

"No, my dear; you must wait till the lessons are done. You know you must push on, and have them perfectly done. Lessons first and play afterwards, you know—that is the way to be a scholar."

Frank looked with a sigh at the grass-plot, and his hoop, lying so temptingly there, under the elm-tree; then, fetching his books out of the hall, and cleaning his slate, he commenced operations.

"What lessons have you to-night, dear?"

"English history, mamma; and parsing, geography and composition, and Latin grammar, and French verbs, and then this sum in fractions to prove!" and the little fellow sighed again, and looked at his hoop. There was no play to-night, at any rate.

"There, I think I know it now," said he; and laying his tiny hand on the page, so as to hide the words, he began to recite his geographical lessons. The reader will not be surprised to learn that his childish pronunciation of the alien words was such as Mr. Lee's German professor would hardly have commended; neither will we inquire too impertinently into the value and permanence of the ideas they conveyed:—

"The Thuringian states comprise the grand duchy of Sachsen Weimar Eisenach, the three Sachsen duchies of Coburg Gotha, Meiningen, and Altenburg, the two Reus principalities of Greitz and Schleitz, and the two Schwarzenburg principalities of Rudolstadt and Sondershausen. Their united areas are 4,934 square miles, with a population of 970,000.' There, I'm glad I've done with that. Now for the sum."

For awhile nothing was heard but the scratching of the pencil, and a gentle rustling sound, as the breeze blew the long flower-starred jasmine branches across the window.

"Oh, mamma, my head does ache; can't I finish this sum to-morrow, or ask Mr. Lee to excuse it?"

"No, dear; it *must* be done. You know papa wishes you to *push on*, and learn as much as you can." And Mrs. Denton put another leaf into her Berlin work, and went on with "Queechy."

The little fingers closed over the pencil once more, and the sleepy eyes bent down on their task. But time conquers most things; and when eight o'clock struck the last lesson was mastered, the last verb learned, the last line construed; and, with a languid "Good-night, mamma," and a confused conglomeration of Sachsen duchies, verbs, fractions, parts of speech, and Latin numbers, Frank went up stairs to bed.

"Lessons all prepared?" said Mr. Denton, as he came in from business, and stretched himself in the great easy chair.

"Yes, all of them. Don't you think, my dear, Mr. Lee pushes Frank on a little too fast? You know he is but a child yet—not nine years old—and he does not seem well; besides —"

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense. Why, when I was a boy, I did twice as much. I mean to ask Mr. Lee next quarter about his learning Greek. He's a clever child, and it's a pity he should not be kept up to the mark; besides, you know, he'll never get on when he goes to the grammar school without a good knowledge of the classics, and I'm determined to make a scholar of him—nothing like keeping children up to the mark."

So the subject passed. Mr. Denton was away on business all day, and when he came home Frank was generally gone to bed, so he did not notice the heavy eye and flushed cheek, nor the pale forehead and trembling hand; he only knew that his little boy had begun to construe Cæsar and work sums in fractions, that he had taken the first prize in history, and could match his compositions with those of the biggest boy in the school; he was going to be a scholar, a credit to the family, as Mr. Denton had made up his mind he *should* be, and that was quite sufficient.

"From the centre A, at the distance A B, describe the circle B C D," murmured little Frank, as the tides of sleep drove back life's weeds and pebbles on the bright shores of dreamland. Yes, he was "pushing on;" but *where?* That was another question altogether.

Mrs. Dale, the lady who lived at the cottage a little beyond Mr. Denton's, was also a woman who had her own views of education, and always paid the best price for it. She expected the best article too, though not so particular as Mr. D. about having plenty of it. So, though Harry Dale was more than eight years old, he never went to school more than two hours in a day, and the rest of the time was spent in roving with his mamma and sister through the glens, and woods, and meadows that cluster so closely round the town of H—, gathering wild flowers, ferns, and mosses, and arranging them in vases at home (Mrs. Dale was not so fastidious as some ladies are about having flowers littering the parlour), learning their names the while, or examining their delicate structure, and listening with eager interest, as his mamma told him stories of distant lands, their trees, and birds, and flowers, and then led him on from this to the kind and loving Father who gave the forest its glowing tints, the birds their voices of music, and all nature its loveliness.

People laughed at Mrs. Dale for calling this education, and expatiated largely on the folly of parents who sent their children to school only a quarter of the time, and yet paid full terms. Divers were the shrewd predictions as to the harvest which would be reaped from a seed-time so irregular, and many the far-seeing hints which were dropped on the subject. "They knew what would come of such vagaries." "Talk of educating children in fields and meadows—such nonsense." "Sure to make the boy idle and useless." But Mrs. Dale went quietly on: she had her own views of the case, and acted according to them. So at eight years of age Harry had never seen the inside of a Latin grammar; could not, for the life of him, have got further than the second column of the multiplication table; was ignorant of geography, except from his mamma's conversations and the stray books he had picked up on the parlour table; parsing, dates, and dictation were strange words to him; and he knew nothing of French, save from the little songs Mrs. Dale sometimes sang to him, with an accent so pure and true. But Harry had a fresh, bright, intelligent soul within him. He would listen, with quick appreciation, as you told him of the wonders of nature and art, of the great men who lived in distant ages, of the strange inventions of genius, and the noble results worked out by patience and perseverance. He was learning to enjoy life, that when the time came he might use it wisely and well. There was rich promise of future energy and vigour in those clear, honest eyes of his, the firm bounding step, the guileless, unsuspecting confidence, the fearless innocence with which his glance met yours—promise which after years failed not to realize.

So much for Harry Dale. And the *pushing on*—whither had that tended? There was another grave in the H— cemetery, and the neighbours, as they read on the marble headstone the touching inscription, "*aged eleven years*," said, "Very astonishing, isn't it, how soon these clever children always die!"—*British Mothers' Journal*.

TRUTH IN PARENTS.

Of the many considerations which impress upon the mind the dignity, importance, and responsibility of the parental office, perhaps none is more calculated to affect the heart, if rightly understood, than the fact of the unlimited authority vested in the parent.

The voluminous code of civil laws has little direct bearing upon the child. The legislative and executive powers are almost all lodged in the hands of his parents. But not the powers of earth alone bring their authority and lay it down at the feet of the parent, saying, Be thou in our stead to the child; but the great moral Governor of the universe places the moral government of the child in the same hands. He says to the parent, Be you in my stead to the child committed to your care, till he is old enough to understand the claims of his unseen Parent to his love and obedience. It may be a brief period; but it has been long enough, no doubt, in multitudes of instances, to shape the eternal destinies of the child for weal or woe. Who would not tremble to occupy so responsible a situation? Perhaps not another instance can be found in God's universe, of such unlimited and almost exclusive control over immortal mind.

Now, if it be true that the moral character of the child begins first to develop itself, and its moral powers to expand, while subject exclusively to parental authority, it must necessarily be of the first importance to the welfare of the child that parental government should be of the right kind. All admit that what is formed after a perfect model is more likely to be excellent, though it may be imperfect, than if no such perfect model were kept in view. The only perfect model of government to which the parental eye can be directed, when asking the interesting question, "How shall I order the child?" is the government of our Father in heaven. As parental authority is lodged in the hands of erring mortals, the best system of parental government will indeed be but a most imperfect copy of a perfect original; but still it remains true, that only so far as it does resemble this perfect model, can it secure the best interests of the child.

But to apply these thoughts to the subject of the present article. Our God is pre-eminently styled the God of truth. "A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he." Let us suppose, for a moment, that this grand element of the divine character and government were blotted out of existence; that the great moral Governor of the universe was not to be trusted; that what he said he did not always perform, and what he spoke was not always made good. What mind can begin to conceive of the chaos of moral darkness and confusion which must brood over a universe thus governed. Indeed, it is impossible for the mind to conceive of a moral government, and a moral governor, without this element of truth.

But now suppose this element of truth to be wanting in parental government, will not effects somewhat similar in kind, if not in degree, be the result? Will not the subjects of such government be most disastrously affected, if this sheet-anchor of all legitimate authority be swept away?

Take heed, then, parent, that this bulwark of truth be not undermined in the government of your children. Intrench yourself within