

means of escape was by swimming a black Stygian looking stream, which I crossed—though not without being alarmed on the other side by the keeper threatening to put an ounce of lead into me.

We certainly were not religious at Fenton; but the modern notions of making boys religious did not exist then to such an extent as they do now. I have known some Church-schools fail miserably, and many almost break down. These facts convince me that a boy is not naturally a religious animal. I confess that boys are, as a rule, much better behaved and more civilized, but certainly not more moral, than they were. What is suppressed in one direction bursts out in another. The Fenton boys were palpable, obvious blackguards. The tendency of the modern boy often is to be a blackguard in disguise. Does not this statement represent the true fact of the change in modern society generally?

Men are learning how morality affects their pockets and their health, and are becoming better "calculating machines" and better "patent digesters;" but are they becoming more virtuous—if we take disinterestedness as the test of a really virtuous act? Family and national ties are surely more lax than formerly, and the dictum of political philosophy, that "the individual—not the family or the tribe—is the unit of society," is true in many senses; though some may say the virtue of cosmopolitanism—a virtue easy to assume but hard to externalise—will compensate for the loss of all other virtues. The line of Terence,

"Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto,"

sounds well, and this circumstance may have some value.

Without going into details, I think any one will form a general idea of the extent to which bullying was practised at Fenton. I had established my reputation as a clever fag, who would undertake perilous enterprises, and escaped some refined tortures to which I might otherwise have been subjected. Besides, I could bear bruises well, as the bullies discovered after applying a crucial test.

"Ajax," they said, "you seem a soft-hearted fellow, for you always cry when you receive a letter from home, and even when you write home."

This was true; for the sights of home how-

ever strict and secluded—when contrasted with those of schools, were calculated to stir up one's deepest and quickest emotions.

"But," they continued, "you never cry for our likings. Now, Ajax, we are going to test you."

Then they let fly into me with sticks and ropes, but had to leave off defeated.

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds

With coldness still returning;

Alas, the gratitude of men

Hath often left me mourning."

I was roughly used at Fenton. The atmosphere was full of unkindness; but for that very reason eminently calculated to bring out individual cases of kindness and warm-heartedness. Friendships were closer than they would be if oppression were rendered impossible. People forget that their pet schemes for destroying vices destroy virtues also. Communism of property, for instance, if it do away with theft and covetousness, would do away with individual energy and generosity; but in the early Church it even led to theft and lying.

As I said before, the tendency of modern legislation is to banish vice from the open day, and to make it multiply or transform itself in secret.

Some one will say: "Why did you never complain?" Because my father always said that interference between a boy—except to remove him—and his master or schoolfellows, was rarely justifiable or expedient, and therefore ought not, as a rule, to be resorted to.

With reference to the interference of trustees with masters, I think Dr. Arnold observes in one of his letters, written after or just before his appointment to Rugby, that he owed it to the master of the smallest grammar-school in England to resist all interference, except dismissal, at the hands of the trustees.

In my days parents and trustees exercised their power perhaps too little; now they certainly use it too much; and therefore home and school discipline are fast dying out, for the boys are the greatest school legislators.

If the head-master of Eton wishes to readjust the holidays, he sends a letter to each parent, and asks for his opinion of the proposed change.

The position of a schoolmaster ought to be analogous to that of a doctor. Persons have a right to select their doctor, and then withdraw