

TEACHERS' READING COURSE.

Conducted by MISS ADA V. WOMBLE, Raleigh, N. C., to whom all correspondence regarding the Course should be addressed.

Discipline in Schools—II.

Things are brought to pass only by those who have ideals. In spite of the pressure of definite every-day duties, the teacher must not lose sight of her ideals, otherwise she is lost. And she must read and think about her profession if she would keep her ideals vital. I can conceive of no drearier or more barren life than that of a teacher who has no ideals, who does her work in a haphazard way, and constantly complains of the "meanness" of her pupils.

The following extract published in the Atlantic Educational Journal, September, 1901, from an article on "Discipline—What For and How," by Lawton B. Evans, Superintendent Schools, Augusta, Ga., is well worth pondering by every thoughtful teacher. It is exceedingly stimulating:

It is well for us to inquire what a child goes to school for. Does a child attend school for the purpose of being disciplined? Is keeping still the prime business of the school-room? I would like to know if the school-rooms that preserve that death-like stillness are always the best taught schools. I have visited many schools where the order was exquisite. Not a child turned round, not a foot in the aisle, not a whisper heard, but all round was that graveyard stillness that was perfectly beautiful to look at, very soothing to the tired nerves of wearied teachers, and very pleasing to the eyes of a careless visitor. But I have often wondered if the question of discipline in the school-room is properly understood. Children do not go to school to be disciplined, but rather to learn how to discipline themselves. Education at best consists of knowledge and habit, and, to my mind, habit is the best of the two. Ruskin tells us that education does not consist in teaching people what they do not know, but in teaching them to behave as they do not behave. So education consists in behavior; the behavior of the mind when it has a task to perform, the behavior of the character in the hour of temptation and sorrow, the behavior of the disposition in moments of irritation, the behavior of the organs of speech when language is to be used. We know an educated man not so much by what he knows as by what he does.

So I have come to the conclusion that in the matter of discipline it is better to have discipline come from within rather than that it be enforced from without. Discipline is the direction of a child's mental energy, rather than the suppression of a child's physical energy. Discipline does not consist in keeping quiet, but in keeping busy. If you should ask me how to discipline your school-room, I should say pro-

vide employment for your pupils. In finding this employment lies the true test of a teacher's ability; for there the school-room is managed not by fear of punishment, but rather by the pupil's love of work.

In this self-direction of energy I call your notice to the two kinds of attention, one of which is manifested in study, and the other of which is manifested in the recitation; and on this is based the argument that no grade should be reciting all the time or studying all the time.

One kind of attention is that which concentrates all its powers upon the solution of a given problem, on the performance of a given task at the seat. This may absorb all of the intellectual faculties and deaden all the senses. Under such mental concentration men like Edison forget to eat or sleep for forty-eight hours. We can only approximate this condition in our school-room; but the power of long-sustained attention with intense absorption is one of the characteristics of men who succeed. The pupil bores into his book. He is given a task that he can perform. He takes a pride in doing it neatly, and has an ambition to do it accurately. That pupil, then, is in order, even if he does assume an ungraceful posture, or puts his foot in the aisle, or if any other simple rule of the school is disregarded.

The other kind of attention is that which puts a pupil on the lookout. The mind is on the alert to learn something, to catch something as it goes by, to detect an error, to answer a question. This is the kind of attention which should be evident in a recitation. This kind of attention is a relief from the other kind, and both are opposed to idleness and listlessness. Now in the recitation, a boy whose mind is alert, whose eye is watchful, who is always loaded, primed and cocked for the occasion is the boy that is in order, though he may give you a great deal of annoyance and be hard to keep down. Some of these days the world may find him hard to keep down, and he may be as ready to answer all questions in life before his fellows when he meets them in the sterner school that only grown-up folk attend.

I am prepared to say this, that no teaching is possible in a school unless it is disciplined. The will of the teacher must be supreme. Certain reasonable regulations must be enforced that will prevent individual pupils from encroaching upon the rights of their neighbors or interfering with the rights of all the school. In other words, no individual must assume a privilege which interferes with anybody else.

What we want to keep ever before us is the fact that our schools are the training camps for soldiers in life's battle. We must remember that life's battles are different from all other kinds of battles, and that the best training for the conflict is knowledge and character and self-directed energies.

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