

more in the hands of Nature and of the boy's school-fellows than in that of his masters. Boys are not born good: they are born ignorant, and are ready to learn both good and evil. We do not believe, I am sure, that the majority of boys are morally bad; but we do know that evil counsels spread much more rapidly than good counsels in a school, and one or two black sheep in a small flock work infinitely more harm than a greater number do in a larger flock; in fact, in the latter case they are occasionally, if not trampled out, at least silenced, by their opponents. A boy, then, at a small school has a possible chance that more attention will be paid to his individual training on the part of his masters (I am supposing the small school to be well mastered); but he loses much that Nature unchecked and his numerous companions, from whom he can pick his set, will do for him in the way of training; and he will surely run a much greater risk of coming into contact with the black sheep, which I fear are never entirely absent for any length of time from any, even the smallest school.

There are, then, two things to be considered: (1) the individual, (2) the aggregate of individuals—the school. Neither must be sacrificed; both are equally important; for, such as the one is, such, to some extent, will be the other.

Now discipline, like all other arts, has its theoretical and practical sides, and in this world of imperfectibility the two will not always coincide. "The general practice of any ideal system of education is hopeless," says Mr. H. Spencer, "we are not good enough." But I suspect it is equally impossible to lay down a good theory of discipline. It is so complex a subject, so much depends on the character and temper of the master, the character of the boys, their ages, their numbers; that unseen power, sympathy, plays so important a part, and yet is so variable.

We, of course, all admit that a school ought to be in a good state of order, but our opinions differ widely still as to how it should be effected and maintained. I imagine that there may exist one of two kinds of discipline in a school:

1. A sort of formal discipline, where everything is done with clock-work precision and uniformity, and the boys are always under the master's eye. There are, of course, various modified forms of this species.

2. The second species is informal in its nature. It is not absolute order, but there is enough order to allow of the carrying out the work of the school without inconvenience.

Of the two, the first is infinitely the easier to maintain, but in my opinion the latter is preferable by far. The clock-work discipline is, I think, neither necessary nor advisable.

The essence of the formal, or, as one might call it, military discipline, is the total absence of freedom, and consequently of the opportunity for self-government, and the almost total absence of sympathy. A system which necessitates such a terrible position as that held by the "pion," as the French boy calls him, must surely be hostile to English notions of freedom. To this some perhaps may be inclined to answer, that no such position exists in an English school. Does it not? Perchance not to quite such an exaggerated degree; but an assistant, or rather subordinate, in many a private school, is but little above the rank of a "pion." More than once have I heard "Principals" bewail their unrecognised profession, their position in society; and yet these very men, I know of a truth, themselves fail to recognise the profession when their assistants, and not themselves, are the individuals in question. Away

with this system of military discipline,—an army with only one commissioned officer, a military discipline which culminates in a despotism,—where freedom is withheld from the teacher as well as from the taught,—where the teacher is expected to do so much work for so much pay, and there the contract ends,—where he has no more to do with the government of the school than a sergeant with the command of a regiment,—where he is, in fact, a non-commissioned officer, whose opinion and advice in the daily campaign is never taken or even asked.

In connection with this form of discipline, we have sometimes a system of drill in the schoolroom. It is met with commonly in primary schools, but it is not confined to them. To a stranger the sight of a large number of boys going through all the common-place actions of schoolroom life with uniformity and precision is somewhat striking, but it becomes monotonous; though with quite young children, I fancy the plan succeeds—they seem to find some sort of pleasure, or even amusement, in acting in concert, and it thus makes it easier for them to keep in order.

A friend of mine once went to visit a very large day-school where the formal system prevailed, and so much impressed was he with the appearance of the rooms and with the schoolroom drill, that he appeared to think that numberless blessings arose therefrom, and to wish that his own school, a boarding school, were in a similar state. I visited the school myself shortly afterwards, and was equally struck at first, but I had no wish to see the system introduced into any school with which I was connected. Moreover, when I came to consider the matter, I remembered that this was a day-school; and therefore it was natural that the classrooms, not being living rooms, should present a much more tidy appearance than classrooms in which boys lived from morning to night; the work too seemed to be done entirely on the paper-work and lecture plan; the rooms were filled with desks and seats; and there was, I believe, but one lesson going on in a room at once, and therefore there was absent that necessary amount of disorder and noise which is unavoidable when forms are coming up and going down; for I most emphatically protest against a form being regularly kept standing for a full hour.

One obvious objection to schoolroom drill is, that it inevitably comes to be looked on as an end instead of a means, and there consequently ensues a good deal of waste of time in order duly to attain an end which is no end. Moreover, it does not leave a boy to act for himself at all; it deprives him of all training in self-restraint during school, since the authority of the master is interposed at every point.

In connection also with this form of discipline, we have silence at meals, and silence with supervision in the dormitories; but of that I propose to speak further on. I need hardly refer to the baneful plan of inspecting correspondence between boys and their friends, as such a piece of despotic surveillance is, I suppose, quite out of date.

But let us take a glance at the other form of discipline which I have mentioned. The general spirit of this is freedom, and self-government. It is the form which exists in most, if not all, Public Schools. Too often, under the other system, the boys regard their masters in the light of natural enemies; but here there is such freedom of intercourse between masters and boys,—the former frequently taking part in the games of the latter,—that such a view would be untenable. This intimate association does not in the least diminish a boy's respect for a master, nor does it impair