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SELF-GOVERNMENT IN
EDUCATION

Self-government as a means of education in schools is of comparatively recent date, but Alfred E. Stearns, who has been principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., for twenty years, has an interesting story which he tells of his early days there, when the boys went a little further in self-government than is usual. A light upon the relations of the boys to their principal is shown when he explains that he had a pretty good start with the boys, for "as a combination of theolog, and baseball and football coach, I was tolerated when perhaps I would not have been under other circumstances." Mr. Stearns slipped into his position of principal by way of that of registrar.

"The education those youngsters gave me I will never forget," he says.

"'Jack' Cates was one of the fellows who helped me in my early days, especially in one situation.

"We had a 'rough house' in Commons and the windows were smashed and the trustees didn't have money enough to replace them. The boys did what they could with their old trousers and caps and newspapers. I called Cates in and asked him what we could do about the situation.

"'Appoint a committee; we can handle it,' he said.

"So we appointed a glass committee made up of Jack Cates, 'Tommy' Thompson, who afterwards played on the Cornell team, and 'Dutch' Schildmiller, who played on the Dartmouth team, three of the strong men of the school. I said to them:

"'We have got to have this thing stopped. Can you do it?'

"'Sure we can do it,' was the reply.

"The next day I happened to go to Boston and, coming back on a late train, I found a note at my house from Cates. He said:

"'Call at my room after you get back; I want to see you on important business.

"It sounded a little like the notes I sent around to the undergraduates at that time, but that was the way they regarded me and regarded my dignity, so I went because I knew it was my duty.

"'I am mighty glad you have come around,' said Cates, 'for we have fired three fellows tonight.'

"'Fired three fellows! What the dickens

are you talking about? You haven't authority to fire anybody.'

"'I know we haven't, but we had to clean up.'

"'What did you fire them for?'

"'For abusing the school spirit and the privilege of Commons. One fellow was a bad egg. The other two we told they could come back, but this one it's no use to bother with.'

"'Where does this leave me with the fathers?' I asked, because I could see a father coming up the next day to inquire.

"'We hadn't thought of that,' he replied.

"'Well, I have,' I said. 'What have you got for me?'

"'We'll give you the information if you want it,' he replied.

"'I thought a minute.

"'No,' I said; 'I don't want it, but I may later.'

"It was two days after that when, sure enough, the father of the 'bad egg' came to see me in a state of great indignation.

"'What does this mean?' he said. I sent my boy here to be under the control of the faculty and not to be bulldozed and ballyragged by the undergraduates. I won't stand for this thing.'

"'All right. What do you want me to do about it?'

"'I want the boy reinstated. I want his case acted on properly and through the right channels.'

"'That is perfectly proper,' I said, 'but first I want to tell you one thing. I don't know anything concerning this case. I have no idea what it was all about. But my experience with boys is this: If your boy hadn't done something pretty desperate the natural instinct of those fellows would be to save him and not get him into trouble. Of whatever he may have done there is no record on the books now. If you wish it, we will let him come back and we will have a formal investigation; and a report will be made and whatever is found to be the fact will have to go down on the books and remain there for all eternity. If I were you I would leave the thing alone.'

"Well, he went away, pretty mad, telling me he would think about it and let me know. A day later I received a letter from him in which he said he had decided to drop the matter. The boy my committee had put out stayed out."—*The New York Times*.