

A CALIFORNIA CRITICISM ON THE CANADIAN TEACHER'S DISCIPLINARY GYMNASTICS.

When the deluded trio Phil and Georgey and Charlie left their puzzled and puzzling teacher that hot evening, they had already forgotten what they had been called back for, and were talking right merrily over the dainty punishment so ingeniously planned and dramatically executed. They had learned no lesson of gentleness, nor had they caught a glimpse of that avenging Nemesis, "which never yet of human wrong left the unbalanced scale."

The whole affair seemed a mere joke, and they were fully agreed that for ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain that teacher of ours is peculiar. Up to this fateful afternoon, we are told that the offenders had been "so good," or one might imagine Charlie, aged ten, ingenious and hardened enough to invent occasion for another interview just to see what the teacher would do next.

Either an offence does, or does not deserve punishment. If it does, and the teacher thinks the sin demands even corporal punishment, let him deal it out with little moralizing and no apology. When we violate a Nature's law, and nature at once retaliates with a good hearty ache, the lesson is unmistakable. We do not soon forget, and have a certain respect for the irate Dame. So often, it must be a whipping, prompt and courageous. If, "once in a way there come a day, when the colt must be taught to feel, the lash that falls, and the curb that galls," let it hurt. Anyone who understands a boy knows how little respect he has for a whipping which doesn't hurt. It's a sham, and he despises it.

But did the offense in question demand corporal punishment? No, it was not a great one, it was committed by children almost too good to be real,—for all the spring had passed and they needed no punishment. It called back, it would be enough to say with a meaning emphasis, "Go back, now, and like sensible citizens meddle not with your neighbors." Or possibly, "Sit here until you are ready to walk home without quarrelling."

Possibly to have let the affair pass unnoticed would have been better. Someone has said that a boy is like a galvanic battery that is not in connection with anything. He generates electricity and plays it off into the air with the most reckless prodigality. It is as much a boy's business to play off his energies into space as it is for a flower to blow, or a catbird to sing snatches of the tunes of all of the birds.

Doubtless Phil had already turned countless hand springs, slung a stone at the saucy meadow lark, "hollered," and tagged every youngster he'd passed, and still there was lots of pent up energy, a "spring stir" in his legs and arms which had to have some expression. Hence its "cuffing and slapping."

Perhaps Phil and Georgey were settling by force of arms which should have the precedence, for know you not that there is a street etiquette in the "Court of Boyville?" No royal court has the rank more exactly settled, and happy is the lad who by natural dignity or bravery has been saved the ordeal of fighting his way to "read his title clear."

Yes, I know we feel that, "it is mean to send a boy for a stick to whip himself." Ghastly business! Something akin to inviting a martyr to light the fagots which are to consume him. It is ludicrous, but why not eminently