

Before I leave this part of my subject it will be well to say a few words on a very important point in school discipline—punctuality. It is very necessary that we masters should set a good example in this particular. An unpunctual master makes unpunctual boys; and the worst of it is, that it is not he who really has to suffer for his fault, it is his colleagues who *are* punctual who suffer; for the boys become demoralized, and get into a habit of being just behind time, and the master who is always on the spot for his Form or Roll-call feels naturally irritated thereat, whereas in all probability the man who is really at fault does not from his nature receive any irritation. A habit of unpunctuality in boys should, I am inclined to think, be nipped at once by very strong measures. No one can possibly foresee the damage it may cause in after-life. Let a high standard of punctuality, then, be an important item in school discipline. In looking through the prospectus of one of the upper middle-class schools of late foundation, I find this paragraph, "A whole holiday is also given once a month to those boys who have passed a satisfactory examination at the Warden's review, and who have not missed roll-call more than six times during the month." Now this I call a very low standard. In my opinion, a boy to be so rewarded ought not to have missed a single Roll-call during the month, or, perhaps, allowing for accidents, but one. In connection with this subject of punctuality, another difficult question occurs to me. How about taking boys' excuses? I have heard men say, "Oh, I never take any notice of excuses." I really think it would not be a bad plan never to receive them—it would save a great deal of trouble, and, perhaps, much lying; but was anyone ever able to carry out the plan? I have made a determination more than once to try it, but have had to give in, because fear of doing an injustice has been too strong for my resolution. "Weak man," whispers some one, "Nature listens to no excuses." True; but, did I always follow Nature, I should be unnatural.

And now I must pass on to another part of my subject, and inquire by what means this school order can be best produced and maintained. It is, indeed, a very difficult question, and I approach it with considerable diffidence; indeed the whole question of discipline is an unpleasant one for a practical school-master to treat of in public, since most of us are standing examples of failure of plans. Moreover, the writing thus in the middle of a busy school Term, seems to me like an attempt to write a description of a battle on the field, while the fight is going on around. One's ideas and feelings are dragged first to one side and then to another, and one feels inclined to crowd the page with details and incidents which, however instructive and interesting—for nothing interests like personal anecdote—might here be in as questionable taste as the recent publication of the Greville Journals. I well remember how on a similar occasion, some time since, I introduced an anecdote to illustrate some remark I had made in which a proper name should have appeared. I ran over the whole alphabet in my mind, and at last fixed on a letter for an initial which I thought was safe from misconstruction. What was my horror on being reminded, after I had read the paper, that the name of a friend, whom I had not in my mind at the time, but to whom my anecdote might have applied, began with the unfortunate initial I had chosen. Luckily the paper did not fall within his reach, or, doubtless, he would have fitted the ready-made cap.

I have said that the training of the individual will regulate the means by which the discipline is enforced.

And here let me pay a passing tribute to Mr. Herbert Spencer. His chapter on Moral Education I consider to be most valuable,—not perhaps because it contains anything new, but because it lays down clearly the principles on which we ought to act, if we wish to produce self-governing beings. "To educate rightly is," he says, "a complex and very difficult thing." Well, if it is so with the individual, how much more with a large body. We must take into consideration, too, the fact that the majority of children who come to school have not been educated by parents who have studied and striven to copy Nature's method. It is my opinion that parents, generally speaking—and I by no means exclude schoolmasters themselves—are bad educators of their own children. Their affection warps their verity. Weak love impels to the former; love, mingled with disappointment at unrealized hopes which ought never to have been indulged in, produces the latter.

Those who have read Mr. Spencer's Essay will remember that all his examples are drawn from home life. Had they been taken from school life, I think we should have seen the impossibility of carrying out to the letter his dictum, that the natural reactions, the true consequences of children's conduct, must be neither warded off, intensified, or have artificial consequences put in place of them. Now, that this dictum is pleasant, is admirable, is theoretically correct, few may perhaps deny; but will any master in a large school tell me that it can be worked? Of course it is not very probable (to use Mr. Spencer's examples) that a mania would seize a hundred boys to lay hold of fire-bars, thrust their hands into candles, or spill boiling water over themselves; but one can imagine a rage for gunpowder, tobacco, or even gin and water. Nature says, "Let them be burned, let them be sick, let them have headaches and other pains." By all means, I say. Nay, let Ossa be piled upon Pelion; let them have all these consequences at once; and yet we must still further intensify the consequences, because not only have the individuals themselves to suffer for their sins, but it is necessary that the safety of the community be consulted; it is necessary, moreover, that an example be set to deter others from following in the steps of the offenders. We know how hard a thing it is to learn from the experience others, and we recognise how much we lose by our inability so to learn. I think boys may be assisted by putting an example before them of intensified consequences, though the natural consequences should not only be disguised, but should be carefully pointed out.

I have at times looked into a journal, boasting the largest circulation in the world, which deals in the romantic, the sensational, I might even add the fictitious—a journal which delights in the wonderful, whether at the distant Khiva, or on our own shores; and there I have learnt that there exist schools in which punishments are unheard of. Besides feeling rather doubtful as to the fact, I do not think such schools are to be commended. I am certain that large boarding schools cannot be carried on without punishments; nor do I think it advisable that one of the most valuable means of education should be ignored. Of course, I admit that the better the school, or the master, the less the punishment; but, before punishment should disappear, both should be perfection.

Among some of my early notions on discipline was one that it is much better to prevent a boy breaking a law, than to punish him for breaking it. In most cases I hold the reverse now. Moreover, I used to think that it was quite sufficient to tell a boy not to do a thing again, and quite unnecessary to punish him for