

A FEW HINTS ON THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN.

DON'T SAY DON'T.

THERE are two interpretations of the doctrine of the Fall and the scheme of salvation that was held among the school men of mediæval Christianity. One regards the fall of man as a break in God's plan, while the other one represents the view that it was God's intention to let man pass through sin to salvation; for without sin man would never have acquired the knowledge of good and evil, which forms the climax of his similarity to God. Adherents of the former view belonged to the school of Nominalists while the latter showed an inclination toward Realism. The former regarded our present world as one particular anomalous accident, and would at the same time insist on the dogma of the cosmo-centricity of the earth, which means that the earth is the stage on which alone God became flesh and revealed himself in Christ. All the other planets, the sun and the moon, and all the fixed stars, exist simply for the sake of the earth as lights that might serve to make time-measurements for human purposes; and on earth man was created to be tempted, and when he had fallen God would set all the armies of angels in motion and come down upon earth himself to redeem him from perdition. This is the view of those who regard every experience of theirs as a particular case, and who see in universals no truly universal features but mere "names" (in Latin *nomina*), a definition from which the name "nominalism" has been derived. Their adversaries, the Realists, were inclined to look upon every particular case as an instance of universal law, and thus

they were inclined to regard man's fall not as an accident, but as a necessity. They argued that man fell because God wanted him to fall. And how could the good tidings of the God-man have been possible if man had not to rise from a lower state to a higher, if he had been and remained from the beginning perfect and without sin? How could there have been any worth in his character if he simply were good because he was created good? No, man had to work out his salvation for himself, he had to establish his own good character, and that feature in man which accomplished his salvation is God himself! Thus, according to the philosophy of the realists, the earth would be a typical case for any possible world on which life develops, and the consistent conclusion would be to say that the same events naturally and necessarily take place in other worlds. On all of them we should find sinners, on all of them error and evil, yet at the same time on all of them God would appear in the flesh and would teach men that self-sacrificing love is the way of salvation. And further, what would Christ or Saviour mean but an actualisation of this self-sacrificing love?

Whatever these two schools may portend, this much is sure: when, according to the legend told in the first chapter of Genesis, the Lord put the man he had created in the Garden of Eden, and said to him with regard to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "Thou shalt not eat of it," the man, as soon as left at liberty to do as he pleased, would not and could not fail to disobey the command.

As the story stands God must have had the intention to make man fall. Otherwise the Ophites, the Syrian Gnostics who believed in the divinity of the serpent, would have been right when they declared that Jahveh was an inferior God, who, himself a slave of passions, like wrath, jealousy, vengeance, etc., wanted to keep man ignorant. The highest God, however, the God of love, mercy, and wisdom, sent the serpent as the first messenger of the gnosis to aspire for knowledge and prepare mankind for the arrival of Christ.

If you have a child whom you want to perform a certain act on its own accord, but not at your request, you need only tell him "Do not do it," and he will be sure to do it. You may by force or

by fear prevent a boy from being disobedient, but you cannot prevent him from feeling the itching in his fingers to do what is forbidden. All the various injunctions so freely given to children are so many temptations to become disobedient.

A little party of children had thrown several boxes of blocks down stairs, which would have given the nurse a good deal of trouble to pick up. They enjoyed the joke greatly, but when a waggish uncle told them that for a punishment the blocks should remain down stairs and that no one should be allowed to bring them up again, the little urchins started at once to carry every block up, and the joy of being disobedient beamed in their eyes.

Hence the lesson, Don't say "don't" to your children. Do not forbid. Do not lead them into the temptation to become disobedient; in other words, respect their liberty and allow them to act foolishly, if they prefer to do so at their own risk.

But the objection may be made: "Children must be educated, and education consists precisely in teaching them what not to do." That is quite true. But the method of teaching them what they should not do ought not to consist in interdictions.

If you do not want the baby to walk down stairs because he will hurt himself and is liable to fall, let him try, and let him by his own experience find that he runs a risk when going down. Tell him he will fall, but do not forbid him: Don't say "don't." When approaching the stairs for the first time, watch over him so that he does not do himself serious harm, but let him experience the fear of falling, and warn him that he will hurt himself. If he disregards the warning, it is better for him to be sufficiently frightened by a fall to remember it.

If a child approaches the stove or the fire-place, warn him in the same way; tell him "hot," "hot," and if the child does not mind, let him burn himself a little. The nurse's business is simply to see to it that he does not meet with a serious accident, not to hinder him from making unpleasant but valuable experiences. You will find that children who are informed about the evil consequences of certain actions will mind the warning much better than the children who are forbidden to eat an apple for no reason what-

ever. That apple will appear "pleasant to the sight and good for food," more so than any other fruit that may be around.

When children want more sweetmeats, more strawberry short-cake, or more ice cream than is good for them, give them a fair warning. Tell them, "I should like to eat more of it myself, but I believe I shall ruin my stomach and be sick if I do; therefore I don't." If the children are strong enough and can stand a disordered stomach, it may be advisable to let them once or twice take more and let them find out themselves what an abused stomach means. But when a child falls sick and when its stomach revolts, the best plan is to sit by his bedside and help him pass in review all the things he has eaten on the previous day, and then to say to him without reproach: "I believe you ate too much ice cream," or whatever it may have been, "and I would not eat so much again. It is unpleasant to be sick, and it is after all the same taste whether you eat one or two dishes."

Sickness is a good teacher of self-control in eating, but parents must improve on the occasion and help the child to discover the cause of its indisposition.

You cannot educate children by punishments; you must make them, so far as possible, feel the evil results of their actions, and the insight into the causation of good and evil will exercise a better and more educational influence than the fear of the rod or the sting of bitter reproaches.

The child will be an echo of your behavior. Scolding makes him a scold, and severity renders him resentful.

THE TREATMENT OF A BAD BOY.

There is a peculiar difficulty in treating children when they become naughty. They scream, they howl, and become obstinate to all moralising. Their bad temper becomes part of themselves, and to relent naturally appears to them a self-surrender.

What is to be done in such a case? Shall educators break the will of the child as is often proposed, or shall they yield and let him have his will? Neither seems to be practical, for, on the one hand, instead of breaking the will we ought to strengthen it,

and, on the other hand, instead of yielding to his will, we ought to lead it and direct it in its tendencies. Will in itself is neither good nor bad ; and strength of will is rather a virtue than a vice, but the goodness of a will depends on the aim toward which it tends.

A child's soul, accordingly should be treated as what it naturally is, a living commonwealth of various and frequently contradictory tendencies. And in doing so, it is advisable to identify those tendencies that are to be cherished and strengthened with the child's self, but to brand those which we wish to remove as foreign elements that are to be discarded. They are like the injurious offshoots of fruit trees which have to be pruned. If the naughtiness of the child be treated as something that he is possessed of, as a mental poison that he has to expel from his mental system, as demons and devils such as Jesus cast out according to the Gospel stories : educators will far more easily regain the good-will of their little rebel if they allow him to capitulate without suffering a humiliation.

Here a combination of two principles appears to be of advantage : first, the diverting of the attention of the child from the cause that produced his ill behavior, and secondly, the personifying his rudeness with a bad boy that has entered his little self. Address the child, saying : "There is a bad little boy in you, come quick, let us cast him out." And then begin a chase after the imagined bad boy the pursuit will give joy to the child who will soon understand the joke and with shining eyes delightedly help to expel the little devil whom he learns to consider as the cause of his bad behavior.

Afterwards he will learn no longer to admit the bad boy, but to expel him before he is able to do any mischief. At any rate he will be able to distinguish between himself and the evil that might originate in him, and will thus preserve his self-esteem and there will be no need of breaking his will in the interest of good behavior.

The methods of casting out bad boys may be changed as physicians may employ various medicines for attaining the same effect. Sometimes it is advisable to pull out the bad boy as the

dentist might pull a tooth, which may be done with a corkscrew after the manner of uncorking a bottle. Another practical method which can be highly recommended is the employment of pincers. The little fellow must open his mouth for inspection, for the bad boy is supposed to sit inside, in the place whence the shrieks proceed. The opening of the mouth will of course stop further crying, and now you can give some information about the little shrieking imp inside who must be caught with the pincers. "Keep still," you tell the child, "I'll catch him with the pincers and take him out; and then you will be our good boy again!" From a quite varied experience in these experiments, I found that the method works well and the child enters into this theatrical performance of a modernised exorcism with great readiness. He accustoms himself to speak of the prior naughtiness as something foreign to his better self and will easily understand the desirability of ridding himself of bad and unworthy qualities, of anger, malevolence, envy, and other passions or vices.

A similar method is applicable when children, as they frequently will do, hurt themselves and begin to cry. If the pain is not serious and will pass away as soon as their attention is called to something else, a good plan is to post them at one end of the hall, or at one corner of the table, fasten the pain with fictitious nails to the spot where they stand and then bid them run away. In speeding along the hall or running round the table, they will quickly overcome their trouble. The activity of running works up an increased circulation and it will not be long before they forget their pain.

Under no circumstances does it seem advisable to pity children or to join in their complaints, even though they may be justified. Commiseration makes a child dissatisfied and you can bring the happiest child to tears simply by pitying it for anything, however ridiculous your compassion may be.

Do not show anxiety, for thereby you make the child anxious; do not show any worry about his bad habits, for thus he will be worried himself and you weaken his character. Show a simple and straightforward determination to help the child to discard what

is undesirable in the makeup of his soul, and the child will naturally acquire a habit of ridding himself of the petty vices of childhood before they can harden into habits.

All these methods can be intensified by a review of the past in calm hours. The father and the mother must be the child's most intimate friends and counselors; they ought to tell him when they are alone with him, what they themselves think of this or that naughtiness; what other people think of it; what will be the consequences; ask him how he would like the same behavior in others; and finally tell him how to mend the fault and how to avoid it in the future. There should be no scolding at such a moment, for that would disturb the calmness of the child's mind. In order to render this instruction effective, not for the moment only, but for the child's whole life, it should be a lesson of self-contemplation and a calm self-criticism.

When the child grows older, he should gradually acquire the habit of exercising this self-criticism for himself; and here it is advisable to call the child's early attention to the dangers of vanity.

STIMULATE SELF-CRITICISM.

While strength of will is a virtue, vanity is a vice. Vanity is the most dangerous demon that can take hold of us, for vanity renders self-criticism impossible.

Every child will be able to grasp the importance and paramount usefulness of self-criticism. Only tell him the story of a man who always blamed others when he did some foolish thing, and who, adhering to the belief in his own perfection, remained a fool all his lifetime. He gathered a rich store of bad experiences and came finally to the conclusion that the whole world was wrong, —but the world thought all the while there was something wrong with him. On the other hand, illustrate by the examples of great men, that great successes are never gained without a stern self-criticism. Self-complacency may create a very happy disposition, but this happiness will not be auspicious; it will be the happiness of lucky Hans who joyfully exchanges his gold for a horse, his horse for a cow, his cow for a pig, his pig for a goose, his goose for

a grindstone, and when the grindstone drops into a well, glories in his having so fortunately got rid of his burden. The way to success in life is the very opposite to self-complacency and is incompatible with vanity. When the foolish man complains about the wrongs of others, the wise man, whenever ill fate befalls him, inquires first into the origin of his own mistakes. So, for instance, when he is cheated, he does not glory in his own honesty and blame the rascal who cheated him, but blames his own credulity and his lack of experience not to have seen through the schemes by which he has been caught.

Remember that the net in which most people are caught is their own vanity. La Fontaine tells the instructive fable of the raven and the fox and adds that the raven, seeing his own foolishness, vowed that he would never be caught again; but the probability is that a vain fellow would not have blamed himself; he would have scolded about the untrustworthiness of people and the frauds of foxes, but would have again fallen an easy prey to the next flatterer who approached him in the same manner.

What appears to us a misfortune is frequently the result of a bad quality in our character. Gamblers are in the habit of catching their victims by first giving them a chance to cheat; tricky agents make you believe that they sell underprice; dishonest lawyers give you a chance to make a contract in which you believe that you cheat some one else, while in fact you are being cheated.

Think of the victims of Reynard the Fox. He knows the foibles of the messengers sent to him and ensnares them in their own vices. The cat is caught by his preference for mice, the wolf by his greed, the bear by his love of honey. None of them blames himself, but all denounce the fox's villainy.

Considering the truth that our own petty vices are the greatest dangers of our life, we must early teach children to regard them as foreign elements which they should cast off, and must help our youngsters to overcome them with grace and in good humor. Genuine manliness is not possible without self-criticism and is built upon a rigorous self-discipline.

DO NOT PUNISH.

Since the days of barbarism a constant change in the treatment of punishment has been going on in civilised countries. The old method was a system of retaliation. Punishment is revenge. The new method which replaces punishment by correction may be called, briefly, a system of education. The turning point in the evolutionary curve of mankind is of a religious nature. It appears first as goodwill toward all, the good and the bad alike, and in the history of the East in Buddha's teaching, it is based on the consideration that all creatures, good and evil ones, are the product of circumstances, and that therefore the bad deserve compassion, not hatred. If a man's character is conditioned by his past, by the circumstances under which he was developed, there is no longer any sense in expecting that he should act differently from what he does according to his nature. Every creature is as its own life history, since the beginning of life on earth, has formed it; and as it is, so it will act. There is no cause for becoming excited about criminal actions. We must understand them, we must above all investigate their motives, and must treat them in the same way as a physician treats a disease. That society, or the government, or the judge, should commit a crime on the criminal because the criminal has committed a crime on society, is as ridiculous as it would be to inflict upon the stomach a stomach-ache because by its indigestion it has produced a head-ache or otherwise injured the fellow-limbs of its organism. Retaliation is a continuation of moral disease, not a cure, and what we need is a cure. Taking this ground, Buddha abolished in the realm of religion the idea of hatred and revenge by saying that hatred is not appeased by hatred. Hatred ceases by non-hatred only. And in the same spirit Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 38-39), saying :

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil."

We need not discuss theology in this place, and do not care in this connexion whether Christ's doctrine really was an absolute

non-resistance of evil, as is maintained in this and the following sentences. We only point out the truth of the sentiment which prompted these sayings and which should be expressed in the sentence: "Resist not evil with evil." Evil must be resisted; but we must not retaliate. Instead of demanding a tooth for a tooth, and giving a lie for a lie, we must overcome a lie by truth, wrong by right, and violence by patience. This ideal of Buddhism and of Christianity has not been introduced into our law books, but is an ideal which mankind in its further progress of evolution is endeavoring to actualise. Justice during the Middle Ages was to a great extent an administration of retaliating punishments. Criminals condemned to die were usually pinched with red hot tongs, their limbs were broken on the wheel, they were burned alive, and all kinds of cruel torture were cunningly invented to make the death of the criminal as painful as possible. All this has changed. Capital punishment, above all, has ceased to be a retaliation, and has become more and more a mere protection against the repetition of a crime. As it would be wrong to leave a tiger abroad, so a man, who by his very nature is a murderer, should not be allowed to remain at liberty, and since imprisonment is on the one hand not a sufficient guarantee for the safety of society, and on the other hand a more cruel treatment than death, capital punishment is, so far as our civilisation goes, still a necessity of our penal law. Yet the attempt is no longer made to retaliate on the murderer the cruelties which he has committed. It is a maxim which has never been explicitly introduced by law, but which is nevertheless firmly established in all civilised countries, that the death punishment should be inflicted with as little pain as possible. The criminal is simply no longer allowed to live, and capital punishment has ceased to be a revenge or retaliation. It has become a cure based upon the experience that the man who commits a murder is liable to commit another murder. Hence a murderer who has killed a man not on account of his murderous inclination, but through an unhappy complication of circumstances, be it in defence of his honor, or for some other reason which is regarded as a sufficient explanation of an unusual and justifiable wrath, will not be treated as a habitual

murderer, and is, according to the laws of all civilised countries not punishable by death.

Our penal laws are not as yet fully adapted to the new view. All the minor punishments are still based upon the plan of retaliation which makes our prisons and penitentiaries breeding-places of crime instead of what they ought to be, moral hospitals. There is no question, however, that the more human treatment of the criminal will in time be brought about. The result will as surely take place as the religious considerations of justice towards our fallen fellowmen and a scientific consideration of crime as a moral disease will in the long run change our methods in education as well as in the administration of justice.

What our courts of justice ought to be and ought to become, parents must realise on a smaller scale in the education of their children. There ought to be no punishment of children in the old and proper sense of punishment. Punishment, if we are permitted to use the old word in a more general sense, ought to become a method of education, and ought to cease inflicting pain without any ulterior purpose. Punishment ought to be nothing but the consequences of a wrong act which is brought home to the knowledge and the sentiments of the child. As a rule, parents do just the reverse. They make the children escape the evil consequences of wrong doing, and let them feel a punishment, the reason of which must naturally appear as the expression of wrath or ill-will. If a child breaks things, it ought, if possible, be made to feel the loss of the broken thing. Suppose he has broken his own glass, then it should not be replaced at once by a new one. If it is the glass of his brother or sister, he ought to give up his own to replace the loss, and if possible some arrangement should be made to let the harm that he has caused fall, at least in part, upon himself.

There is perhaps no harm for parents to show anger if children become very mischievous, but the anger should be felt by the child to be the direct result of his action.

There is a rule propounded by educators never to punish in a state of anger, and the rule is good. But it is insufficient, in so far as the child ought to feel the anger of his parents as the result

of his own deeds more than the punishment itself. It may be advisable even to simulate anger so as to impress the child's mind with the danger of losing his parents' affection. The child ought to learn what deeds are productive of wrath, and this should be made a means (one of the means only) of learning to avoid them. Otherwise, if parents would not resent mischievous acts, the child would, when later on he becomes acquainted with other people, be very much disappointed in the world, for no one else would exhibit the same patience.

The proper punishment would be to let a child feel the full result of wrong and unwise deeds. If once in a while you allow a child to eat his fill of sweets and become sick, and remind him when sick that his sickness is of his own doing, you apply a natural punishment, which without making him obstinate will cure him of a bad habit.

To educate children by simply forbidding is not the right way of securing manly independence. There ought to be as much liberty as possible, for by liberty alone the sentiment of responsibility can be insured.

DIRECT AND DIVERT, BUT DO NOT SUPPRESS.

Man is by nature a creature that yearns for activity. All his nerves and muscles are storehouses freighted with energy which are eager to perform work. The main duty of education consists in directing the work, but not in suppressing it. Every function performed establishes a case of precedence, and however easy, as a rule, it may be to dig the first channel for the rivers of the soul, it is very difficult to change them as soon as they are firmly established in habits.

Children that are taught to busy themselves will be more manageable when they grow older, than children who in their earlier years are left to themselves. The age of early babyhood so much neglected now, is in fact the most important period of a man's whole life, and this is not less true because the evil consequences that result from mistakes made at the beginning of life, are mostly difficult to trace.

The child has a right to be active and parents and nurses should see to it that when the little one is in good health it should always be busy.

Now it sometimes happens that a child does something that it should not do, that it touches things which it might break, that it begins to busy itself with things which it would better leave alone. In such cases it is not advisable to interfere violently by tearing away the thing which it should not handle. Educators will find it easy to divert the child's attention by giving it some other toy which for the sake of newness, or for some other reason, it will at once prefer.

The policy for all cases ought to be to divert the attention of a child instead of robbing it by violence of any object which it may happen to take hold of.

When things are taken away from the child, the child will naturally cry, and no one can blame the little fellow for it, but if its attention be diverted he will drop the forbidden thing voluntarily and there will be no crying and no naughtiness.

Therefore, nurses should make it a rule never to snatch away anything from a child before substituting for it some other toy which would appear at the moment preferable to the child's mind.

The same is true of bad as well as dangerous habits to which a child should be disaccustomed. Children generally love pencils and will put them into their mouths. Of course they may fall and knock the point of the pencil right into their throat. If children are forbidden to put the pencil into their mouth, they will be all the more anxious to do so and may develop a habit of doing it when unobserved, whereby an accident is almost sure to happen. But if you teach the child to take the pencil lengthwise in the mouth, he will more readily discontinue putting in the point foremost and you will forestall in this way the formation of a dangerous habit.

What is true of children is true generally. Any one who has to deal with obstinate people, especially the warden of an asylum with insane people, will be wise never to antagonise passionate outbursts unless compelled to do so by the direst necessity. Diversion is easier than suppression.

There is a story about a warden of an insane asylum who visited one of his colleague's institutions. He was admitted to the grounds by the janitor who knew him personally, and while walking in the park, met a gentleman who introduced himself as a doctor and inspector of the wards. The two gentlemen shook hands as colleagues and enjoyed a pleasant walk and talk and at last the visitor was shown up to a wooden tower which commanded a general view of the park and its vicinity. When the two reached the top, the inspector at once proposed to his guest to jump down, as that was his fashion with all the people whom he showed round through the institution. Now at once the visitor, to his dismay, becomes aware of the fact that he is face to face with one of the patients, who by some mishap must have escaped from his keeper, and as insane people frequently do, had up to that time behaved in a quite sensible way. But now the pretended inspector began to show all the symptoms of an approaching attack, and the visitor looked round for a means of defending himself in case of aggression. Had they come to a fight on the narrow platform of the tower, they would both have fallen a considerable depth. The visitor, being accustomed to insane persons, remained calm and said quietly to his companion: "You want me to jump down from this tower? That is nothing, every one can do that; but it is much more difficult to jump up from below. I'll show you how to do it, come down." The patient was startled, and asked, "Can you do that really?" "Of course I can," was the reply, "come down and I'll show you." Thus the expert alienist diverted the wild imagination of the patient and led him down to a place in which he was no longer in danger. They had scarcely reached the ground when the keeper arrived and took charge of the fugitive.

The lesson is obvious and the policy of the clever warden can be profitably imitated in practical life whether in dealing with irascible adults, with mobs, or with children.

EDITOR.