

ments, and their indulgence ; but we deny them what it is our chief concern to give them—opportunity to develop character. Yet, it is in order to afford them that opportunity, or, we might say, to compel them to that development, that we, as parents, exist. If we fail to do it, we might as well, as parents, not exist at all.

We are a busy people, devoted to business. We work hard every day to make ends meet, and, even after ends have met, we generally keep on working from habit, or from some vague form of ambition or another. We say we are fond of our children. We are fond of them, in a way—a selfish way. We see them after office hours, at meal times, on holidays ; we amuse ourselves with them, indulge them, get them to show off a little, ask them whether they have been regular in their school attendance. If they answer this question in the affirmative, and we find them reasonably proficient in their studies, we are satisfied ; we discharge our souls of further responsibility. We have entrusted them to the State, and the State takes better care of them than we could. For which of us is as wise as the State, or has the State's resources ? Have we the leisure to teach them arithmetic and geography ? Or are we competent to do so, if the leisure were available ? And even were this the case, it is not expedient to keep children too much at home ; they ought to go out in the world, to measure themselves against other children, get knocked about a bit, and have the nonsense taken out of them. "Oh, no !" we cry, waxing enthusiastic ; "there is nothing like sending children to the Public School—entrusting them to the State !" In short, we neglect and abandon them, just as we neglect our civic duties—because we imagine we cannot spare the time to attend to them, but must be in our offices, making money, or seeming to do so. Not one man in a hundred, to put it very moderately, has any knowledge of how his children pass their hours out of school, of what they learn in those hours, and of what the consequences to them are.

The exceptional man does know. I have in my mind a man of my acquaintance, who sends his little son to Public School, but who never lets go of the child's hand, so to say. He is one of the busiest men I know, working often sixteen or eighteen hours a day ; but he always has leisure to attend to that son of his. To see them together, you would think he had nothing to do but attend to his son. He knows precisely what that child is studying in school, just what progress he is making, who his teachers are, with what other school children he is intimate, and what his opinion of them is. He is aware of what kind of thoughts the child's mind is productive when the child is not with him ; not what the particular thoughts are, but their character and quality. For this is apparent not so much in what the child may say or do when they are together, as in his manner of saying and doing, his tone, the scenery of his soul. He goes over his studies with the boy ; he prays with him when he goes to bed at night ; he talks with him, leading him on to express opinions, and to consider those which he himself expresses. He never allows the boy to see in him anything which is less than honorable and decent, or the idea to enter the child's mind that his father can be otherwise than conscientious, courageous and magnanimous. The two are friends and mutual confidants ; the boy knows that his father is both just and kind—that he will always forgive the sinner, though never giving quarter to the sin ; and, on the other hand, that a good or generous deed or word will always draw sunshine from his face, though seldom words of praise from his lips. Withal, there is no humdrum solemnity and formality in their intercourse.