

unattended by good feeling between parent and teacher, and the subsequent co-operation of the former.

In these visits from parents I would frequently discover, as I have already remarked, that the misconduct and idleness of a boy had its origin in neglect, or in unwise and, often, unnecessarily harsh treatment at home, and I would unhesitatingly take the liberty to advise another course; urging the parent to offer every incentive to an honorable ambition on the part of his son; and, while deprecating any undue severity, I would recommend him to show decidedly to the child, that upon the report of his teacher must depend his reward or punishment at home.

For the purpose of enabling us to retain the aid of parents in this manner, the Sectional School Board of Directors caused to be prepared blanks for a weekly report, so simple in its character as to be easily understood by any parent able to read. This report is now in use in most of the schools of our city, and I believe answers well the purposes for which it was intended. It occupies very little time in its preparation, as it can be copied directly from the roll by any intelligent boy in the class, and it shows at a glance the conduct of a pupil, his lessons, attendance, punctuality, etc., during the previous week. In its effect this report was found to possess far greater influence in stimulating the child to increased industry and good conduct than the fear of the rod ever did under the old dispensation.

The frequent consultations with parents, and the use of the weekly report, together with an occasional exhortation or lecture to the boys, when time and opportunity offered, constituted my chief substitutes for the abandoned instrument of torture; and with their aid I have no desire ever to resume it.

It may, however, be asked: "Are there not some few who are still invulnerable against argument and persuasion; who are naturally so depraved as to be entirely beyond such influences?" I answer that I have found none such, among thousands of children of every condition in life and every variety of disposition. I do not undertake to say that there are no incorrigible children at all, but I do say that if a child is so depraved as to be entirely beyond the reach of kindness and forbearance then the school-room is not the place for him, but another institution, a house of correction, is needed. There is no reason why a mode of punishment alike degrading to both teacher and pupil should be maintained in the schools, because, perhaps, one child in a hundred may be naturally so bad, or under such evil influences at home, as to be inaccessible to any other kind of discipline.

In addition to the gratification of being able to dispense with so disagreeable a mode of punishment, I found such excellent results from the substitutes which I had adopted, that I was enabled to modify in a great degree another kind, which I had always ought to be a greater infliction upon the teacher than upon the pupil; I mean detention after the regular school hours. Before the weekly report was brought into use, it was not uncommon to detain the idle or disorderly during a whole noon-time, and seldom less than one hour, depriving a boy of the rest and recreation absolutely necessary for a proper discharge of his duties in the afternoon, to say nothing of the injury to his health.

Within a few years I have diminished the time allowed for detention, so that it is now limited to half an hour per day; and, as most cases of the kind are on account of failures in lessons, I endeavor to have the detention considered not so much as a punishment as an opportunity for the pupil to make himself more thorough in a lesson, which, though he may have studied it diligently, he has had the misfortune not to know perfectly, and a complete knowledge of which may afterwards be requisite to insure his promotion. As pupils who have studied their lessons most diligently are frequently detained by accidental failures, it does no harm to assume that they have all done so, and I invariably find this mode of treatment more efficacious than harshness and scolding.

Among the good results growing out of the abolishment of corporal punishment is the absence of all turmoil and trouble with the parents. The father of a pupil, instead of coming to the school greatly exasperated on account of the punishment inflicted upon his son, will have, in nearly every case, a perfectly amicable understanding with the teacher, and go home determined to do all in his power to aid in accomplishing the object which concerns him so much, the proper education of his child.

Another particularly gratifying result which I have experienced

is, the almost total avoidance of cases of discipline requiring the interposition of the School Committee. The Committee that first empowered me to try the experiment found, contrary to their anticipations, but to their decided gratification, that their occupation in that line was almost gone; and six months after the plan was adopted in the Grammar School, the Board of Directors, of the Third Section, then (before the consolidation of the city) comprising the whole of Southwark, ordered the abolishment of every kind of corporal punishment in all the schools of the Section. The same result has been accomplished in the Tenth Section, in which my present school is located, and it is a source of no little satisfaction to the directors and teachers of the school that during a period of more than five years, but one case of discipline has been brought before the Committee.

But one of the best results may be seen in the cordial and affectionate feeling manifested by all the pupils towards their teachers. This is not confined to the select few who are always correct in their deportment, but it is shown in an equal degree by the most thoughtless and troublesome boys in the school; a feeling that could not have existed, when it was customary for the teacher to report her pupils to the principal, to be subjected to a cruel and degrading punishment.

It may, however, be contended that although this mode of discipline may be adapted to the temperament and capacity of some teachers, it will not answer for others. This depends entirely upon the spirit in which the teacher will enter upon the responsible profession which he has adopted, and the industry, forbearance and self-command that he can bring into action in discharging its duties. To carry out successfully a discipline based upon moral suasion, a teacher should endeavor to feel for every one of his pupils the same interest that he would for a son or a brother. He must make an earnest effort to convince all that are under his charge that the reproof or punishment he administers is for their own good. He should endeavor to implant in their minds a love of truth and integrity, and show them how closely their future prosperity must depend upon the habits formed in school, and the reputation they will there leave behind them. He should thus try to elevate them in their own estimation, and having accomplished this, then show that he can place confidence in them, instead of continually making them subjects for watchfulness and suspicion. The most powerful aid that I have experienced in maintaining good order, is the feeling, which I have to a great extent succeeded in producing, that a falsehood is the most dishonorable crime that can be committed in the school-room, and I am satisfied that no boy in the division under my own immediate charge will deliberately tell an untruth, either to screen himself from punishment or to obtain a reward to which he is not entitled. Were any boy to do this, he would be sent to Coventry by every one of his classmates, and I could read the evidence of his falsehood in the faces of every one cognizant of it.

Now this mode of treatment does away with all motives for misconduct. If a boy feels bound in honour and by the public sentiment in his class to tell the truth on all occasions, whether it be to his own detriment or not, he certainly can have no inducement deliberately to commit an offence. In consequence of this feeling, I can leave my class entirely to themselves for half an hour or more, and feel perfectly confident that no breach of discipline has been committed, during my absence, or that if any rule has been violated through thoughtlessness, I can know all about it at once on asking for the offender who is himself bound in honour to report it.

This may seem to some a very utopian state of affairs, and so I should have thought it myself some years ago, but it is nevertheless, a fixed fact, which I have tested in every possible way; but it is one that could never have been brought about by harshness and severity.

I have endeavoured, as well as my brief time has permitted, to give you my experience under the application of a system in which not only corporal punishment has been abolished, but also every other bordering on severity. In doing so, I have been compelled to speak rather more of my own success, than is agreeable to me, but I trust that your request to be explicit upon that point, will relieve me from any charge of egotism.