

Miscellaneous.

THE MANAGEMENT OF BOYS BY MOTHERS.

BY THE REV. JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

A clergyman of much observation recently remarked, that the experience of sixty years had taught him, that if boys had a faithful and judicious mother, they were pretty sure to turn out well, whatever might be the character of the father. There are mothers who, from various causes, in rearing their sons, are deprived of the co-operation of the father. The following hints are intended for the assistance of such mothers.

1. *Keep your boys by all means out of the streets.*—At the proper times for play, allow them to invite some of their neighbors' children into your yard, or permit them to visit those children of your friends with whom you are willing they should associate. But let it be an immutable law, that they are not to rove the streets in freedom, to play with whatever companions chance may throw in their way. By commencing early and firmly with this principle, you will have no difficulty in enforcing it. Turn a boy loose into the streets, to associate with the vicious and the profane, to lounge at the corners of stores and stables, and he will almost certainly be ruined. Therefore, at all hazards, keep them out of the streets.

2. *Do not allow your boys to play out of doors in the evening.*—There is something in the practice of night exposure and night plays which seem to harden the heart. You never see such a boy possessed of a gentle and modest deportment. He is always forward, self-willed, unmanageable. There is always temptation in the darkness of the evening, to say and to do things which he would not be willing to do in the open blaze of day. The most judicious parents will never allow their children to be out at such hours; consequently, the only companions he can be with are the unmanaged and unmanageable. There is something almost fiendlike in the shouts which are occasionally heard from such troops of boys congregated at the corners of the streets. If you would save your son from certain ruin, let him not be with them. Keep him at home in the evening, unless, by special permission, he is at the house of some judicious friend, where you know he will engage only in fireside sports.

3. *Do what you can to keep your sons employed.*—Let play be but their occasional privilege, and they will enjoy it far more highly. Employ them in the garden, if you have one, at work, not at play. It will do them no harm to perform humble services. It will help you, and help them still more, to have them bring in the wood or the coal, to scour the knives, to make their own beds, and to keep them in order. You may thus render them highly useful, and greatly contribute to their future welfare. If you are sick, it is still more important you should train up your sons in these habits of industry, for they stand peculiarly in need of this moral and physical discipline. Louis Philippe, the late king of the French, though the son of the proudest and the richest noble of France, was in childhood and early youth required to wait upon himself in the performance of the humblest offices. It was through this culture that he was trained up to be one of the most remarkable men of the present age.

4. *Take an interest in your children's enjoyment.*—A pleasant word, an encouraging smile, from a sympathizing mother, rewards an affectionate boy for many an hour of weary work; and the word and the smile reach the heart and make a more pliable, gentle, mother-loving boy. How often will a boy, with such a mother, work all the afternoon to build a play-house, or a dove cote, cheered with the anticipated joy of showing it to his mother when it is done. And when he takes her hand to lead her out and show her the evidence of his mechanical skill, how greatly can his young spirit be gratified by a few words of encouragement and approbation. By sympathizing in the enjoyment of your children, by manifesting the interest you feel in the innocent pleasures they can find at home, you thus shield them from countless temptations.

5. *Encourage as much as possible a fondness for reading.*—Children's books have been, of late years, so greatly multiplied, that there is but little difficulty in forming, in the mind of the child, a taste for reading. When the taste is once formed, you will be saved all further trouble. Your son will soon explore the libraries

of all his associates, and he will find calm, and silent, and improving amusement for many rainy days and long evenings. And you may have many hours of your own evening solicitude enlivened by his reading. The cultivation of this habit is of such immense importance, and is so beneficial in its results, not only upon the child, but upon the quietude and harmony of the whole family, that it is well worth while to make special efforts to awaken a fondness of books. Select some books of decidedly entertaining character, and encourage him for a time to read aloud to you, and you will very soon find his interest riveted; and by a little attention, avoiding as much as possible irksome constraint, you may soon fix the habit permanently.

The great difficulty with most parents is, that they are unwilling to devote time to their children. But there are no duties in life more imperious than the careful culture of the minds and hearts of the immortals entrusted to our care. There are no duties which we can neglect at such an awful hazard. A good son is an inestimable treasure; language cannot speak his worth. A bad son is about the heaviest calamity that can be endured on earth. Let the parent, then, find time to "train up the child in the way he should go."

EVILS OF THE RATE-BILL SYSTEM.

The system of Rate-bills for the payment of part of the Teachers' salaries is found in its practical operation to be much less satisfactory than its projectors probably expected it to prove. It is rather an expensive evil, than a positive good. For in any School Section where it is depended upon,—it is in the power of a few either to break up the School, or to render its sustentation a heavy burden upon those who support it. Nor is the plan of voluntary contribution for this purpose, which is adopted in some School Sections, fully adequate to remedy the evil, since if the heads of two or three large families in a School Section, refuse to unite with their neighbors in order to make up the required sum for the Teacher's salary, the endeavours of the rest must prove abortive,—or they must contribute more than they would otherwise be required to pay. Hence many schools are occasionally left vacant for a long time; and thus the children suffer from the want of instruction;—or otherwise incompetent teachers are employed, at low salaries, whose efforts at instruction are frequently more productive of ill to their pupils, than fruitful in furnishing the elements of necessary knowledge.

A judicious system of taxation for school purposes, if properly carried out would doubtless provide the means of maintaining our schools more liberally and more certainly than the present system of Rate-bills;—but it is questionable whether, at least this portion of the Province is generally prepared for such a system. It is certain there is, in many Townships, great prejudice existing against it; and it is to be feared its introduction, at the present time, would not be productive of much satisfaction.—*Rev. James Padfield, Supt. Com. Schools, Bathurst District.*

EVILS OF DELAYING THE COLLECTION OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS.

There is, however, another evil of a most serious character that calls aloud for immediate reformation, and does, I presume, lie within your province to remove. I refer to the unnecessary and injurious delay in collecting and paying over the School Assessment, which is now but too general. This delay not only deprives the Teachers for a long time, of one half of their income derived from the School Fund,—but it also hinders their obtaining the remaining balance of their salaries,—since the rate-bills cannot be made out till the amount of assessment is made known. Thus they are deprived of two-thirds of their wages for weeks, and sometimes for months,—and are often left worse than penniless to provide for their families at the most inclement season of the year. I say worse than penniless,—for they are often obliged to incur debts to procure the absolute necessaries of life. Nor does the evil stop here. It also gives rise to imperfect and inaccurate reports on the part of School Trustees,—and thus puts it out of the power of the District Superintendent to furnish the information required from him by the law of the land, within the time limited for supplying it. It leaves the accounts of the present year to be detailed and completed in the next, doubling the amount of labor; and after all the additional trouble thus occasioned, too frequently leaves him deprived of the