

PART ONE

Students and Student-Teacher Relations

Young People Without Integrity

Although most of the young people you educate will have an admirable candor, a purity, and an innocence, be sure that there are others who, even if still quite young, have already tasted the fatal fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The demon has already had access to the souls of these young people, and in an age so young they know a thousand secrets and have aged in the path of depravity. We even find parents, often religious ones, who in blind security are asleep in this regard and indirectly foster the vices of their children by laziness. These poor parents abandon their children to take care of themselves, give them liberty to visit anyone, or make no choice of the companions that show up. They are unaware that it is enough to have one dissolute character in their children's midst to spread the poison of malice and corrupt weak or impressionable natures.

Among the many young people in a school, it is hardly possible not to find some affected with this poison. It is your task as the shepherd of the young flock to redouble your care, attention, and vigilance in order to keep these sheep from spreading their evil to all those who are healthy and do it well. You will never be able to display too much zeal and activity in discerning the young people

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who are the plague of your school and whose influence you must at all price prevent and destroy. Look on them as devouring wolves that the devil has introduced into the sheepfold confided to your care, in order to surprise and kill the tender lambs who rely on you for their security. Experience will also teach you that these hearts have a particular skill in recognizing one another, guess at and attract one another. Surely the nature of evil favors and friendships, for they quite soon have an understanding. A few words uttered by chance are enough to be understood; they already know one another and their friendship is formed. Since crime is the principle and bond of this union, your duty is to break it and prevent the results.

By what characteristics, then, will you recognize these young truants, and by what means will you be able to keep them apart, foil their tricks, or, if possible, work to remedy the situation? At first you will be aware of them from a certain desire they have to be together, to be a separate group, with an air of defiance and a certain separation from their teachers or prefects. You will also know them by their gestures and their attitude, by a type of isolation and staying apart, by an air too calm and quiet to be ordinarily associated with healthy young people of their age. Undoubtedly that will not be enough to let you make a sure judgement or allow your suspicions to become evident facts, but it will be enough to awaken your attention and further open your eyes. *(To Be Continued)*

