

the school, he is not the kind of a teacher that we would hold up to admiration, and whose views on this subject we would take up and follow. But the majority of teachers are persons who love the business of educating; who take a kindly interest in the scholars, and who would gladly be spared the trouble and pain of chastising them, if it were possible to conduct the school on the pacific, non-restraint system. This is simply impossible; so say twelve hundred teachers, male and female, in the city of New York; and we are bound to give them a fair hearing when they petition for the restoration of the rod. These teachers have had three years' experience of the "love" plan of governing bad boys, and they unanimously declare it a failure, not simply as to the refractory youngsters themselves, but worse still, the more docile and amiable class, who are made insubordinate, and idle and vicious by the unrestrained example of the little miscreants. In many cases the only remedy has been to expel the troublesome boys from the school, turning them forth to grow into boorish and dangerous men. Among the 1,200 teachers who request that corporal punishment be revived in the schools, are some who voluntarily abandoned it, before the board of education adopted the by-law of 1870. These teachers were misled by book theories, and had really persuaded themselves that by the exercise of judgment, firmness, and patience, they could reduce the most rebellious boys to love and obedience. They have given the new-fangled plan a faithful trial, and they are among the first to solicit permission to take the back track. We have been so much impressed by reading the petition of the teachers, that we regard the re-introduction of corporal punishment as the one thing now vitally needful to keep the male schools from ruin. Our common school system is open to many serious objections; if to these is now to be added the fact that the schools are only noisy playgrounds, and that the pupils are indulged in idleness, impudence and viciousness, unchecked by wholesome correction, then we shall be brought again to consider the question whether the common schools themselves should not follow the fate of the old-time rod and be abolished.

We append as matter of interest, in connection with the discussion, some extracts from the report of the committee of the board intrusted with the examinations of the subject:

Twenty-five of the principals of our Male Grammar Schools, Primary Departments and Primary Schools, have been examined, at considerable length, to ascertain their views as to the success of the experiment of the present system of exclusive moral suasion upon the discipline and scholarships of our schools. These principals were selected in part by lot, and in part by the older and more experienced of our teachers, some of whom were known to have dispensed with the use of corporal punishment in the management of their school before its abolition by the board; but the result of the inquiry has shown that the unanimous sentiment of these teachers, is in favour of the restoration to principals of male grammar and primary departments, of the right to inflict corporal punishment, under proper restrictions, upon wilfully disobedient and incorrigible boys, and that such a change would be not only highly beneficial, but is indispensable to the proper discipline and general progress of the schools.

The main points brought out by our investigations are as follows:

First. Obedience to ordinary commands, relating to the customary exercises of the classes, is no longer prompt and exact.

Second. Obedience in matters calling for self-denial or submission of the pupil's will to that of the teacher is seldom promptly secured.

Third. Wilful and defiant disobedience is much more common than heretofore, and manifestations of ill-temper and ill-manners much more frequent.

Fourth. Insolent behaviour and indifference, and disrespect to all school authority have greatly increased.

Fifth. Truancy is more frequent.

Sixth. Personal cleanliness, also the proper care of books, slates and other school property, are not as easily secured as formerly.

Seventh. Gross disobedience in all sorts of matters, such as to require interference of some authority external to the teacher, has greatly increased.

Eighth. The defiance of parental authority, especially in cases of children with widowed mothers, has more than doubled; many such boys, proving entirely beyond control, have drifted out of the schools into the street, or workshops, or private schools.

Ninth. Pupils in the higher classes are less docile than formerly, thus showing that previous school training has not tended to form habits of obedience and submission.

Tenth. Teachers have, to some extent, fallen into the habit of overlooking offences committed by boys known to be beyond parental control, and have thus lowered their standards of discipline, to the injury of their pupils.

Eleventh. Children are ruder, both in and out of school, and less self-respectful, than under the old system.

Twelfth. Instances of gross and continued neglect of studies are more frequent. This has nearly doubled the labour of the class teachers, while the advancement of the children in a given time has been much less.

Thirteenth. Poor men are often compelled to visit the schools to assist in governing their children, often at great inconvenience and loss of part of a day's work, and make it the cause of complaint against the public schools. Moreover, parental settlement of school difficulties, and punishment for school offences, have no restraining influence upon other scholars.

Fourteenth. Teachers resort to questionable expedients to secure that obedience and attention, without which their classes cannot be brought up to grade.

Fifteenth. Juvenile lawlessness, rudeness, profanity and crime, have manifestly increased since the abolition of corporal punishment, thus proving a directly evil influence upon society in general.

Sixteenth. A large number of bad children, who might have been reformed under the old system, have been "worked out" of the schools, or taken out, and "put where they could be made to mind."

While, therefore, in the opinion of your committee, this question is one of very serious import, and we have no reason to doubt that the tendency elsewhere is to imitate the practice which has been lately adopted in our schools, dispensing with the use of the rod altogether, we feel compelled to say, that the experience of our ablest and most successful teachers, in and out of our public schools, leads us to the opinion that no real practical good has resulted from the change, but that, on the contrary, much evil has been occasioned by it. The effect of unrestrained disorderly conduct, on the part of one pupil in a class, is, of itself, sufficient to demoralize the whole class. There is at present but one remedy, under our rules, for such cases, and that is to remove the bad influence and example by expulsion, which results in turning a bad boy into the streets. This not only does not work a salutary change in the pupil, but removes all chances of his permanent reformation: and in this connection we cannot refrain from calling the attention of the board to the fact, that in most of the reformatory institutions in this city, we find quite a number of bright boys who have actually been placed there, simply because their parents, by their own confession, could not control them at home, and could not have them governed in our schools, where they ought now to be.—*Pennsylvania School Journal*.

3. SUSPENDING A BAD BOY.

To the Editor of the Journal of Education.

SIR,—Suspension seldom or never creates remorse for its cause. Remorse is a rare emotion, not only among boys, but among men. When we can get it the victory is won; the boy manages himself afterwards. We must not confound spite, independence or even vexation with remorse. Remorse is self-condemnation—a moral condition far too refined to be expected from boys needing suspension. Two things will produce remorse—reflection and moral suasion; but a reflecting boy seldom needs suspension, and if moral suasion is the remedy, then it is the teacher's fault for withholding it. Even if suspension should create regret for the loss of education, which, however, with this class of boys it never does, still regret is not remorse. But it may be argued that, if by any means other than beating, we can make a bad boy behave, no matter about remorse; well, I concede this, with a slight reservation, for behaviour is a thing we want. The two remaining means are bribe and love. Now we know that with men the power of a bribe depends on its quantity and on the strength of principle opposed to it. The price of behaviour of a poor bad boy would be disregarded by a rich man's son, thus, waiving the moral of the bribe, we should have to give unequal quantities for the same commodity. The other means is love. Now of all means of order love is the best; but, like faith, it must have a cause; and of all causes capable of inspiring love, a bad boy is the most unlikely. There is another property of suspension that appears to be overlooked—the more it is used the less is its effect; suspend one spirited bad boy the effect may be vexation; suspend two you reduce the vexation; suspend half-a-dozen and the first boy will be greatly relieved both of vexation and disgrace. The rule holds good among men; a minister can with duty and impunity descend publicly on the depravity of his congregation, but let him single out one. * * * But we "must not use any means that will irritate or annoy the children in school," says the Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, to 600 teachers in convention. Instead of building a Reformatory for the 600 bad ones suspended, would not the breaking of the boys have been more cheaply and more quickly done, if the 600 teachers had been let at once at the 30,000 scholars with 600 rawhides?

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