

Perhaps some one will say, this is a pleasing picture, but where are we to look for its reality? It is indeed to be regretted that such scenes are of so unfrequent occurrence, but it is far from being true, that they do not occur. There are many such families, of happy parents, and affectionate children. And these families are not confined to the wealthy and the learned. It requires not wealth, and it requires not extensive learning, to train up such a family. The principle of government is simple and plain. It is to begin with enforcing obedience to every command; it is to establish the principle that a mother's word is never to be disregarded. Every judicious parent will indeed, try to gratify her children in their reasonable wishes; she will study to make them happy; but she will never allow them to gratify themselves in contradiction to her wishes.

To illustrate this, let us refer to the children playing with the blocks. Maria asks permission to play a few moments longer, till she can finish her house. The mother, desirous of making her children as happy as she can, grants this reasonable wish. Here is a judicious indulgence. But suppose again that the children had continued playing, without regard to their mother's command. They intend perhaps to continue their amusement, only till they complete the pile then in progress. Here is an act of direct disobedience. The children are consulting their own inclinations instead of the commands of their mother. A judicious parent will not allow such an act to pass unnoticed or unpunished. She may perhaps think, considering the circumstances of the case, that a serious reprimand is all that is required. But she will not fail to seize upon the occasion to instil into their minds a lesson of obedience.

It is said that by noticing such little things a mother must be continually finding fault? but it is not a *little thing* for a child to disobey a mother's commands. This one act of disregarding authority, prepares the way for another. It is the commencement of evil which must be resisted. The very first appearances of insubordination must be checked. There are doubtless cases of trifling faults occurring, which a wise parent will judge it expedient to overlook. Children will be thoughtless and inadvertent. They will occasionally err from strict propriety, without any real intention of doing wrong. Judgment is here requisite in deciding what things must be overlooked. But we may be assured, I think, that direct and open disobedience is not, in any case, to be classed among the number of trifling faults. The eating of forbidden fruit banished our first parents from paradise. The atrocity of the offence consisted in its disobedience to a Divine command.

Now every mother has power to obtain prompt obedience, if she commence with her children when they are young. They are then entirely in her hands. All their enjoyments are at her disposal. God has thus given her all the power, that she may govern and guide them as she pleases. We have endeavoured to show, by the preceding illustrations, that the fundamental principle of government is, *When you do give a command, invariably enforce its obedience.* And God has given every mother the power. He has placed in your hands a helpless