

rule and measurement. Whatever exceeds the line must be lopped off. But only up to a certain point does the analogy between the plant vegetable and the plant human hold good. The human plant cannot be pruned without doing it serious injury, nor can it be dwarfed in one direction without assuming abnormal proportions in another. It may be trained and led to seek the light in some new direction, but the time-honoured system of "don't" has proved the undoing of many a parent who had no suspicion as to what the real want of success might be attributed.

Would you then let children do as they please and become the spoiled, unmanageable beings we so often see?

Yes, my good madam, let them do as they please, but first see that they "please" to do right. There is too much recognition of evil in the world. Evil exists certainly, but why should it be kept before the minds of children by constant admonitions not to do this or that when, perhaps, nothing in their natures has as yet been appealed to by this especial form of evil? Our army of soldiers is led to move in one direction by following the flag they love, not by shunning the one they hate. There will not be a great necessity for repressing evil tendencies if the standard of right be set up for all to follow and evil ignored wherever possible.

One of the most dreadful of all things in dealing with children is so repressing them that they are not allowed to analyse their own motives or give a statement of the argument which led them to a certain action. A child may commit a disobedient action from a perfectly pure motive. Mistaken zeal, a hope of special approval when the thing was explained, has led many a child into an action diametrically opposed to commands. Alas! That explanation was never permitted, and the child was punished instead of receiving approval for judgment. Every child before being condemned should be accorded a just hearing before a judge that should be impartial, and able to weigh evidence and motive. Were this plan faithfully pursued, many an uplifted hand would be dropped without inflicting the hasty blow, for the motive would be found to be lack of judgment rather than a desire to do wrong. And if the former, it is probably clearly the parents' own fault.

We should remember that a child resembles a traveller in foreign lands, and has no means of learning what he wants to know but by his eager "why?" His habits of observation are as yet unformed, or, at least undeveloped, so he has nothing upon which to base his judgment but that which is told him by those who have been longer in the country than he. Upon the manner in which this information is conveyed if it be conveyed at all depends much of the future of both parent and child. A hasty "don't" or an impatient "because—I tell you so" may close the subject for the time being, if an apparently unnecessary question has been put, but the wise parent will explain rather than

repress the spirit which has prompted the "why?" This means will establish a perfect confidence between parent and child, and will ere long lead to such a communion of thought between the two that requests or commands will be met by obedience founded on respect, and will be unquestioned because heretofore reasons have been given and their justice acknowledged.

In other ways is this wise. A command once given stands for the hour only. A reason once given stands for all time and saves future questioning.

"Mother, can I go down Harrow's Lane for daisies this morning?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I say so."  
Result—the eager questioner snubbed and sullen; the mother master of the situation for the time being. But tomorrow and next day again comes the same eager question, with the same result, until further requests are angrily forbidden.

If, on the contrary, the mother had quietly given a good reason for the refusal, there would have been no further trouble or loss of dignity. If she had said, for instance, "No, the grass is high and you will get your feet wet," or, "I do not wish you to go because there is a case of scarlet fever down there," or, "Farmer Harrow's fierce bull is loose," the whole question would have been settled in a moment.

If parents consider it beneath their dignity as parents to answer an eager "why?" when they give a command, they can save the situation absolutely by supplementing their command in this way, with a reason before there is any chance for a question.

Only by learning the reasons of their elders can the juniors form any possible judgment of their own. Yet parents will keep their children in an utter state of unenlightenment as to proper motives for any special line of action, exacting only a blind obedience; and later these same parents will feel themselves hardly done by if their children, when thrown upon their own resources, become involved in a serious entanglement. But what else is to be expected from such a system?

The next item of repression which is most pernicious in its results is the repression of expression of thought. Through this baleful influence many men and women have failed utterly to find their proper niche, the position in life which would bring out the best that is in them, until it was almost too late to be of service to themselves or others. While, for instance, the world is not suffering from a dearth of authors, and could, perhaps, readily spare some toiling in the ranks, it is nevertheless a fact that there are many who have "died

with all their music in them," by reason of the uncongenial atmosphere by which they were surrounded. Other and happier circumstances, encouragement to form habits of expression, attempts to reach the innermost thought as yet almost unformed and tangible, might have given to the world mightier minds than any we have yet seen. It is contended that if there be anything in a man, it is bound to come out. Yes, as a plant will, perhaps, force its way between the crevices of a rock. But who is so foolish as to say that the pale, delicate, green shoot which has struggled against all kinds of adverse circumstances and has finally triumphed, through sheer force of will and an indomitable sense of latent power, can in any way compare with the plant it would have become, had it been properly trained and nurtured and encouraged from its birth?

To hear the sacred secrets of her child's inner soul is, or should be, a mother's dearest privilege; but it is one, alas, which is not prized as it should be. It is her province to hear the plans and ambitions which stir the heart of growing youth to guide, advise, to pour in, to rejoice. The ambitions will seem childish, the hopes vain. It is not for her to judge, but to wait. Each woman thinks her children swains, but many of them are but ducklings, and some of them "ugly duckings" at that. Even for the last there is a saving grace in the true, pure, mother love which encourages confidence rather than represses it. The doctrine inculcated by "do" is far better than that put forth by "don't." It has been the fate of

many parents to be disappointed in the outcome of their children's career. But for this disappointment who is chiefly to blame? They were self-deceived. The glamour of their own desires shone over all the future, and without striving to find out exactly for what the children were fitted, the older predestined the younger to a certain course in life. The result has been the world's loss without anyone's gain. Many a man has made a poor minister who would have made an excellent blacksmith and who would have gladly followed the latter calling. Many a woman has become a third-rate singer who would have been a first-rate dressmaker. Many a woman has been obliged to stick to her needle when she might have roused the world as an actress. Many a man has followed the plough when he should have been an orator. Suppose it really comes to pass "in time"? What can repay the one successful so late in life for all the sweetness missed? What is to redeem the years spent in cramping, uncongenial occupation? What is there for the parents to do then but to acknowledge sadly that they have made a bitter mistake? And what goal will that do—after the mischief is done?

But the bitterest, the most cruel, of all forms of repression is that exercised in a failure to encourage expression of affection, not only between parents and child, but among the children themselves. There is something in the nature of every infant which appeals for sympathy and affection. One of his first conscious acts is to reach up his tiny hand and pat softly the cheek of the face bending over him, be it that of nurse or of mother. If

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