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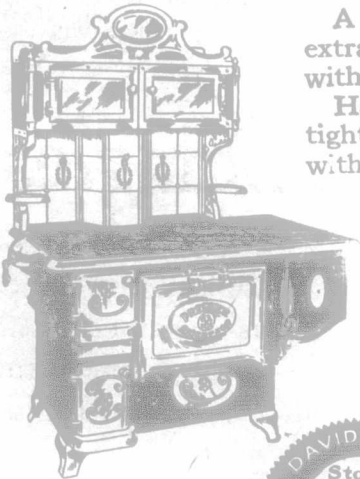
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Our School Department.

Discipline in the Class-Room.

BY RITA COYLE, ESSEX COUNTY, ONT.

Having seen in your columns the invitation extended to teachers to voice their sentiments on certain topics, I shall take advantage of the opportunity. I always look forward, each week-end, to see what interesting reading matter the "School Department" has in store for me. I think it is a wise plan for teachers to exchange ideas, so I shall give expression to a few views on "Discipline."

It is an undisputed fact that in olden times, the birch-rod discipline pervaded practically every class-room and the rule-of-thumb order was all that the average teacher had as her objective. While I am no advocate of the abolition of corporal punishment, nor am I a promoter of the "molly-coddle" method, I still maintain that the wise teacher may accomplish a great deal through kindness. Many offences, however, cannot be reached in any way except by inflicting some form of physical discomfort upon the pupils. In many cases, though, mental discomfort suffices.

By mental discomfort I mean that you can make the pupil feel that he did wrong. Point out the disadvantages in after life, of such absurd things as every natural child does. Show the child how the world looks upon a grown-up man who acts in the way the child acts. The results are soon seen, as the child will invariably hang his head with remorse of conscience—the best and safest punishment of all. Thus we see that the teacher who used kindness as her weapon was successful. On the other hand, when this method fails, and the pupil shows persistency in disobeying, the teacher must resort to corporal punishment.

To my mind, this treatment through kindness is the straight way to the "heart of the pupil," and I have often wondered how the change was made from the ancient birch-rod discipline to the modern discipline of consequence. I suppose that when this doctrine in education was first advocated, a body of adherents welcomed it simply because it was new; or perhaps, they welcomed it because it appealed to some dominating sentiment of their natures; again, perhaps it was welcomed by some because of a deep-rooted dissatisfaction with the old. Anyway, it is here and I believe it has been met with approval by most teachers.

Pedagogues say that a good disciplinarian has no trouble in winning her class. But what qualities in a teacher go to make up what is termed a good disciplinarian? First of all, I would say that she required a strong personality. With this valuable asset the teacher can win the love and confidence of the children. The pupils feel her presence and they will invariably aim to please their teacher at any cost.

Another important factor is that the teacher should be an interesting and clear teacher. By the interest and clearness of her work the pupil's attention is secured and her discipline affected thereby.

Not only must the teacher know her work, but she must also understand child nature. Little misdemeanors are often looked upon as serious violations of authority. A careful examination into circumstances, together with a knowledge of child nature would show that the actions were only expressions of impressions which every natural child experiences.

Then a good disciplinarian frequently puts the pupils on their honor. If the children feel that the teacher does not trust them, they will feel like criminals in her presence. On the other hand, the teacher who leaves the room and says, "I expect you to act just the same in my absence as you would in my presence," will receive the confidence of the pupils in return for hers.

By all means, the teacher should not have a code of rules for the pupils to follow. One general rule, "Do right" is enough for any class to have before them. The teacher must also make a distinction between what is wrong morally and what is a breach of good conduct. Some pupils, if not otherwise informed, believe whispering to be a crime. Others, on the contrary, look upon swearing as

only a breach of conduct. Therefore, I say, "Draw a dividing line between the two."

Summarizing the qualities of a good disciplinarian, I shall say: First, she must possess a strong personality; second, she must be an interesting and clear teacher; third, she must know psychology in order to understand child nature; fourth, she must trust her pupils and know how to put them on their honor, and lastly, there must be very few rules.

To, conclude, I shall say with a philosopher of the past, "Let us treat our pupils with all friendliness but with all firmness."

I hope I have not taken too much space in your valuable paper. I would like to read others' opinions on different matters of school-room routine.

Rural Education Association.

BY ALPHA.

An interesting feature in connection with the rural school system in Manitoba is the number of trustees' conventions held. District school inspectors state that the large attendance and interest manifested augurs well for the future welfare of the young people. Inspector Geo. Hunter, of Deloraine, writes that a number of conferences with trustees and parents were also held, proving most helpful. These meetings foster greater interest in the schools and their surroundings. Inspector Fallis, of Neepawa, states that the trustee gatherings create an increasing desire for improving school conditions. Several schools were represented by ladies at the Brandon convention, resulting in steps being taken to provide lunches at additional schools. In Saskatchewan, Rural Educational Associations have made remarkable progress, 33 new ones being formed in one year and 50 re-organized, making a total of 83 as against 57 in 1917. Several inspectorates had an association in every municipality. The activities of these organizations include school exhibitions, educational meetings, school fairs, community gatherings, agricultural short courses, boys' and girls' clubs, Red Cross meetings and patriotic rallies. In fact, their work has become so important in the judgment of the Minister of Education, as to warrant the appointment of a single official to promote their organization and development. British Columbia has Trustee Associations which meet every year to discuss educational subjects and every conceivable grievance.

Municipal School Boards.

BY ALPHA.

Inspector F. H. Belton, of Roblin, Manitoba, in a recent report on the schools of his district, states that 25 years' participation in educational work has demolished his faith in local control of public school education. He is now fully satisfied that the unit of school administration should be enlarged. J. Boyd Morrison, Inspector of Hamiota, Man., reports that the most striking educational event of the year in his district was the action of the people of Miniota in adopting the municipal school board, thus making the whole municipality one district with a single rate of taxation. The new board administers 12 school districts, including three consolidated schools. Inspector Geo. Hunter, of Deloraine, Man., states that 309 trustees and secretaries are required to manage the school affairs of 2,362 children in the six municipalities, whereas six district boards would give a far more efficient administration. Dr. Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education in British Columbia, reports that the municipal school system there has worked exceptionally well, and after a year's experience he is satisfied that not a municipality in the Province would want to go back to the old plan.