

illustration suggests itself. Take the first and second readers of the new series. We have examined them with some care, and we venture to say that the rate of progress assumed in them is far beyond the capacity of the average child. There is often enough in one lesson for three or four. Columns of new words are given that must be perfectly appalling to the untrained mind of the child. The principles of repetition in many new combinations of the words already learned, and the gradual introduction of new words, seem to have been almost wholly lost sight of in the preparation of these books. We honestly confess that we should be very loath to have a child of our own subjected to the ordeal of getting from lesson to lesson in such a book, if he were to be denied all access to the aid afforded by more philosophical primers. There are dozens of little "first steps" published in England and the United States, any one of which would convert the discouraging and almost impossible steep of the Readers into a gentle slope, and thus transform the intolerable toil of the learner into a healthful and delightful recreation. To say to the intelligent teacher that he may not put such help into the hands of his pupils, however willing the parents might be is, we repeat, a useless and meaningless tyranny. This is, of course, but a single illustration of what must occur at every stage of the Public School course. Could we suppose the officials of the Education Department to be interested in the sale of authorized books, as some of the newspapers maliciously insinuate, we should have a reason, though a most unworthy one, for the existence of such a regulation. Apart from this, it is hard to conceive of any.

It is singular that at a time when the tendency in free countries is in the direction of throwing more and more of the duties and responsibilities of self-government upon local institutions and corporations, the opposite policy of centralization should prevail to such an extent in our educational affairs. To take all freedom and responsibility in regard to books and methods off the shoulders of teachers is to deprive them of one of their best means of growth, as well as to put beyond their reach the highest rewards of success.

Surely the day is not distant when all this will be changed, and the Department of Education will content itself with prescribing subjects and courses of study, and leave the selection of books and modes of instruction to the discretion of teachers and the people. Freedom always brings more arduous duties and heavier responsibilities, but it also brings its own rewards, and becomes of itself one of the most potent of all educational forces. The same argument which deprives teachers of the right to choose their own implements and prescribe their own modes of working, lest they may make mistakes or abuse their privileges, would be equally valid for depriving the municipalities of their local self-government and the masses of their elective franchise. As the best way to fit a civilized people for liberty is to make them free, and the best way to learn to do is by doing, so the best way to teach teachers to use the best text-books and methods is to throw upon them the responsibility for such use by making their professional success dependent upon it.

"To tell the child when, and where, and why he is wrong is the indispensable function of the teacher." In this dictum of Bain's we would have the "why" doubly emphasized. We have known teachers who would content themselves with simply telling the child when he was wrong, without giving either the "where" or the "why." Others are particular in regard to both the "when" and the "where," but quite neglect the "why." So far as possible—and we believe that under a right system it is always possible—the child's reason should always be appealed to. He should not be asked to make a correction simply upon the authority of the master or the book. There is no education in that, and it is education, not information, which is wanted. A very suggestive story is told of a schoolboy who afterwards became a very distinguished man. Being asked one day, during a lesson in grammar, why a certain word was in a certain case, he persisted in saying that he did not know. "There," exclaimed the schoolmaster, repeating the rule of syntax, after, of course, having administered a flogging according to the pedagogical fashion of those days, "perhaps you will know the next time." "Why," replied the boy, "that is only the rule you have given. I knew that all the time, but you asked me for the reason, which I did not and do not now know."

An excellent rule for parents, teachers, and all who are in positions of authority is, never to give a command without being sure of ability and determination to see it obeyed. An observance of this rule would often save the teacher much trouble and chagrin. These often arise out of hasty and ill-considered orders and regulations. The teacher soon sees his mistake, but feels that he cannot unsay the command or withdraw the rule without loss of prestige. He has thus imposed upon himself the alternative of a public admission that he was hasty or unwise, or a tyrannical enforcing of an unnecessary, perhaps unjust, mandate. A little more calmness and deliberation would have saved him from this dilemma.

To the above should be added another self-imposed law of still greater importance. Never give a pupil the tremendous advantage of feeling that he is in the right and you in the wrong. The best auxiliary you can possibly have in school government is the child's conscience on your side. Conscience makes a coward even of a little child when it condemns him. On the other hand it often makes him a determined rebel, if it but sides with him in the dispute. The teacher who can succeed in making it manifest to every pupil that he is striving above everything to do right and to do good, will find himself reinforced at every turn not only by the best public opinion in the school—in itself a mighty influence—but by the monitor which dwells in the bosom of every child, and whose office it is to approve the right and to denounce the wrong. Great mistakes are made in consequence of underrating the power of a child's conscience.

While we are on the all-important subject of school government we should like to add one word more. We were going to finish the foregoing sentence with the words "about commands," but we hesitate to use that last term. We dislike