

"No one who has had much to do with children can doubt that punishment is necessary to their proper discipline, or that sometimes it needs to be administered with considerable severity. The sentimental theory that children can be trained and taught 'wholly by kindness' generally issues in a practice which is the converse of the principal laid down by Hamlet—'I must be cruel to be kind.' There are, however, certain forms of punishment which compare most unfavorably with the old-fashioned birch, and ought to be discouraged, if not interdicted. We have repeatedly pointed out the evils and injuries likely to result from the boxing of ears and the smacking of faces. These 'methods' should be summarily repressed by those who are the masters of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. Cases which have recently occurred have too forcibly illustrated the truth and need of our many warnings. Nevertheless, punishments of this class are still daily inflicted, and until some hard lesson has been taught the pedagogues who resort to this stupid mode of stimulating the dull intellect, there will be consequences of which the few that come to public knowledge are probably a small percentage. The practice of keeping children without their proper food, of locking them up in dark closets, or even of placing them in solitary confinement in light rooms, cannot be defended, because injurious to body or mind. The imposition of tasks is a shortsighted policy, seeing that it makes learning a terror, whereas it ought to be a delight. Can no disciplinarian devise a suitable discipline for youth? Until that discovery is made, it would be better to fall back on the old birch, properly and moderately applied. It made the flesh smart, but it broke no bones; and few, if any, of its so-called victims failed to profit by its occasional administration."

This is on the whole sound advice, though I personally do not agree that the birch should be the only instrument, believing its use had best be confined to punishment for grave offences. Corporal punishment can hardly be said to be a grievance in Canada. Public opinion sanctions its temperate use; and Parents as a rule do not actively oppose it. I only maintain, as a matter of principle that a Head Master should have the right to inflict such punishment, if he thinks fit. It certainly should never be excessive; its use should, if possible, be infrequent, but yet it should be severe enough, at all events in the form of caning and flogging, to strike some terror in the hearts of idly disposed and ill-behaved urchins.

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