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DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY THE REV. DR. ARNOLD, LATE HEAD MASTER OF RUGBY SCHOOL,
ENGLAND.

As it will be interesting to many readers of the *Journal of Education* to be in possession of the conclusions, after extensive experience, of one of England's most distinguished and enlightened educationists, regarding *Discipline in Public Schools*, we have given an extended extract from a published address of the lamented Dr. ARNOLD, on the subject. It will be borne in mind that Dr. Arnold, in penning the following remarks, had especial reference to the objections usually urged against the prevalent corporal modes of discipline, in the great public schools of England. He remarks:—

Liberal principles and popular principles are by no means necessarily the same; and it is of importance to be aware of the difference between

them. Popular principles are opposed simply to restraint; liberal principles to unjust restraint. Popular principles sympathize with all who are subject to authority, and regard with suspicion all punishment; liberal principles sympathize, on the other hand, with authority, whenever the evil tendencies of human nature are more likely to be shown in disregarding it than abusing it. Popular principles seem to have but one object—the deliverance of the many from the control of the few. Liberal principles, while generally favorable to this same object, yet pursue it as a means, not as an end; and therefore they support the subjection of the many to the few, under certain circumstances, when the great end they keep steadily in view, is more likely to be promoted by subjection than by independence. For the great end of liberal principles is indeed the “greatest happiness of the greatest number,” if we understand that the happiness of man consists more in his intellectual well-doing than in his physical; and yet more in his moral and religious excellence than in his intellectual.

It must be allowed, however, that the fault of popular principles, as distinguished from liberal, has been greatly provoked by the long-continued prevalence of principles of authority which are no less illiberal. Power has been so constantly perverted that it has come to be generally suspected. Liberty has been so constantly unjustly restrained, that it has been thought impossible that it should ever be indulged too freely. Popular feeling is not quick in observing the change of times and circumstances; it is with difficulty brought to act on a long-standing evil; but, being once set in motion, it is apt to overshoot its mark and continue to cry out against an evil long after it has disappeared, and the opposite evil is become most to be dreaded. Something of this excessive recoil of feeling may be observed, I think, in the continued cry against the severity of the penal code, as distinguished from its other defects; and the same disposition is shown in the popular clamor against military flogging, and in the complaints which are often made against the existing system of discipline in our schools.

“Corporal punishment,” it is said, “is degrading.” I well know of what feeling this is the expression; it originates in that proud notion of personal independence, which is neither reasonable nor Christian, but essentially barbarian. It visited Europe in former times with all the curses of the age of chivalry, and is threatening us now with those of Jacobinism. For so it is, that the evils of ultra-aristocracy and ultra-popular principles spring from precisely the same source—namely, from selfish pride—from an idolatry of personal honor and dignity in the aristocratical form of the disease—of personal independence in its modern and popular form. It is simply impatience of inferiority and submission—a feeling which must be more frequently wrong or right, in proportion to the relative situation and worthiness of him who entertains it, but which cannot be always or generally right except in beings infinitely