

## IS PARENTAL AUTHORITY WANEING.

(People's Journal.)

Under the autocratic rule of our grandfathers and grandmothers children were hardly allowed to speak; were often punished severely for trifling offences, and were generally kept in the background as much as possible. However, in these days, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. From being ruled, children are now the rulers, and "spare the rod and spoil the child" is a maxim literally practised in the majority of households to-day. Whether you take country children or town children, the same lack of home-training meets you at every turn. Indeed, to such a pitch have things come, that a well-behaved, well-trained child is regarded as something of a curio, and treated accordingly.

Take a few cases in point. One day I was passing through the streets of a large industrial town and noticed a crowd gathered around an object lying on the ground in front of a shop window. The object turned out to be a small boy who had flung himself on the ground in a fit of temper because his mother would not buy him something he wanted out of the shop. The mother, who was carrying a baby in her arms, begged and entreated the boy to get up, adding as an inducement, that he should have something nice when he got home, but the youngster would not budge one inch. At last a woman in the crowd stepped forward and lifted the boy bodily from the ground, set him on his feet, administering a good shake as she did so, and informing him that she would fetch a policeman if he did not go with his mother. This threat had the desired effect. The boy ceased howling and went off, holding on to his mother's skirts. "There goes a fine specimen of the rising generation," said a cynical onlooker, and the rest nodded and laughed.

## Pampered Pets.

Take the meals of the average ordinary household, and what do you find? Why, unlimited indulgence. Once upon a time children were expected to eat what was set before them or go without, but not so nowadays. To-day children's appetites are pampered in every conceivable form, and it is not what will do them most good, but what they must like, that children eat in these progressive days. Said an old woman of eighty to the writer: "I brought up a family of twelve boys and girls and I never asked one of them what they would have to eat. Just put it before them, and if they did not like it, why they left it." Not many mothers of families can say that to-day.

In how many homes, I wonder, do conversations like the following take place at the breakfast table?

"What would you like for dinner, Dick?" Dick, who is perhaps a boy of sixteen or so, "What have you got?" "Nothing but a bit of mutton." "Well, you know I can't stand mutton at any price. I'll have some beefsteak." "All right, Annie, what will you have?" Annie considers for a few seconds, and then decides that she will have two boiled eggs, with bread and butter. Amy gives her verdict in favor of boiled fish and potatoes, while Willie must have an apple dumpling. In cases of this kind it must be plain that mothers make a lot more work for themselves than there is the slightest need for—work, too, which they bring on themselves by pampering the children's appetites to such an extent.

Some time ago an anecdote was told me of a wise mother who cured her children of this trying habit in the following amusing manner:—She had put up with the inconvenience and personal discomfort of preparing half a dozen different dishes for half a dozen people every day until she could stand it no longer, and determined to stop it. One day the family were surprised to see a large bowl on the dinner table in place of the usual small dishes. Said one of the boys—"Whatever have you got in that bowl, mother?" It looks big enough to hold all our dinners."

"That is just what it has done, my boy," was the answer; "there's Harry's mutton and onion sauce, Sam's beef and potatoes, Bill's pork and cabbage, Mary's eggs and toast, Jim's fish and Ada's beans. I found it would be much less trouble than if I cooked them all separate, so you must each sort out your own." Needless to say, from that day the children were content to eat what their mother provided.

## Parent Will Weak.

Whether you look around among your acquaintances in large towns or in country villages the result is the same, no sign of any home-training. One day I was visiting at a thatched old-world cottage in a rural village, and the children came trooping in from afternoon school. "I want some bread and jam, mother," shouted one, and "I want some bread and treacle," shouted another. When the mother could make herself heard she said, "Tea will be ready in half an hour. All of you go into the garden and play until I call." Immediately there arose a chorus of dissent, in the midst of which the biggest boy calmly walked to the cupboard where the eatables were kept, and cutting a large slice of bread, covered it thickly with jam. To prevent the others following his example, the mother, perforce, was obliged to cut bread and butter for all the rest, and when the unruly tribe had gone into the garden she turned to me and said helplessly—"I can't think what children are coming to nowadays. They never used to be so when I was a girl."

The half-hour elapsed, and we were just sitting down to tea, when I suggested that the children had better be called. "Oh, they'll be off somewhere long ago." "But you told them to stay and play in the garden, didn't you?" "So I did; but, bless you, they never take one bit of notice of me. I may as well save my breath." However, just to satisfy my curiosity on the point, the good woman went in to the garden, calling loudly for the children, but there was no answer. Sure enough, the birds had flown. A neighbour, whose olive branches were in the same boat, volunteered the information that the children had all gone birds'-nesting in the wood, and neither of the mothers knew what time they would return.

On another occasion I was invited out to tea where there was a family of four boys. Tea that evening was a veritable pandemonium. One could scarcely hear oneself speak, and the mother seemed powerless to stop the racket. The boys squabbled and fought among themselves, upset the tea, and threw bread at each other, and it was only when the father came in and fell to cuffing them soundly all round that even a degree of quietness was obtained. Then the mother looked at the father, and wondered aloud whether any other woman could be blessed with such unruly children as hers.

## A Degenerate Generation.

The cases already mentioned are by no means isolated instances of badly trained children; no, they are simply picked at random from the households of friends and acquaintances. There seems to be no restraint, no discipline no training of children today. They are left to "gain their ain gait" with a vengeance, and whether they turn out well, or whether they turn out ill, at any rate the home training has very little to do with it.

What will be the ultimate effect of this weak system of indulgence? Ah, who can say? Already children show no respect for parents—indeed, they cannot under the circumstances—because from their earliest years boys and girls are allowed full liberty of speech and action, and are only reproved on very rare occasions. Shall we ever be able to hit the "happy medium" in the management of children not to be unduly severe on the one hand, or weakly indulgent on the other? If it be true that "manners make the man," then it is greatly to be feared that the present generation of children will not make men and women of whom any country may be proud, because, as Wordsworth points out—

"The child is father of the man."

## THE CASE OF REV. F. H. HARPER.

A special meeting of the Hamilton Presbytery was held the afternoon of the 3rd inst., to consider the report of the committee appointed to investigate complaints regarding the conduct of Rev. F. H. Harper, the pastor of the Drummond Hill congregation. Gossip had for some time connected the name of Rev. Mr. Harper with that of a married woman of the congregation, who has a grown-up family, and whose home he visited more frequently than those of other members of the congregation. For some time Rev. Mr. Harper refused to pay any attention to the stories that were afloat, or to discontinue the visits which were causing all the talk. It was intimated to him that his resignation would be in order, but he refused to hand it in until such time as his character had been cleared. The result was that the presbytery, at its last meeting, appointed a committee, with Sir Thomas Taylor as its chairman, to investigate the stories and report back. The committee discovered that Rev. Mr. Harper had been on the most friendly terms with the members of the family whose name was being connected with his, and that he had been away on fishing and wheeling trips with a son of the woman's who is about 20 years of age. Last Winter he was taken so seriously ill that his life was despaired of, and as he was alone at Drummond Hill, the woman in the case insisted that he be removed to her home, and she nursed him back to good health. For a month it was a question whether or not the reverend gentleman was going to get better, and naturally, when he was restored to health, he was very grateful to the woman who had nursed him through his illness. But despite the thorough manner in which the committee probed the case, it failed to find that Rev. Mr. Harper had been guilty of any wrong doing, further than that he was indiscreet in not discontinuing his visits to the house when gossip began to get busy. This afternoon's meeting of the presbytery was held behind closed doors. Rev. Mr. Harper was there, and the congregation was represented by a committee. The contents of the committee's report was not made public, nor would any of those who were present give out a statement of what took place. The discussion on the report lasted for nearly two hours, and it is reported that at times it waxed warm. The husband of the woman in the case was present, and he was indignant that his wife's name should have been connected with that of the minister. He was satisfied that there was nothing in the stories. Rev. Mr. Harper also made a statement, in which he practically admitted that he saw that he had been indiscreet, but denied that he had been guilty of any wrongdoing. He insisted that his resignation, which he tendered a couple of weeks ago, after the committee had started its investigation, should be accepted. The only statement of the case which was given out was moved by Rev. D. R. Drummond, and seconded by Sir Thos. Taylor, and carried: "That the report of the committee be adopted," and that while the presbytery regrets the indiscretion on the part of Rev. Mr. Harper, it rejoices that nothing was adduced which reflects in any way on his character."

Rev. Mr. Harper's resignation was accepted, and the Drummond Hill congregation will now have to secure another pastor. Rev. D. M. Buchanan, of Jarvis, reported that he had moderated in a call from the congregation of Lyndoch and Mount Hope to Rev. J. Johnston, formerly of Paisley. The call was sustained and provisional arrangements were made for the induction in event of Rev. Mr. Johnston accepting.

All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass—Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.—Archibald Alexander.