

This leads me naturally to a few general remarks upon the subject of school discipline. A period occurs in the life of every child, however carefully and fondly nurtured, when the paternal supervision must be intermitted. Custom, convenience and a variety of engagements preclude the possibility of the child remaining entirely under the eye and control of the father during the whole of his minority, and common consent has confirmed the expedience of investing the public instructor with the intellectual and to a great extent the moral training of the child at a very early age, when the infant mind is impressible like wax but retentive like adamant. This most critical period, so pregnant with consequences, is viewed by the parent with the profoundest solicitude, by the child with a feeling of relief as of expected emancipation from restraint, it should be regarded by the teacher with a corresponding sense of responsibility. The power of regulating the conduct, informing the mind, expanding the moral and intellectual faculties, of punishing the bad and rewarding the meritorious acts of the child, which nature originally devolved upon the parent as his exclusive prerogative, are for the time delegated to him. How fearful the trust! when we consider the keen perceptions, the budding passions, the dormant fires, the exquisite sense and faculty of imitation of early childhood, of that sacred period when the purest and holiest desires may be awakened, a thirst for knowledge created, a noble and life abiding manliness established, by the force of good example, noble precept, and correct discipline! of that fatal period when the self-consuming yet inextinguishable fires of unholy passions may be enkindled by force of evil example and communications and imperfect discipline! Truly, the reins of discipline and authority should be held at this time if ever with a firm yet gentle hand.

The teacher in the government of his school must not lose sight of one principle which should in most instances be the guide of his conduct, whatever feelings predominate in his own mind will be reflected as by a mirror in the minds of his scholars. The greater number of children who attend Common Schools are as yet within the domain of instinct. They instinctively approach and unbosom themselves to a kindly and congenial nature, and as instinctively close and shrink from a harsh and unkindly nature.—There is a magic in kindness, especially in our intercourse with the young. If punishment or kind rebuke is inflicted in a spirit of kindness it carries its balm with it which mollifies the wound. Anger, begets anger; contention, begets contention; recrimination, begets recrimination; wanton cruelty, begets retaliation; harsh and coercive measures beget dislike, obstinacy and even hatred. If we drop the seed upon the frozen soil or flinty rock we do not expect germination; so if the seeds of scientific or moral truth are dropped upon the callous surface of a mind frozen by indifference or indurated by aversion and dislike, we need not expect intellectual germination. Kindness, gentleness, persuasion, operate upon young minds in rendering them fitting receptacles of truth, like the genial influence of vernal suns and showers and winds upon the face of the earth. If the cheerful smile, the encouraging look and gesture, the clear explanation, the timely aid fail to awaken a disposition or capacity to learn, corporal coercion, the strap, the birch, the dark closet, will prove in a more signal manner ineffectual. Another and not less important consideration to be ever borne in mind by the teacher, is the regulation of his deportment. Although men differ as to the propriety of introducing religious or sectarian instruction into the secular schools, all, I believe, agree in the propriety of inculcating prudential maxims and moral precepts therein. As before intimated, the instincts are keenly alive and sensitive during childhood and youth, and it may be added that the perceptions at that time are equally vigilant and acute. Could the teacher see as clearly the thoughts and emotions which are coursing through the busy brains of his pupils as they can read the thoughts which are transpiring in the teacher's breast, he would perceive many close and curious observations upon his own conduct and character. Those little eyes which are raving so heedlessly and innocently everywhere, are like so many needles, they fasten upon every object, not a look or a gesture escapes them, not a transient change of countenance, not a fitting emotion is unobserved. They scan the innermost thought and they are particularly acute in discerning any, even the slightest, inconsistency between one's teaching and his practice. An idle word which is unremembered by the speaker at the next moment leaves its impression on a soft clay which forthwith indurates and becomes rock. An unguarded look is retained for years. Hence the necessity of strict propriety in the teacher's deportment. Not only his morals but his manners are contagious; if he is boorish, his pupils are clownish; if he is courteous, they are respectful; if he is industrious and attentive they are studious; if he is indifferent, they are listless; if he is affable, they are civil; if his language is choice and select, theirs is proper, or at least well intended; if his conver-

sation is loose and unrefined, theirs is vulgar—beastly. His moral conduct and conversation must be guarded and irreproachable; he must live and act what he professes and teaches. If he gives license to his appetites or passions or evil propensities of any kind, he becomes responsible for the most fearful consequences. If the immaculate sins, those under his tuition become sceptical of good; if he falls, he unconsciously drags many into the way of ruin. Regarded as the great exemplar and model of good conduct, if he takes a slight liberty those under his guidance will take a broad license; if his lips, the vehicles of truth and pure instruction, are polluted with indecency and immorality, his school becomes at once a seminary of vice and infidelity; its atmosphere becomes impure, tainted, contaminated and infectuous; it becomes a very lazar house of putrid and obscene sensuality, and its foul associations become a very Nesseean cloak which clings to the vitals and marrow of the wearer, and which no efforts in after life can radically remove. The school teacher cannot too often recall the remembrance of that great and good teacher of old whose name must be ever spoken with reverence, whom little children might be suffered to approach without fear of contamination, and whose whole life was the embodiment and realization of his simple and divine teachings. The school teacher has need of such a heavenly remembrance, for his position is at all times in this sense one of awful responsibility. It would seem impossible that any professional school teacher could undertake the work of forming the tastes, regulating the studies, in short of shaping the destiny present and eternal, not of one, but of hundreds of human beings, without an overwhelming sense of the responsibility thereby incurred. For the efficient and conscientious discharge of his trust he is responsible to the parents, who have so confidently placed in his charge their most precious treasures—to the children whom he is unconsciously to themselves moulding into vessels of honor or of dishonor—to society, which annually receives from the common schools, the academies, and colleges, an infusion of new blood, which goes to disorganize or to strengthen its constitution—to his maker who will rigorously exact a strict account of his cure and stewardship of immortal souls. Yet it is to be feared that many enter your vocation with no other end than pecuniary profit, and regardless of the means by which that end is attained; whose only care is to hasten the flight of time until their task is completed and their reward secured. Some urge that the duties of the school teacher are confined to educating and forming the intellect exclusively, and that during certain fixed hours assigned to the purpose—and that all further care and responsibility concerning the pupil devolves upon others. To my mind this is far from being a just and comprehensive statement of the case, but as it involves a very important part of the teacher's work, it will not be deemed amiss in me to make a few suggestions of what should be avoided and what should be practiced in the process of developing and feeding the human intellect. The sentient principle in man being a something imperceptible to the senses, which cannot be weighed or measured, seen or felt, we are frequently compelled in speaking of operations to compare them to things of which we can take actual cognizance and in fact, upon observation we do find strong analogies to certain physical processes with which we are quite familiar: for example, we often speak of administering food to the mind, by which we mean the storing it with knowledge, and we convey a meaning similar to what is implied by administering food to the body—and by tracing the analogy farther, we shall discover striking similarities between the physical processes of digestion, assimilation and absorption, and the corresponding mental processes. Strong meat is said to be suitable to men, and milk to babes. This principle should be constantly regarded by the teacher in prescribing his courses of study. Indigestible food in the stomach deranges the whole system and returns it no nutriment.—Studies above the pupil's comprehension perplex and discourage him and occasion a great expenditure of vital energy to no purpose.—The teacher should have particular reference to the pupil's age, proficiency and aptitude before putting the text-book into his hand.—Again, over-feeding impairs the digestion and clogs the system with useless matter. No more food should be taken than can be properly digested and assimilated. No error is more frequently practiced in the management of schools than that of over-feeding the young mind. Such a course encumbers the memory, confuses the reason, and in no way aids the growth and development of the intellect. The memory is not inaptly compared to a store house in which the various merchandise of knowledge is deposited and assorted, and to which the reason repairs for material with which to carry on its operations. This store house should not be lumbered with a multitude of heterogeneous materials, hastily and promiscuously thrown in packages and parcels, bales and jewels with rubbish mixed. In such case when the reason comes down for an article it request, it makes a tiresome and ineffectual