

OLD TIME SCHOOL DAYS.

By L. A. Miller.

I was somewhat surprised a few days ago when I called for my mail at the postoffice when an unusually bright, tidy little motherless girl, but who has now an excellent home by way of adoption, caught me by the hand and said: "What did you study that made you such a good scholar?"

I might have taken the complimentary remark by the child as a compliment, but owing to her tender years it appeared to me as insignificant. However, in order to satisfy the inquisitor, I thought it my duty to give her a brief sketch of my school days' experiences as a matter of politeness.

I told her my first day in school was an epoch in my life. The school Ma'am, or Mistress, as we called her, was one of the first lady teachers in this section of the State. She was a handsome woman, and a good teacher. My primer was so badly torn that my father pasted the leaves containing the alphabet on to a paddle made of a shingle. This was a common custom then, because books were expensive. Besides this the paddles came in handy when a pupil needed correction.

There is no use in lingering over this part of the story. We little chaps were allowed to sleep, go out and play and enjoy ourselves generally as long as we did not annoy the larger scholars. It was a year or two before I got to reading in school, although I could read pretty well at home. At school we had to spell, not only in the book, but out of it, and until a scholar could knock off all the words in the "United States speller," from "acorn to abecedarian" he wasn't allowed to begin reading from a regular reader. There were couplets between the lessons such as: "My son, do no ill, Bad men go to the pit."

There are also selections from Proverbs scattered among the first spelling lessons. Following these were moral selections at the heads of the pages; and after finishing the three columns of three syllable words, beginning with "ambiguity," the half of each page was taken up with selections from "Poor Richards Almanac." The first one began: "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Then followed a department commonly known as town's names, beginning with acre—a seaport town in Turkey. Then came those two immortal poems, dear to every one who studied the United States speller. The first began thus: "The dog will come when he is called, The cat will walk away, The monkey's cheeks are very bald, The goat is fond of play."

This poem continued in this style until it exhausted the animal kingdom, or at least as much of it as school children are likely to know anything about. The next one, although not a great poetical work, still lives and probably will for a long time, if only for the benefit of the parodist. I almost forget it, but this couplet is a sample of the whole: "Who ran to catch me when I fell, And kissed the place to make it well? My mother."

Another fair specimen of interest is: "I have two hands that can spin a top And climb a tall tree to make the nuts drop." Here is another important production: "I will not hurt my little dog, But stroke him on the head, I like to see him wag his tail, I like to see him fed."

How that grates upon the ears of us old fellows who yet proudly recall the days when we climbed tremblingly onto the up-turned coal box and belched forth the stentorian, yet quivering voice, with arms rising and falling, out of tune like so many pump handles: "I like to see a little dog, And pat him on the head, So prettily he wags his tail Whenever he is fed."

The average reader will probably say that the writer of this silly stuff is a fool; he understood that the literature made use of on this occasion is intended for the kids, who by the way, wield a wonderful influence in the home. But that is neither here nor there; what I want to say is that our old school books were better adapted to the business in hand than the book now in use. From the first page to the last of each one of them, beginning at the John Roger's Primer, there was fact or suggestion, that, when once fixed in the youthful mind, could not help bringing forth good fruit. They inculcated pure morals, taught manners, suggested easy topics for investigation in history, mechanics, arts, science, animal and vegetable life. The modern book is a batch of trash, with not enough information in it to raise a child above the level of a Hotentot. But why waste time talking about it?

Cattle Mortality Below Average.

Harrisburg. — Cattle mortality throughout the State in 1923 was below the average for the ten year period, reports compiled by the Department of Agriculture published recently show.

The average of horses and mules dying from disease during the year was 14 in 1000 or less than the average mortality rate. The rate for cattle of all ages was 19, one less than the period rate while for swine it was thirty or three less. Fifty lambs out of each thousand died from disease and exposure, a higher rate for the period.

Gave Himself Away.

Lady (in opera party)—"Can you look over my shoulder?" Stunned Youth—"Oh, yes, indeed; I've been looking over both of them and I do think they are beautiful."—U. of Chicago Phoenix.

Human Body Is Composed 75 to 80 Per Cent Water

People think that their bodies are, literally, among their most solid possessions. But the human body is composed largely of water, the average proportion being from 75 to 80 per cent. We are three-fourths water, even including our brains.

I have heard people speak of a person as having "a fluid mind." They did not realize how close they came to the literal truth. From head to foot, all of us are so "fluid" that it seems almost a miracle when we continue intact, year after year, apparently as solid as ever.

You may think that we become more solid as the years go by; that old people really are, as we call them, withered and dried up. But they are not "drier." Human beings grow even less dry as age comes on. It is estimated that the water content of the body in old age is from 81.2 to 84.8 per cent, as compared with from 75 to 80 per cent in earlier life. So the common expression, "a dried-up old man," has no basis in fact.

If the amount of water content in the body is reduced by only 10 per cent, it results in very serious disorders. If it is reduced 20 per cent, death is almost certain to follow. There have been cases where a person has survived beyond this point; but a loss of 22 per cent is, I believe, a limit beyond which human beings cannot live.—American Magazine.

Says Coffee Fruit Is Similar to a Cherry

"It is doubtful if in all nature there is a more cunningly devised food package than the fruit of the coffee tree," says William H. Ukers in "All About Coffee" (the Tea and Coffee Journal company, New York). He describes it minutely as follows:

"The coffee fruit is very like a cherry, though somewhat elongated and having in its upper end a small umbilicus. But mark with what ingenuity the package has been constructed. The outer wrapping is a thin, gossamerlike skin which incloses a soft pulp, sweetish to the taste, but of mucilaginous consistency. This pulp in turn is wrapped about the inner seed, called the parchment because of its tough texture.

The parchment incloses the magic bean in its last wrapping, a delicate silver-colored skin, not unlike fine-spun silk or the sheerest of tissue paper. And this last wrapping is so tenacious, so true to its guardianship function, that no amount of rough treatment can dislodge it altogether; for parts of it cling to the bean even in the roasting and grinding processes."

First Europeans in Panama

The first Europeans to visit the Isthmus of Panama were those who, under the leadership of Rodrigo de Bastides, sailed from Cadiz in October, 1500. Vasco Nunez de Balboa was among them. The records of this expedition are meager, but it is known that they picked up the mainland of South America near Trinidad and coasted westward past the Gulf of Darien and along the Isthmus as far as Nombre de Dios.

The letters of "Lettera Rarissima di Cristoforo Colombo," an Italian version of a dispatch from the great discoverer to Ferdinand and Isabella contains the earliest account of the isthmus in existence. He wrote this letter while shipwrecked on the coast of Jamaica at the end of his fourth and last voyage to the Indies.—Detroit News.

Medicinal Vegetables

Curative qualities are possessed by most vegetables and fruits. Spinach has a direct effect upon the kidneys, while onions, garlic, leeks, and shallots contain medicinal qualities which have a marked effect upon the circulatory system. A raw onion eaten before going to bed is an excellent remedy for insomnia, while soup made from onions has a soothing and restorative effect upon weak digestive organs.

Lettuce and cucumbers cool the system; beets and turnips are excellent appetizers, and celery has such an admirable effect upon the nervous system that it has been known to cure neuralgia and is of great use in rheumatic cases. Tomatoes are good for the liver. Figs, currants, cherries, and strawberries are cooling and purifying. Eaten first thing in the morning, it is claimed an orange will cure dyspepsia sooner than anything else.

Forms of Government

"A republic is different from an autocracy." "Undoubtedly," answered Senator Sorghum. "In a republic as far as you can go is to order a man to resign at sunset or take the consequences. In an autocracy you can have him shot at sunrise."—Washington Star.

The Tragic End

Theater Manager—You do not seem to have enjoyed the show this evening. Movie Fan—I did not. Let me ask you, is there any reason why the play should not end happily, instead of the hero and heroine always marrying at the last moment?

No Danger

Coal Merchant—Quick! Quick! My coal-yard's afire! Fireman—Oh, is it? Well, if the stuff be the same as you sold me t'other day, there ain't no 'urry!'—London Humorist.

Rescuer Had Motive in Saving Bill Jones' Life

"Help! help!" came a faint cry from the swollen river.

On the bank a little knot of people shouted and gesticulated, but a brave man would have hesitated before plunging into the icy torrent. Others were quickly attracted to the scene, among them a short, determined-looking man.

"Wot's up?" he asked casually. "Man's drowning!" some one said tensely.

"'Oo is it?" "Bill Jones," volunteered a voice. "Bill Jones," he gasped. "Strike me plink!" Saying which he flung off his coat, and plunged headlong into the swirling waters. With powerful strokes he succeeded in reaching the side of the now exhausted man. Then began a desperate battle, as yard by yard the hero fought his way to the bank with his helpless burden. Cheers sprang from hoarse throats as willing hands hoisted rescued and rescuer to safety.

By this time the doctor had arrived. "Will 'e live?" anxiously inquired the dripping hero.

"Thanks to you, my gallant friend, he will," replied the doctor. "England should be proud of men like you, and I trust this poor fellow will never forget that he owes his life to you!" The hero turned away.

"That's all right, guv'nor," he growled. "I don't want 'is blinkin' life. All I'm botherin' about is the two quid 'e owes me!"—The Passing Show (London).

Millions Bequeathed to Rulers by Their Subjects

Not many men have chosen to leave their fortunes to members of the royal family in the manner of the late Lord Farquhar. Under the terms of his will Prince George receives £2,000 and Princess Maud and Lord Carnegie £50,000, while other royal beneficiaries are the king and queen, Queen Alexandra, the princess royal and Prince Arthur of Connaught.

The largest gift ever willed by a subject to a British sovereign was that of £500,000, which fell to Queen Victoria on the death of one John Camden Neld, who died in 1852.

The son of a London goldsmith, Neld succeeded to £250,000 on his father's death, but, being of a miserly disposition, he lived in poverty. After his death he was found to have left the whole of his property, with the exception of a few legacies, to "Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, begging her majesty's most gracious acceptance of the same for her sole use and benefit."

Another man who remembered the sovereign in his will was Sir Ernest Cassel, who, on his death in 1921, left property to the value of £8,000,000. His London residence, Brook house, Park lane, may one day become a home of the royal family, for Sir Ernest directed that in the event of the death without issue of his daughter, the house and its contents should be offered as a gift to the then reigning sovereign.—London Tit-Bits.

Ties Given "Turkish Bath"

Railway construction engineers have found that railway ties, even when air-dried for a considerable time, still contain 15 per cent or more moisture, and therefore are susceptible to decay, since bacterial growth requires moisture. In recent experiments an effort has been made to drive out moisture by using the same process that nature does, and dissolve, neutralize and wash out the sap and other liquids which obstruct and close the pores. Warm air saturated with moisture is circulated among the ties. This opens and cleans the pores of the wood just as a Turkish bath does the pores of a man. The saps and resins filling the vesicles themselves, expand with the heat and force their way out, to be diluted and carried away by the warm vapor. After some hours of this treatment, the amount of moisture in the lumber is reduced by very slow degrees, until, at the end, it is practically dry, and the wood is removed from the kiln with not more than 5 per cent of moisture left in it. Lumber so treated, engineers assert, is immune to decay as long as it is kept dry. So the ties, after their Turkish bath, are given a waterproof coating by dipping into a hot bath of heavy asphalt.

Maternal Co-operation

A fond mother, to whom her youngest son was indeed a Joseph asked him one day why he associated with "those low persons who live under the hill by the railroad tracks." He replied by introducing his mother to Mrs. Timothy Byrne, whose claim to fame rested in her parenthood of Timmy, Jr., the leader of the "gang." "This, mother, is Mrs. Byrne, an' she's teachin' Timmy to be a policeman, an' if he gets licked in a fight she licks him. Timmy hasn't been licked in more'n a month now. Mother, she's a grand woman, an' a great help to Timmy."

The 'Owling Howl

A new-rich cockney went to Devon to see a country house that he thought of buying and as the head gardener was showing him over the grounds a peculiar screech was heard from a neighboring thicket.

"What was that?" said the cockney, with a start.

"An owl sir," said the gardener. "Yes, yes, my man, of course," said the cockney, "but what was 'owling'?"—Pittsburgh Telegraph.

Many Uses Are Made of Centrifugal Force

When you get rid of the water in a mop by twirling it round you make use of one of the most important mechanical forces. Centrifugal force, as it is called (it is pronounced "cen-trif-ugal," by the way), drives the water from the mop just as it drove the stone that killed Gollath from David's sling.

An object, once set in motion, wants to continue traveling in the same direction, and resists any attempt to change this direction.

A stone tied to a piece of string and whirled in a circle pulls harder the faster it is whirled. If the string breaks, the stone will continue to travel in the direction it was moving at the instant the string broke; it would travel in a straight line were it not for the pull of the earth, which finally brings the stone to the ground.

When turning a corner on a bicycle you instinctively lean inward; if you didn't centrifugal force would upset you.

A motorcar turning a corner at high speed would run on the two outside wheels, and the inside wheels would be lifted from the ground. Cars turning corners quickly are often shown in drawings with the outside wheels clear of the ground, which is quite wrong.

Many uses are made of centrifugal force; the modern cream separator collects the fat particles from the milk by its action.

The little governor that regulates the speed of a gramophone depends on it.

And the ever-popular "roulette wheel" flings off its occupants by this force.

Residents of St. Kilda Rely on Birds for Food

St. Kilda, fifty miles west of the Outer Hebrides, is only three miles long and two miles broad, and, being very rocky, its inhabitants have to be pretty wide awake to make a living. To a great extent they depend upon sea birds for their food supply, and one fowler has been known to catch 620 birds in a single day.

The fowler sets out with a long deal pole, nine or ten feet long, with a horsehair noose at the end camouflaged by gannets' quills. Puffins are numerous on the island, and the fowler creeps as near the birds as possible without giving them the alarm, thrusts forth his rod along the ground, works the noose close to an unsuspecting puffin, and very dextrously drops the noose over the bird's head and secures it.

The birds are treated much like herrings, except that they need a preliminary plucking. When that is done they are split open, kippered and hung in long strings across the cottage ceiling. In this way they will keep for an indefinite period, and provide a puffin breakfast at a moment's notice.

Garden Moles

The chief food of ordinary garden moles is composed of earthworms, grubs, caterpillars and insects of various kinds. In captivity moles have been known to eat birds, mice and other flesh. During the summer these little animals burrow about in the light topsoil searching for food. They go deeper in winter and hibernate, or at least live in a semi-dormant state. Although moles do considerable damage by upheaving the ground in lawns and gardens, they partly recompense for this harm by destroying insects which prey upon the roots of plants. The eyes of the moles are very small and sunken, being almost hidden in the soft fur. It is now believed that the eyes of garden moles are degenerate and serve practically no use as organs of sight. Moles seldom come to the surface of the ground except at nighttime. This habit has often been observed, but never adequately explained.—The Pathfinder.

How Many Is a Few?

"An editorial under the caption of 'How many is a few?' recalls to my mind an incident of my boyhood," writes a resident of Buena Vista, Colo., to the Pathfinder. "I was assisting my father, who was a minister in the Congregational church, in excavating a well, my duties being to turn the windlass which drew the buckets of dirt to the surface. I called father's attention to the fact that it was almost quitting time and he remarked that he would take out a few more buckets. I asked him how many a few was. He replied that 'according to the Bible a few meant eight.' Accordingly, we took out eight more buckets of dirt, and the same evening I asked him where he obtained the information as to a few meaning eight. For answer he referred me to I Peter 3:20 where, in speaking of the ark, it states a 'few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.'"

Origin of Adam's Apple

The Adam's apple, which is a projection or enlargement on the forepart of the throat, received its name from the old absurd belief that when Eve gave Adam the forbidden fruit, which was supposedly an apple, a portion of it lodged in his throat. This theory was all the more plausible from the fact that the Adam's apple is visible on men but rarely noticeable on women, and then usually only late in life. According to the superstition the lump caused by this piece of apple in Adam's throat was transmitted to his descendants and became a characteristic of the human race. The projection is produced by the thyroid cartilage of the larynx.

Trying to Fool the Farmer

After passing a Bonus Bill that will take billions from the tax payer and will prove of doubtful benefit to the soldier, and agreeing on a revenue bill that violates every principle of sound finance, our cheap Congress will now try to pass another vote-getting measure, the McNary-Haugen Bill. This bill fixes the price of wheat and other farm products above the natural market price, the government buying the surplus. In writing of the bill Mr. George E. Roberts, the well known economist, says:

"Any kind of general Governmental price-fixing is fundamentally unsound. It has been proved so by every experience that we have ever had. We have got to deal with fundamental conditions, the relation of surplus and demand. It is a mistake to think that in the case of wheat, hogs, milk, or any other produce, prices can be arbitrarily fixed or held regardless of the relation between supply and demand. It is futile to encourage production at prices above those at which consumption will absorb the supply. You cannot interfere with these natural relations between price and quantity, with supply and demand, without disturbing the entire balance."

This is sound common sense as all thoughtful men will agree.

The only remedy for the low price of wheat is less wheat; diversified farming in those sections of the west where nothing but wheat is produced.

The McNary bill will help every one that handles wheat, but not the farmer who grows it.

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