

connexion with its punishment:—1. To make it less easy of commission; 2. To make its detection more sure and rapid; 3. To carry off as early as possible those who are becoming professional or habitual thieves, and deal with them before they are confirmed in their habits; 4. To have long periods of penal servitude, with the arrangements for conditional remission to be earned by industrious habits; 5. To make confinement while it lasts a state of privation and hardship, so far as sanitary considerations will allow; 6. To establish an intermediate prison, with a state of transition from confinement to freedom; 7. To keep up the superintendence of the police upon those obtaining remissions, and to have an eye upon all old offenders; 8. To provide ultimately some classified means of confinement and employment for those upon whom all the measures of a reformatory kind have been tried in vain. With regard to the repression of crime, apart from its punishment, Lord Neaves said,—"While it is the right and duty of society both to punish crime and to prevent the violation of public decency and good order, the attempt to carry compulsion into the private lives of men is not a legitimate or useful exercise of power. There can be no virtue without freedom. To repress merely certain forms or outward manifestations of vice is of little avail if the characters of men are not intrinsically purified and exalted. It does no good to dam up the stream if the fountain is still flowing. The waters will only bear down the interposed barrier, or spread their mischievous influence in other directions, perhaps more fatal than the existing channel."

7. LAUGHTER AS A SOCIAL AGENT.

Lord Neaves, in a recent address in England, on "Punishment and Reformation," thus referred to the great value of laughter as a social agent: he said, "The best way of weaning men from intemperance is by counter-agents, by education, by good food and ventilation, by the establishment of well regulated clubs and institutions to be conducted by the working men themselves, by free access to parks and public places, by exhibitions and museums, by good available libraries, and by entertainments and rational diversions in the widest as well as the best sense of the word. Useful knowledge is often a very good relaxation from physical labour. Entertaining knowledge may be still more freely resorted to. But what I want now and then is entertainment without any knowledge at all—at least, without any scientific knowledge, any knowledge but that of human nature—entertainment, in short, by itself, in its simplest and broadest form. A sense of the ludicrous, the faculty of laughter, are essential, and, as I think, most useful parts of our nature. Laughter is essentially a social, a sympathetic, and a contagious power. Some nations, particularly the Orientals, are said never to laugh, but all European nations have been great laughers, and the ludicrous has played an important part even in their very history. By means of laughter absolute monarchs have been controlled upon their throne, demagogues have been checked in their career, and even Demos himself has been made to laugh at his own follies till he was almost shamed into good sense. Quackeries, hypocrisies, and affectations of all kinds have been exposed and suppressed, and the reformation was promoted by the united efforts of reason and ridicule. The Scottish nation have never been behind their neighbours in their appreciation of this element, or in the power either of making or of enjoying mirth. Our old songs and ballads, and the best of our native writers—Dunbar, Lyndsay, Burns, and Scott—all prove the irrepressible tendency of our countrymen in this direction, and I consider it as an important counterpoise to some of those opposite qualities of sternness and severity for which we are equally remarkable. Indeed it is probable that the grave and mirthful faculties are best developed when they co-exist in the same character, and were intended by the Creator to be brought into companionship. Spain, the gravest country in Europe, has produced the great masterpiece of ludicrous writing, a never-failing treasure of genial and innocent merriment, and in our own Shakspeare it is difficult to say which of the two powers preponderate—the comic or the tragic. I am humbly of opinion that this resource is not sufficiently used in promoting the recreation of the humbler classes; and I think the omission is much to be lamented, as tending to leave unemployed a powerful engine for promoting social and kindly feelings. There are men among us on both sides of the Tweed who have the highest and justest reputation as orators, preachers, and divines, who, if they put forth their mirth-making powers, could make their audiences as weak with laughter as Samson was when shorn of his locks. I do not ask these men to exhibit much in this way personally, for that might give offence to the weaker brethren; but I ask them to join in vindicating the usefulness and nobleness of this province of the mind—to concur in bearing testimony that the sense of the ludicrous and the sense of the pathetic have their sources not far from each other, in the very highest parts of our nature, and on this

ground to endeavour to procure for the poor and wearied, for the thoughtless, and even for the erring, an occasional enjoyment of this special kind. If the theatre cannot be made to coincide with their views of morality there are substitutes for it that may be easily found. Henderson the actor went up and down England setting large rooms of people in a roar at that wonderful production of the most melancholy of men, the diverting history of "John Gilpin," then just published anonymously, and among his audiences was to be seen the great Mrs. Siddons herself, who shook her sides and clapped her hands in ecstasy at the exhibition. I venture to think that an hour so employed was as well spent in its turn, and might be allowed to alternate with more serious subjects. Plenty of materials for such amusement may be found, if they are carefully sought and judiciously selected, and we should not leave the selection merely to the unaided taste of uneducated men. In popular productions of a comic kind there will often be something of the freedom or even the coarseness of the popular spirit. But such flaws are merely incidental to the ludicrous, not essential to it, and the guidance of a more refined spirit may keep it all right. A good laugh thus periodically administered would save a great quantity of alcohol, while it would excite those very sympathetic feelings and genial dispositions which are most wanted for regenerating our moral system and knitting together the different classes of society. The men whom we could thus send laughing to their beds would have experienced an hour's happiness without sensuality—an evening's pleasure without fear or misgiving at the time, and without any remorse or reaction afterwards.

III. Papers on Practical Education.

1. THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

There are few periods of a teacher's life of more real practical importance, and which concern his future success in his vocation more than the first of the school term. Not only the success for the day or the term, but his success or failure for a life time is to be measured by the impression made on his school during the first day. How important, then, that the impression made be a good one! The great mass of mankind form some kinds of opinions in regard to those with whom they come in contact, at their first meeting; and in most cases their opinions are not far from being correct. We all judge of character to some extent at first sight, and this applies as well to children as to the adult portion of the human family. They of course are not sufficiently skilled in human nature to read character with that degree of precision which we naturally look for from those of more mature minds, but they will nevertheless form some conception of a man's general character from his manner and actions, and they will not fail to be prepared to give their opinions of the new teacher. Every eye is attentively scanning his movements, and it will require a very short time for the circulation of the individual impressions created.

It is important that the teacher have some plan mapped out for the first day's operations in his school-room. A good start is half the race. If pupils find that their time is profitably employed during the first day, they will soon come to the conclusion that their teacher is a worker, and they will imitate his example. On the contrary, if there is a waste of material, friction, or the machine stops for want of work to keep it going, the pupils will soon find something with which to employ their time to their own amusement and to the teacher's annoyance. The start in mischief once made, ten times the work will be required for its suppression that would have been required for prevention. Boys and girls will be busy at something, and if that something be not of a proper nature, they will supply its place with all manner of mischief and amusement. But aside from this, it is important that a plan be mapped out in order that pupils may form a just estimate of the teacher's character and intentions. If their is not sufficient work prepared for them, they will come to the conclusion that they are to have an easy time under the present teacher, and they will lay their plans and conduct themselves accordingly.

The true teacher has his work already, to some extent, clearly defined in his own mind before term time approaches. So it should be. Too many give no thought whatever to the work to be accomplished during the term, previous to the crossing of the threshold of the school-room the first morning of school. As a consequence, everything rushes upon the teacher at once; a dozen things crowd upon his attention, each claiming immediate action upon his part. Everything is presented in a topsy-turvy manner, and he retires from the work thoroughly tired, if not thoroughly disgusted, with the first operations. The pupils, instead of becoming his helpers, as under judicious management they would, are tempted to engage in anything that will divert their minds, they become careless in the discharge of their duties, if they even ever give a thought to them. It is ab-