

tain sense, for the purpose of giving his mother pleasure. The case corresponds in all these particulars with that of his mother's statement in respect to her being once a little boy and living by herself. Those words were spoken by her to give him pleasure, and he said what he did to give her pleasure. To give her pleasure! the reader will perhaps say, with some surprise, thinking that to assign such a motive as that is not, by any means, putting a fair and proper construction upon the boy's act. His design was, it will be said, to shield himself from censure, or to procure undeserved praise. And it is, no doubt, true that, on a nice analysis of the motives of the act, such as we, in our maturity, can easily make, we shall find that design obscurely mingled with them. But the child does not analyze. He can not. He does not look forward to ultimate ends, or look for the hidden springs that lie concealed among the complicated combinations of impulses which animate him. In the case that we are supposing, all that we can reasonably believe to be present to his mind is a kind of instinctive feeling that for him to say that he ate the cake all himself would bring a frown, or at least a look of pain and distress to his mother's face, and perhaps words of displeasure for him; while, if he says that he gave half to his sister, she will look pleased and happy. This is as far as he sees. And he may be of such an age, and his mental organs may be in so embryonic a condition, that it is as far as he ought to be expected to look; so that, as the case presents itself to his mind in respect to the impulse which at the moment prompts him to act, he said what he did from a desire to give his mother pleasure, and not pain. As to the secret motive, which might have been his ultimate end, *that* lay too deeply concealed for him to be conscious of it. And we ourselves too often act from the influence of hidden impulses of selfishness, the existence of which we are wholly unconscious of, to judge him too harshly for his blindness.

At length, by-and-by, when his sister comes in, and the untruth is discovered, the boy is astonished and bewildered by being called to account in a very solemn manner by his mother on account of the awful wickedness of having told a lie!

Now I am very ready to admit that, notwithstanding the apparent resemblance between these two cases, this resemblance is only apparent and superficial; but the question is, whether it is not sufficient to cause such a child to confound them, and to be excusable, until he has been enlightened by appropriate instruction, for not clearly distinguishing the cases where words must be held strictly to conform to actual realities, from those where it is perfectly right and proper that they should

only represent images or conceptions of the mind.

A father, playing with his children, says, "Now I am a bear, and am going to growl." So he growls. Then he says, "Now I am a dog, and am going to bark." He is not a bear, and he is not a dog, and the children know it. His words, therefore, even to the apprehension of the children, express an untruth, in the sense that they do not correspond with any actual reality. It is not a wrongful untruth. The children understand perfectly well that in such a case as this it is not in any sense wrong to say what is not true. But how are they to know what kind of untruths are right, and what kind are wrong, until they are taught what the distinction is and upon what it depends.

Unfortunately many parents confuse the ideas, or rather the moral sense of their children, in a much more vital manner by untruths of a different kind from this—as, for example, when a mother, in the presence of her children, expresses a feeling of vexation and annoyance at seeing a certain visitor coming to make a call, and then, when the visitor enters the room, receives her with pretended pleasure, and says, out of politeness, that she is very glad to see her. Sometimes a father will join with his children, when peculiar circumstances seem, as he thinks, to require it, in concealing something from their mother, or deceiving her in regard to it by misrepresentations or positive untruths. Sometimes even the mother will do this in reference to the father. Of course such management as this must necessarily have the effect of bringing up the children to the idea that deceiving by untruths is a justifiable resort in certain cases—a doctrine which, though entertained by many well-meaning persons, strikes a fatal blow at all confidence in the veracity of men; for whenever we know of any persons that they entertain this idea, it is never afterwards safe to trust in what they say, since we never can know that the case in hand is not, for some reason unknown to us, one of those which justify a resort to falsehood.

But to return to the case of the children that are under the training of parents who will not themselves, under any circumstances, falsify their word—that is, will never utter words that do not represent actual reality in any of the wrongful ways. Such children can not be expected to know of themselves, or to learn without instruction, what the wrongful ways are, and they never do learn until they have made many failures. Many, it is true, learn when they are very young. Many evince a remarkable tenderness of conscience in respect to this as well as to all their other duties, as fast as they are taught them. And some become so faithful and scrupulous in respect to