

—The soundness of George Macdonald's philosophy on domestic affairs, from the appearance of his *David Elginbrod* until the present time, has never once been doubted, and there is the wisest of counsel to parents in these words of his:—"The mistake of all but the wisest parents consists in putting off to a period more or less too late, the moment of beginning to teach their children obedience. If this be not commenced at the first possible moment, there is no better reason why it should be begun at any other, except it will be harder every hour it is postponed. The spiritual loss and injury caused to the child by their waiting till they fancy him fit to reason with, is immense; yet there is nothing in which those who have the right to insist on obedience are more cowardly than this. The dawn of reason will doubtless help to develop obedience, but obedience is yet more necessary to the development of reason. To require of a child only what he can understand the reason of, is simply to help him to make himself his own god. If parents, through weakness or indifference, fail to teach their children obedience in the years preceding school-life, the best training of the wisest teachers can never fully supply the deficiency. It is common to talk about the work of the school in making good citizens. The school can aid in the work, but the homes of a country determine the character of the citizens." The school inspector, who is gifted with even an ordinary share of shrewdness, never fails to detect the character of the community in the conduct of the children who attend its school. The detection, of course, is easier when the teacher exhibits evidences of ability. The careless, incapable teacher will ruin any school in any community, however well ordered it may be; whereas, the gifted teacher's energy will tell upon any school in any community, however ill disciplined the children may be. In the first instance, it is not easy to say that the home training is at fault, but in the latter, the evidence of painstaking effort on the part of the teacher can nearly always be detected on the dark background of an ill-bred community of children. A town or village which changes its teacher once a year, because there is always some difficulty between pupils and teachers, ought not always to trace such difficulty to the incapacity of the teacher. There is as much sound sense in such indiscriminate criticism as there would be in the teacher, who, after failing in three or four schools, would