

some one who was constantly thwarting her wishes, uttering sharp reprimands, and occasionally inflicting actual penalties on her, she would pay but little attention to any professions of anxiety for her welfare which accompanied these acts. Why, then, does she suppose that her boy will conclude otherwise?

But now observe how different will be the results if the system we contend for be consistently pursued—if the mother not only avoids becoming the instrument of punishment, but plays the part of a friend by warning her boy of the punishments which Nature will inflict. Take a case; and that it may illustrate the mode in which this policy is to be early initiated, let it be one of the simplest cases. Suppose that, prompted by the experimental spirit so conspicuous in children, whose proceedings instinctively conform to the inductive method of inquiry—suppose that so prompted, the child is amusing himself by lighting pieces of paper in the candle and watching them burn. If his mother is of the ordinary unreflective stamp, she will either, on the plea of keeping the child “out of mischief,” or from fear that he will burn himself, command him to desist; and in case of non-compliance will snatch the paper from him. On the other hand, should he be so fortunate as to have a mother of sufficient rationality, who knows that this interest with which the child is watching the paper burn results from a healthy inquisitiveness, without which he would never have emerged out of infantine stupidity, and who is also wise enough to consider the moral results of interference, she will reason thus: “If I put a stop to this, I shall prevent the acquirement of a certain amount of knowledge. It is true that I may save the child from a burn; but what then? He is sure to burn himself some time; and it is quite essential to his safety in life that he should learn by experience the properties of flame. Moreover, if I forbid him from running this present risk, he is sure hereafter to run the same or a greater risk when no one is present to prevent him; whereas, if he should have any accident now that I am by, I can save him from any great injury: add to which the advantage that he will have in future some dread of fire, and will be less likely to burn himself to death, or set the house in a flame when others are absent. Furthermore, were I to make him desist, I should thwart him in the pursuit of what is in itself a purely harmless, and indeed, instructive gratification; and he would be sure to regard me with more or less ill-feeling. Ignorant as he is of the pain from which I would save him, and feeling only the pain of a balked desire, he could not fail to look upon me as the cause of that pain. To save him from a hurt which he can not conceive, and which has therefore no existence for him, I inflict upon him a hurt which he feels keenly enough; and so become, from his point of view, a minister of evil. My best course then, is simply to warn him of the danger, and to be ready to prevent any serious damage.” And following out this conclusion, she says to the child: “I fear you will hurt yourself if you do that.” Suppose, now, that the child perseveres, as he will very probably do; and suppose that he ends by burning himself. What are the results? In the first place he has gained an experience which he must gain eventually, and which, for his own safety he can not gain too soon. And in the second place he has found that his mother’s disapproval or warning was meant for his welfare: he has a further positive experience of her benevolence—a further reason for placing confidence in her judgment and her kindness—a further reason for loving her.

Of course, in those occasional hazards where there is a risk of broken limbs or other serious bodily injury, forcible prevention is called for. But leaving out these extreme cases, the system pursued should be not that of guarding a child against the small dangers into which it daily runs, but that of advising and warning it against them. And by consistently pursuing this course a much stronger filial affection will be generated than commonly exists. If here, as elsewhere, the discipline of the natural reactions is allowed to come into play—if in all those out-of-door scramblings and in-door experiments, by which children are liable to hurt themselves, they are allowed to persevere, subject only to dissuasion more or less earnest according to the risk, there can not fail to arise an ever-increasing faith in the parental friendship and guidance. Not only, as before shown, does the adoption of this principle enable fathers and mothers to avoid the chief part of that odium which attaches to the infliction of positive punishment; but, as we here see, it enables them further to avoid the odium that attaches to constant thwartings; and even to turn each of those incidents which commonly cause squabbles, into a means of strengthening the mutual good feeling. Instead of being told in words, which deeds seem to contradict, that their parents are their best friends, children will learn this truth by a consistent daily experience; and so learning it, will acquire a degree of trust and attachment which nothing else can give.

And now having indicated the much more sympathetic relation which must result from the habitual use of this method, let us return to the question above put: How is this method to be applied to the graver offenses?

Note, in the first place, that these graver offenses are likely to be both less frequent and less grave under the *régime* we have described than under the ordinary *régime*. The perpetual ill-behavior of many children is itself the consequence of that chronic irritation in which they are kept by bad management. The state of isolation and antagonism produced by frequent punishment, necessarily deadens the sympathies; necessarily, therefore, opens the way to those transgressions which the sympathies should check. That harsh treatment which children of the same family inflict on each other is often, in great measure, a reflex of the harsh treatment they receive from adults—partly suggested by direct example, and partly generated by the ill-temper and the tendency to vicarious retaliation, which follow chastisements and scoldings. It can not be questioned that the greater activity of the affections and happier state of feeling, maintained in children by the discipline we have described, must prevent their sins against each other from being either so great or so frequent. Moreover, the still more reprehensible offenses, as lies and petty thefts, will, by the same causes, be diminished. Domestic estrangement is a fruitful source of such transgressions. It is a law of human nature, visible enough to all who observe, that those who are debarred the higher gratifications fall back upon the lower; those who have no sympathetic pleasures seek selfish ones; and hence, conversely, the maintenance of happier relations between parents and children is calculated to diminish the number of those offenses of which selfishness is the origin.

When, however, such offenses are committed, as they will occasionally be even under the best system, the discipline of consequences may still be resorted to; and if there exist that bond of confidence and affection which we have described, this discipline will be found efficient. For what are the natural consequences, say, of a theft? They are of two kinds—direct and indirect. The direct consequence, as dictated by pure equity, is that of making restitution. An absolutely just ruler (and every parent should aim to be one) will demand that, wherever it is possible, a wrong act shall be undone by a right one: and in the case of theft this implies either the restoration of the thing stolen, or, if it is consumed, then the giving of an equivalent: which, in the case of a child, may be effected out of its pocket-money. The indirect and more serious consequence is the grave displeasure of parents—a consequence which inevitably follows among all peoples sufficiently civilized to regard theft as a crime; and the manifestation of this displeasure is, in this instance, the most severe of the natural reactions produced by the wrong action. “But,” it will be said, “the manifestation of parental displeasure, either in words or blows, is the ordinary course in these cases: the method leads here to nothing new.” Very true. Already we have admitted that, in some directions, this method is spontaneously pursued. Already we have shown that there is a more or less manifest tendency for educational systems to gravitate towards the true system. And here we may remark, as before, that the intensity of this natural reaction will, in the beneficent order of things, adjust itself to the requirements—that this parental displeasure will vent itself in violent measures during comparatively barbarous times, when the children are also comparatively barbarous; and will express itself less cruelly in those more advanced social states in which, by implication, the children are amenable to milder treatment. But what it chiefly concerns us here to observe is, that the manifestation of strong parental displeasure, produced by one of these graver offenses, will be potent for good just in proportion to the warmth of the attachment existing between parent and child. Just in proportion as the discipline of the natural consequences has been consistently pursued in other cases, will it be efficient in this case. Proof is within the experience of all, if they will look for it.

For does not every man know that when he has offended another person, the amount of genuine regret he feels (of course, leaving worldly considerations out of the question) varies with the degree of sympathy he has for that person? Is he not conscious that when the person offended stands to him in the position of an enemy, the having given him annoyance is apt to be a source rather of secret satisfaction than of sorrow? Does he not remember that where umbrage has been taken by some total stranger, he has felt much less concern than he would have done had such umbrage been taken by one with whom he was intimate? While, conversely, has not the anger of an admired and cherished friend been regarded by him as a serious misfortune, long and keenly regretted? Clearly, then, the effects of parental displeasure upon children must similarly depend upon the pre-existing relationship. Where there is an