

Learning at School the Trade of Right Living Student Should Not Recoil From Discipline, for It Makes the Man or Woman—Discipline Is Training That Produces Good Habits of Thought, Feeling and Action.

By ARTHUR H. TOMLINSON,

Principal Swarthmore Preparatory School, Swarthmore, Pa. A S I look back upon my own school and college days a remarkable peculiarity of human nature, especially of young people collected in considerable numbers, strikes me very forcibly—namely, an all too prevalent habit of looking upon moral and religious views as leading to right or wrong conduct and character, and indeed life itself, as questions on which one's own views and those of others as inexperienced are all sufficient. It has frequently seemed to me that there are few directions in which the youth of our land might improve their judgment and wisdom to great advantage to themselves, but noticeable everywhere and almost everywhere, let me ask, what any one expecting to enter a profession or business does? Does he not spend some strenuous time with those who know from experience and practice a great deal about that profession or business, tried men? If it be law he is interested in, he expends much time and effort in studying the law before he decides upon the law school he shall enter in order to secure the best to guide and direct his preparation. If he is to go into an office, he seeks that of a man of great learning and reputation for practical ability. While in college or office, if he is blessed with ordinary talents, he is eager to get the advantage of all possible advice from these authorities, not depending, strangely enough, upon his companions at school, who are of his own age and inexperience for the material upon which to build up his profession. Why do we act as though questions of more real and vital import need no such preparation for their right solution? For any young man or young woman life itself is so much more important than any mere profession or business. Manhood and womanhood are the most precious things God has made, for has he not made them in His own image? One believes in God to the fullest when he respects and cherishes the most precious gifts of His Creator. The greatest evidence of Himself, no one can do this fully and freely unless he has absolute and abiding respect for himself, body and soul. This respect and consideration grow and thrive with the growth of the stable

and moral training that produces good habits of thought, feeling and action, and that whatever the cause that brings the result, provided it is just. If we are wise we shall seek this discipline for ourselves, shirking never. But if we are not without trying to make use of the wisdom and experience of older people interested in our welfare, we are guilty of worse wastefulness than is the spendthrift who squanders only money, while we squander life. When we wish to invest money we are wisely careful of whom we seek advice; otherwise we suffer. Do we not need even more care here? When one leaves home for school he places himself where the temptations to follow irresponsible advice are different, and mostly increased by conditions usually measured by the segregation of many persons of nearly the same age and same amount of moral and spiritual experience, while he leaves behind him the restraints of home and surroundings, no less strong because he has scarcely realized them, but surely far more strenuous and more binding than any rules he will find to take their place. The inevitable but real restraints placed upon him by business or profession and society are far more effective than school regulations. The tendency is a demand for more freedom, more independence. I believe as thoroughly as the best of you that the student who is able to fall if any considerable number of pupils in choosing a university or a college were to do so largely on an estimate of the opportunities afforded for learning how to live from the standpoint of physical, moral and religious directness? And then, if the members of the incoming class were to follow this line of thought, would it not be the most thoroughly tried men or women in the college for advice on these lines, what then? When I was a pupil in school and in college many of us were sure we knew better about such things than did our instructors, at least so far as we and our classmates were concerned. If our school principal allowed us ever to feel the need of such advice we were likely to go rather to our companions, sometimes even less experienced than ourselves and very often willing to give or forgo hints and ill considered advice, because of no feeling of responsibility. Said Dr. Needham, president of George Washington University, when giving his address of welcome to the students recently: "I welcome you to the discipline of the university. You recoil from that, do you not? If your moral instructor should tell you that to become a doctor in the use of the instrument you must submit to severe discipline until the hand becomes your perfect agent you would most likely refuse that discipline. You would rather be a doctor of the shams than be a doctor of the truth. Only the student recoils from discipline, and yet it is the thing that makes the man or woman." He might have said, "The student who needs it more than these because of the responsibility he is to assume toward his fellow men. It is discipline that fits one for the life of duty. The student who does not need it necessarily mean punishment, but the kind of physical, mental

more important task than was that of freeing four millions of negro slaves over fifty years ago. Young men who have his own remain tied to his mother's apron strings and withstand such taunts and jests and buffets of bad advisers rather than that he should come to them? Let us have freedom and courage and independence to follow the better choice, not to be compelled by bad advisers. There are things often done under the cover of numbers that one cannot afford to allow himself to be led into. It is in examining the disposition of instructors and of other good friends and certainly self-deception, betting and various other forms of gambling, &c. Usually does a young man have any large amount of freedom to follow the right course? Even those who gamble know that it is not only not right but foolish to follow the wrong course. Does a boy grow up free to follow the right course? If so there has been a change since I was a lad and one that has taken place so silently that I have failed to notice it though I have watched for it unflinchingly. One who values his own respect cannot afford to do this. The questions thoughtlessly, nor can he afford to allow himself to be manipulated to force his decision their way. Much less can he afford to be one of those who force a companion to decide against his will, or whether one in his brother's keeper or not, no one wants to be responsible even partly for the physical or the moral and mental ruin of another. The fact that a human being holding in his life his individual part of God's spirit, who must remember that the compulsion exerted by the attitude of his associates is often more compelling than even the kind that a young lady said in her examination for a teacher's certificate was his office. A number of young men in our district are so bad that capital punishment is again to be considered. "You raise fine horses in your State, I believe," said an English lady to a native of Kentucky. "Yes, madam, but I thought of the fact that the best horses are often the best bred." "What is that?" replied the gentleman. "What is that?" she asked. "Men," he answered. "The times call loudly for young men who will endure hardships as good soldiers, who will not break down, whose trials will not mar them and whom evil cannot defeat. I could wish," he had added, "and who will give every other youth a fair chance." In these times there is a noble and far reaching desire to be helpful to others, to make sure that the world is the better for our having lived in it. Many people give up because they feel they cannot be useful to others and that their lives count for little in God's great plan. Numerous instances are at hand of young people who were waiting away without apparent cause who have been brought back to health and strength almost miraculously when they have found themselves indispensable to little children or to people more feeble than themselves. Many brave young people consecrate their lives to work in foreign lands for the purpose of doing what they believe to be a large thing in God's plan. Some feel that their part is in it, but because they cannot do so great a thing as this, they give up. Every neighborhood, every school and every college furnishes a fertile and all important field for work. And how often we fail to stand. Many are expended in doing the wrong work, which horse needed a shoe raced to the shop lest it should be closed ere he arrived; he got there in time, but his horse fell dead at the shop door. This parable applies to many who treat themselves as that man treated his horse. One man makes his business go, another makes his body, another makes his mind, while another expends his conscience, name and character. They have done the wrong work, and themselves are down, conquered. Some last for but a brief fight or a little journey in the world. A few years at college, at sea or in the city and this youth and that young man, a degenerate—shamed to look his old father in the eyes or to kiss his mother or his sisters. These have been the last days of their lives. Evil makes conquest of the good. With proper equipment and royal opportunity and the assistance of thoughtful companions, they have rushed to ruin and embraced defeat. The times call loudly

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