such—and the most important one—of the teachers of her own children. If the mother does her share of teaching, and if the teacher does her share of mothering, each will come to a sympathetic understanding of the other's work.

I am aware that this is "a fairly large order" for both mothers and teachers, and that it cannot be accomplished unless each is prepared to bring to the task all her energies of body, mind and soul, but the end is abundantly worth all its costs.

In the earlier grades, and nearly all the way through preparatory school, the chief advantages lie with the mother. She has been her child's first teacher, she holds the first place in his affections, and, when he first goes to school at least, he regards her as the fount of all wisdom. And if she is a wise mother and

teaches him to regard her as a sort of general practitioner, whose advice must not be disregarded, but who, just because she is wise, is ready to defer in certain matters to the judgment of the line, she will still remain his highest court of appeal. Should she really feel convinced, after trying faithfully to look on both sides of the matter, that the teacher is making a mistake in regard to her child, she should not tell the child so, but should seek an interview with the teacher—and let me beg her not to seek this interview during school hours. Try to remember, mother, that during those five hours per day the teacher is charged not only with the care of your child, but also with the care of thirty or forty other lively boys and girls, and it is scarcely possible for her to give you her undivided and sympathetic attention, while she is in turn wondering when she will be able to get her lesson which your entrance has interrupted, and praying that you may take your departure before Willie Jones and Tom Brown get entirely out of hand. Go to her privately and talk the matter over with her kindly and courteously, telling her why you have so intimate a knowledge of your own child, think thus and so, and if you do not find the teacher ready to meet you fairly and either grant your request or furnish you with excellent reasons, why she should not do so, yours will be an exceptionally unfortunate experience, and I fear we will have to admit that that particular teacher has mistaken her vocation.

All through these earlier years stand by the teacher, lend the weight of your own authority to the support of hers, and you will receive the benefit of the reflex action in the increased respect of your own child, think thus and so, and if you do not find the teacher ready to meet you fairly and either grant your request or furnish you with excellent reasons, why she should not do so, yours will be an exceptionally unfortunate experience, and I fear we will have to admit that that particular teacher has mistaken her vocation.

When children reach the high school age conditions are somewhat reversed, as by that time our children are beginning to discover that our judgment is not infallible nor our knowledge unlimited, while the capable high school teacher is so obviously a person of eminently superior attainments as to appeal strongly to the admiration of the "teen age" boy or girl, and it now comes the teacher's turn to emphasize, whenever she can naturally and effectively do so, the duty and the beauty of filial reverence and devotion, and the fact that desirable as knowledge is, wisdom is still better.

But mothers should try hard to justify the teacher's tribute to them. They should endeavor to know all their children's sources of thought, the books they read, the friends they make, the studies

they pursue, and the manner in which those studies are presented to them, and should try hard to keep abreast of their intellectual interests.

I do not go to the length of saying that a busy mother should, or can, attempt to do the same Latin and mathematics as her son or daughter who is attending high school, but she can read the same history and literature, and can put into the child's hands supplementary reading which will help him to remember the history and to understand the literature. She can encourage the child to talk over with her the various things he has learned in class, and can take an intelligent interest in them, and try to remember them and to be able at a future time to refer to them with some aptitude. All this will take some time and trouble, but time and energy could not be more wisely spent, nor more richly rewarded. To retain through life the complete respect and confidence of one's children, and thereby to be able to save them from many a pitfall, is worth all effort and all sacrifice, and the mother who achieves this high task will find that the high school period has not put a gulf between herself and her child, but has drawn them closer together.

I began with firmness, let me end with love. No one who does not love children should ever presume to enter the teaching profession, for what we do not love, we can never fully understand; and, beside, what satisfactory relationship could possibly exist between a mother who loves her child far more than she loves her own life, and a teacher who has no loving interest whatever in him?

Further, the teacher who does not love children is doomed to a most unhappy existence, for only love can supply the patient kindness which is so essential in the correcting of a child's faults and the development (often by slow and painful degrees) of his finer qualities, and without patience, a teacher's life would be well nigh intolerable.

And mothers and teachers alike have much need to constantly seek the aid of Him who is the source of all love and of all wisdom, and to "continue therein with patience unto the end."

Over wayward childhood wouldst thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy Love, Hope and Patience, these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep abiding.

Yet haply there will come a weary day,
When, overtaken at length,
Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.

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