

rents to the proper care and training of children, never inculcating those habits of obedience which are among the first which every one should learn at the very earliest age. Honor thy father and thy mother, the first commandment with promise, seems unknown to, or entirely disregarded by large numbers of children, caused in great part by the entire neglect of careful, early and daily instillation of those habits of prompt and ready obedience, which lie at the foundation of all good government. Probably the parents have not that control of themselves which seems essential to all true government of others, and their efforts are only fitful and capricious, and not so much the result of calm judgment and reflection, as the irritation caused by some slight annoyance or act of disobedience, which is punished out of all due proportion to the offence.

No true government can be founded on, or maintained by fear, and a child must be made to feel, both by precept and example, that love is the guiding principle of all parental discipline, and be taught also that the true design of all correction is to train up a child in the way he should go, that when he is old he may not depart from it. No one can be a good citizen who lives in violation of the laws; and if children do not learn in early youth to obey their parents and those who have the care and management of them, very few will acquire the habit in after life, and they will very probably not be disposed to render that cheerful and hearty obedience to the laws of the land, which is the bounden duty of all loyal citizens.

Besides, a person who has not acquired the proper control of his temper and passions in youth, will be in great danger of some mental disturbance from the inability to look calmly and coolly at the different subjects, and exercise that proper balance of thought and that careful examination of reasons and facts which we call judgment. They will be most likely of that class which make up their minds from impulse or passion, and are constantly blundering from one thing to another, and scarcely able to come to a correct conclusion, without help from others; and when some unusual trouble comes, they have no sober judgment or controlling moral principle which will enable them to meet the shock, or guide them to the proper course to be pursued, and they very frequently pass into some severe form of mental disorder.

Parents are so apt to neglect the duty so incumbent on them of proper parental discipline, by trying to have that performed by teachers, forgetting that the proper time to instil and enforce habits of obedience is in the early formative period of life, before any other habits and practices can be acquired.

It is not the duty of the teacher to take the place of the parents, and make up their deficiencies, and it is unreasonable in parents to insist that the teacher shall perform the double task of instructing in the rudiments of education, and the more difficult labor of trying to impress on the minds of neglected children, that their first duty is obedience to their parents, and to all who are placed in authority over them. Every neglect of a parent in this respect is adding pain and trouble to themselves, and injuring the future prospects of the child by rendering him less able to bear the trials and temptations he may meet, and thus opening up the way more readily to an incursion of some mental disorder.

Although the law does not allow children to be sent to school before they are six years of age, there is a constant disposition to evade this provision, and obtain admission for a child at an earlier age, so that the parent may be relieved of looking after and enforcing obedience during those years.

School directors will readily testify that they have had applications for the admission of scholars who had not reached the required age, as an incident of recent occurrence will show. Two directors were applied to for admit the same child into the public school, and, on representations made, the certificate were given by each director, without the knowledge of the application to the other, and one of the certificates was used to secure admission for a child below the regular legal age. This, it will be said, may be corrected afterwards; but the fact is given as an illustration of the statement made, that the parents wish to be rid of the care of the children at the earliest possible period they can manage to place them under control of a teacher.

And when children are thus sent to school, do they there receive that careful attention and discipline which they should have? It is a well established fact, that in early childhood there is a restlessness and desire for movement, most natural to all healthy children, and when they are placed where this cannot be had, they will suffer in different way; but still in such a manner as seriously to interfere with the proper development of their powers of mind and body. To place children of tender years in a school, and require them to sit still for an hour and a half at a time, is expecting of them more than they are really able to perform, even if they have a lesson before them which they are expected to learn. To expect a child to keep its mind fixed on any one thing for any length of time, is to look for that which is not attainable, but can only be gained in growing years, and by careful training. The child can see nothing to interest it in the words on the printed page, and it needs something to arouse and attract its attention, and keep it directed for a short time in such a way that it will be able to obtain, through the senses of sight and hearing, an idea of what is intended to be taught. But the aroused attention can only be kept up for a short period, and the whole time should be divided between mental and bodily exercise, in such a way as to prevent undue exercise of the mind, and that restlessness and discomfort caused by being kept too long in one position; and the restlessness and feeling of discomfort is too often increased by the vitiated air of the room, caused by the want of proper ventilation which should carry off all that has a tendency to injure the purity of the air.

There are difficulties attending the proper direction and management of children in schools, but these difficulties would be greatly lessened if parents would consider their own responsibility for the careful management of the children at home, and more anxious to have them examples of correct behavior and prompt obedience, and less desirous of that relief which they may gain by placing the children in school, and insisting on their remaining there so many hours a day. The teacher cannot, and ought not to be expected to take the place of the parent, however excellent the discipline or however thorough the training he may give.

"I knew of several teachers, years ago, who felt very much the need of a change with regard to the number of studies pursued by their pupils, and better modes of exercise, and even went so far as to converse with some of the parents and school authorities with regard to the matter, when, to their utter astonishment, they were informed that they were treading on *holy ground*, which was not lawful for any one not having the proper authority, or number of children. Some of these officers could not themselves read understandingly, and went so far as to threaten to dismiss the teacher because she did not keep the smaller children in the full six hours, but either sent them home or out to play after they were through reciting." (Extract from a letter.)