

made by his teacher, for some fault, "the laughing-stock of the school." *Expulsion from school* is often suggested as solving the difficulty. But they who rely upon this, as it seems to us, can hardly have considered the very weighty objections that lie against it. The education of youth is not a voluntary matter in Massachusetts. Our statute law compels "Every person having under his control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen years," to cause such child to attend school during a certain portion of each year.—*Gen. Stats.*, ch. 41, sec. 1. Our public policy does not permit the idle or vicious child to grow up without the elevating influences of education; and yet the easy remedy of expulsion would cast upon our community this very class, and take from them the only reclaiming influence of their lives. It is to be feared that such would seek dismissal from school rather than shun it. The community at large have a stake in this matter. Are life and property too secure now? Do the haunts of ignorance and crime need further recruitment? Are our houses of correction in want of tenants? Shall we decimate our public schools to fill our reform schools? Viewed only in the selfish light of protection to society, we cannot afford to adopt the measure of expulsion. And shall we give no thought to the higher interests of humanity, with which this fatal policy is linked?"

A memorial having been made to the committee to modify their rule, the following report was made by the sub-committee:—

"The Sub-Committee on Rules and Regulations, to whom was referred an amendment to Article 9, chapter 2 of the Regulations of the Public Schools in the following words: 'In the third line, after the words, 'as far as practicable,' shall be inserted this sentence: '*Corporal punishment* shall not be inflicted on a female pupil.' And in the fifth line, after the words '*corporal punishment*' shall be inserted the words: '*on a male pupil*,'—beg leave respectfully to report:—That after giving the subject mature consideration, they are unanimously of opinion that however desirable the entire abolition of corporal punishment in our public schools may appear, or with whatever certainty its gradual disuse may be looked forward to in the future, as the result of the general improvement of our school system, the retention of the power to inflict it by the teachers is absolutely necessary to the success and good order of the schools, as at present organized. In large schools filled with pupils from all classes of society, many of them the children of rude and illiterate parents, there must of necessity sometimes be a resort to a short, sharp and summary method of punishment. The public schools contain a large class of children with whom the first step in improvement must be made through a learning to pay implicit obedience to an authority which they must feel it is in vain for them to resist.

"This authority once established, it is easy to employ higher motives, but until they are made to feel that there is a power over them capable of controlling them, a very large class cannot be made to feel the influence of such motives. The movements of a public school containing several hundred children must be made with almost military precision, or its operations are seriously embarrassed. A single unruly child has it in his power, if able successfully to resist the authority of the teacher, to throw a whole school into confusion. A partial defiance of authority on the part of a few unruly members lowers the discipline of the whole.

"Your Committee are of opinion that to expect from public school teachers the successful conduct of the schools, as at present organized, after the power to inflict corporal punishment had been taken away, would be in the highest degree unreasonable. They are confirmed in this view by the fact, as they believe it to be, that this is the almost unanimous opinion of the best teachers in other places, of teachers who are wise, humane, and kindly, and of some whose schools are of such a character that they seldom or never have to resort to such punishment. Any regulation respecting the practice must be of uniform application, and though in many schools such punishment may be never needed and never even heard of, yet in others it may be of the very highest necessity.

"Your Committee are aware that the example of large schools may be cited which are conducted without resort to corporal punishment. They believe, however, that when these cases are examined, it will either be found that free use is made of the power of expulsion of unruly pupils, thus depriving of the benefits of schooling, the very class of children that need it most; or else, there is great liberty of choice in the selection of pupils for admission, none being received who are likely to require a severe discipline; or that in other cases it will be found that there is a lower standard of discipline and attainment in such schools; or else resort is had to punishments much more objectionable in their character than corporal punishment properly administered. Whether in any part of the country, schools exist where such progress has been made in the art of instruction, and in the abandonment of the absurdities which still belong to our methods of teaching, and our selection of studies as to make school a place of pleasant resort, where none but the

mildest discipline is needed, even for the rudest and most ignorant children, your Committee are not advised; but without expressing any doubt as to the possibility of an approach to such a condition of things in the future, they would state their belief that in our own schools, very great changes of organization and methods must take place before that condition is reached, and that the approach to it is likely to be very gradual.

"Your Committee have thought it advisable to make these remarks on the general subject, as in some degree explanatory of their conclusion in regard to the immediate question referred to them, of the propriety of making a distinction in the discipline of the two sexes. Holding the above stated view in regard to corporal punishment in general, they must express the opinion that to make such discrimination in the Primary Schools, and in the lower classes of the Grammar Schools, would be in the highest degree inexpedient. The little girls in these schools are quite as likely to be naughty as the little boys, and are quite as able to bear the proper infliction of punishment. Corporal punishment, as administered in these schools, is nothing very frightful, although, in the minds of some good people, it seems to stand as only something a little less severe than capital punishment itself. Wherever it is administered cruelly or severely, it is an evidence that the teacher is an unsuitable person, who should at once be dismissed from office. But even if it were abolished, a harsh teacher has other methods of indulging in severity, many of them far more objectionable than the very mild form of corporal infliction practised in our schools. There is no remedy for this danger but the vigilance of Committees and Superintendents; but your Committee are happy in being able to state their belief that the citizens of Cambridge may feel great confidence in the present teachers of their well-ordered schools. Punishment at their hands is mercy itself compared with that which many children would receive from brutal or drunken parents if sent from school in disgrace.

"In the case of the pupils of schools and classes of a higher grade than the Primary and lower classes of the Grammar Schools, your Committee are of opinion that there is just and reasonable ground for a discrimination, based on the physiological considerations recently so ably put forward by an eminent physician of our own city. Your Committee would not assert that girls of the age in question are not sometimes quite as deserving of punishment as boys, for they believe that they are; but on the grounds referred to, they believe that, as a rule, a punishment which would be suitable to boys, would often not be judicious or safe in the case of girls. Neither would they be understood as implying that in the only mode in which it is ever administered in our public schools, it is wholly unsuitable and unbecoming as a punishment for refractory girls in the higher classes; but only that, on the grounds above referred to, its administration would be accompanied with dangers which do not belong to it when inflicted at an earlier age. Hoping, therefore, that the time will soon come when, through the improvements that are so rapidly introducing themselves into the public school teaching, and especially through the introduction of a better system of organization and a better method of supervision, the whole subject will become one of curiosity rather than of practical importance, and believing, moreover, that the power thus left in the hands of your present faithful teachers, will neither be abused nor injudiciously exercised, your Committee would submit as a substitute for the proposed amendment, the following addition to Article 9, chapter 2, of the School Regulations:

"The corporal punishment of girls above the age of twelve years is forbidden; and any girl above such age who shall be guilty of such conduct as, in the judgment of the principal, renders her an unsuitable member of the school, shall be suspended from attendance, and her case shall be immediately reported to the School Committee."

At a meeting of the Committee, held April 5th, the report was taken from the table, and a question having arisen as to the power of the Committee to report a substitute to the amendment offered for their consideration, Prof. Atkinson said:—"He did not believe in the punishing of large girls, but even this he was quite prepared to leave to the discretion of teachers. The girl of foreign parentage who was dismissed from school for misconduct, was often sent home to meet a worse punishment at the hands of a brutal parent, or was turned into the street to become a vagabond. He believed in trusting to the discretion of teachers, in helping them by vigilant supervision, and employing only such as could be trusted.

"But though disliking corporal punishment, and believing in its final abolition, he did not believe the time had come when its entire abolition was possible, and he was opposed to taking the power out of the teacher's hands. Let the organization of the schools be so improved, that it will die a natural death. Discrimination by legislation would only create new difficulties, and sudden abolition would only destroy all discipline. He thought the time would come