

be of great advantage in maintaining discipline in the school-room, and industry in study both there and at home.

I would earnestly recommend every teacher to try the plan of making the acquaintance of the parents of pupils, more particularly in the case of those who are inclined to be troublesome. It may at first be somewhat burdensome, and require additional sacrifices of time and labor in a profession the duties of which are admitted to be already sufficiently onerous; but he will find it of so much benefit in removing almost every cause of misunderstanding and want of proper co-operation, that he will not regret the half hour per day required to accomplish this object.

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.

The Editor of the *Teacher* remarks on this as follows:—

We think that our readers will find it an interesting document though they may not subscribe to all its positions. We cannot agree with Mr. Lauderbach in thinking that corporeal punishment is necessarily degrading to teacher or pupil, or in believing that all children who cannot be managed without it are fit candidates for a house of correction. We are sure there are many schools in Massachusetts where such punishment is rarely resorted to, and where no blow is ever struck improperly, in which a class of children are retained, and taught successfully, who could not be retained if the power to punish were taken away.

We are glad of the account of any experience that shall help to bring the time nearer when the rod may be dispensed with, and to record any practicable testimony to the possibility of mild discipline. We think that many parallels could be found in New England; if not, we must be content to yield the palm to our Philadelphia friends, and learn of them.

4. HON. E. D. MANSFIELD, OF OHIO, ON THE DISCIPLINE OF SCHOOLS.

There are intellectual epidemics in the world. Sometimes they are general, and like the cholera, go into all countries. Sometimes they are local, and confined to one country. Just now, there is an ideal epidemic in our country against whipping in schools. Some clergyman in New York beat his child to death; some furious woman in Chicago cruelly bruised her child; and several teachers have beaten children at school more than they ought; and one or two judges, when these teachers have been called before them, have pronounced this whipping a barbarous affair, which the law ought not to suffer—and to make sure that it should not, decided the teachers had no right to whip, which is contrary to law. The law, as it has heretofore existed and been administered, allows the parent and the teacher to punish with the rod in a moderate way. Of course, the law does not allow cruelty. It would be an unreasonable law if it did. But it allows as a *principle*, the parent, or teacher, to use his *discretion* in the discipline, by which he enforces obedience to his prescribed rules of conduct. The teacher, in the language of the law, stands in *loco parentis*, and the law cannot and ought not to say, that a parent shall not punish his child as he pleases, unless this punishment endangers life or health, in which case it becomes a crime. A *discretion*—a discretion which may, it is true, be abused—is allowed the teacher as to what kind of, and to what extent, punishment should be employed. The simple fact that it is a discretionary power, makes it difficult to use it judiciously. The degree of tempers, judgment, and opinion among teachers is as great as among parents, except that there are none not in some degree educated. There are, perhaps, thirty thousand teachers in Ohio, and can it be supposed that these teachers are so perfect that there are none of bad tempers or of little judgment? This is not supposable. But when we look over the state of Ohio, and see how few complaints are made against teachers, and how seldom they are summoned to appear before the law, we are compelled to believe that the teachers are rather to be admired, as a body, for humane and judicious treatment of pupils, than to be condemned for unnecessary and cruel severity. On the contrary, if this were the only

test of their discipline, we should be afraid that they fell short of, rather than exceeded their just powers of government. But, after all, those specific instances of maltreatment are no test whatever of this mode of discipline. "One swallow," says the proverb, "does not make a summer." Isolated instances among thousands of teachers of unusual cruelty in the punishment of children, prove nothing. More, by far, may be found among parents, whom no one would think of prohibiting this natural power. If we could form some correct opinions of the question of physical discipline, we must go back to first principles, and discuss it *ab origine*. What is the nature of the child? And what is the province of the teacher? In the first place, we observe that learning—knowledge, knowledge of things,—is not the sole object of teaching. It is scarcely half of it. One of the great objects of teaching is *discipline*. If the child in school never learned one fact or principle in knowledge, would it have been idly employed if it acquired a discipline of mind and heart and body? If it brought its body to regular habits, its mind to think, its heart to feel right emotions, would not the greatest object of education be accomplished? How long, after such a discipline, would it take to acquire the knowledge obtained in all our common schools? Not a tenth part of the time usually taken. Hence, discipline is, at last, the great thing for us to achieve in the school. This is the great thing achieved at West Point. But if we look at what is said and written about our public schools, we should think the public mind had lost sight of discipline altogether. The idea of liberty has, by necessity, been so much talked about, that men have got a sort of undefined notion that we must relax the law; that all restraint is an infringement on liberty; that it is degrading to punish children; and that the teacher who uses the rod to enforce obedience is a tyrant, who degrades his pupil and abuses his trust. Now, there is nothing more certain in the constitution of society than that law is necessary to liberty, and that the enforcement of law is necessary to maintain it. We say, without assuming the office of prophet, that our country stands in danger this day from no one cause so much as the *want of discipline* by parents and teachers and the *want of respect for law*. We are now thirty-seven millions of people—and *ten millions of them are or ought to be in the schools*. Just think of it: ten millions in the schools and two hundred thousand teachers! Now, suppose this whole generation of boys and girls growing up without discipline, because teachers must not punish, and parents will not degrade the sovereigns of America by discipline! What will they come to? Where will this country be when its youth have learned no discipline for themselves, have no respect for law, and pay no veneration to age? All the laws of our human nature must be reversed, if this country does not come to ruin, when such is the education of our youth. No man need say there is no danger of this, when judges of our courts tell the teacher he must not use the only mode of punishment which in some cases is possible, and tell the boys that they can enforce the law against the discipline of the teacher! If this were really done throughout the state, the schools must be broken up. That would be inevitable. But, happily, by tradition, by their own education, by their common sense, and by their natural desire for the welfare of their children, most parents see and repudiate this extreme humanitarian view of physical punishments; and when they know, as generally they do, that the teacher is acting, to the best of his judgment, for the good of the children, they will sustain and strengthen his hands. We thus have the help of nature itself to maintain discipline against ultra opinion.

But are not teachers to blame sometimes in setting before pupils too much the fair side of things? Exciting the hopes of ambition too much in one direction, and the fears of failure too little in another? It is the commonest thing for speakers at school exhibitions, as well as teachers themselves, to tell the boys that any one of them may be President of the United States; but they fail to tell them that the chances are a hundred times greater that any one of them may be hung for want of early discipline in truth and obedience. Yet the last is strictly true. Hope is indeed, the great impulsive motive of the mind; but if the mind may be swayed healthily and nobly by its attractions, is it not also true that it may be repelled from awful evil by the fear of its terrible retributions? Is human life so wholly invested with roseate hues, that we dare tell the youth, adventuring in its morning, that those are never darkened?—that morning is never clouded? Alas! clouds and darkness rest upon it; and we should teach those boys and girls, before we teach them any knowledge, that—they can escape the dangers of the storm only by the love of holy truth and obedience to all just authority. This is discipline of the heart, which, above all culture, gives also the true discipline of the mind.

But how is *obedience* to be secured? This brings us to what is called the practical, every-day discipline of the school. And here comes in the epidemic opinion of philanthropists (*who is a philanthropist?*), that we should not use the *rod* lest we should degrade these precious bodies, or blunt the sensibilities of some aspiring