

TALKS WITH TEACHERS.

There is a strong and growing necessity for the enforcement of a curfew law in New Brunswick, not only in the towns but in the country districts. Some very reasonable people are of the opinion that parental control is all the time growing weaker, and that a larger amount of what is often called paternalism should be exercised by the state. No one questions the right of the state to compel attendance at the schools, and none its power of regulating and restraining the action and conduct of all members of society.

The danger to boys, and perhaps girls—though it must be admitted that the latter are more carefully looked after than the former—is greater in small communities than in large ones; because in the former there is not the opportunity of selection as to companionship that there is in the latter, and a few bad boys may influence the conduct of the whole number.

Idleness usually begets mischief, and as the evenings are spent in that way by all classes, the boy who comes in contact with some of his elders on the street corners or in the country stores does not learn much to his advantage. He generally has the opportunity of hearing bad language, and it may be of acquiring the tobacco habit. What he sees and hears the men do he is liable to consider manly and to imitate it as far as possible.

The boy is not so much to blame as the parents, and both require guardians.

The teacher's duties and responsibilities do not end with the school hours, though it is feared that many so regard them. The ideal teacher will not only exercise influence upon her pupils but upon the whole community. I know teachers that are by far the most influential personages in the localities in which they labour, not excepting the clergymen.

It is true that the teacher who is able to overcome entirely the influences of the street and perhaps of the home, is of exceptional moral calibre. The state should step in to assist in overcoming the influence of the street, while the teacher has largely in her own hands the moulding of the homes of the future at least. Moral instruction should be practical and addressed to the actual needs of the pupils, not dull platitudes having no bearing upon anything in particular.

A few more practical lessons upon profanity, tobacco, the rights of others, bad companions, cruelty to animals, and such topics would be beneficial.

Such texts as the following might be taken, and I can vouch for their being well founded.

A commercial traveller returning to his hotel from a

country store amused the company there by his account of the bad language and tobacco exploits of the small boys who were allowed to congregate there in the evenings.

A respectable resident of a country village complained that it was impossible to have any public entertainment because of the bad conduct of the boys, many of whom attended the schools.

Another stated it was dangerous to pass along the road near a certain school because of the conduct of the pupils, and if remonstrance was used it was only greeted with insult.

Another said that the boys were constantly throwing stones either in his fields or at his buildings.

Another remarked upon the cruelty of boys to the birds—always throwing stones at them, and spending their holidays either in shooting them or destroying their nests.

Can the schools and teachers escape responsibility in these matters? They should not try to.

One of the first lessons children should be taught is to respect the rights of others.

More than precept and example are required to keep boys out of mischief. Occupation must be found for them; and it is the teacher's part to see that it is of the proper kind.

It is to be regretted that better school grounds are not provided for all schools. It has already cost the country very dear. Such amusements as a horizontal bar, baseball, cricket, croquet, lawn tennis, foot ball, etc., may be provided in many places. They will not only keep the boys off the streets, but will interest them in school to the end of attending more regularly and remaining longer. Manly exercise is one of the best safeguards against unmanly action and conduct.

When we have a workshop in connection with every school, another valuable aid will have been secured.

It was a happy thought to unite Bird day with Arbor day in the school celebrations of yesterday. The birds, trees and flowers are inseparably connected. The birds return to us at the time when trees and plants renew their verdure. Their songs of love are blended with the perfume of the flowers; their homes are amid the foliage of the trees, and the cradles of their young are perched on swaying boughs, rocked by the vernal breezes. Without trees, plants and flowers, the earth would be a desert; but with these, and without the pretty airy forms, the alert life and sweet music of the birds, what a void there would be in Nature's spring symposium! Yet for many years cruel hands have made war upon the birds till they have become sadly fewer than they were. Teach the young to study, take an interest in and love the birds, and you make them gentler, more refined and better, while at the same time the birds are saved and protected. — *Charlottetown Guardian*.