THE FLAG AT COLUMBIA CORNERS.

The school committee had engaged Helen Fenton to teach for the fall and winter terms at Columbia Corners with some misgivings. "We ought to have had a teacher with more determination and energy," suggested Chairman Ross, of the committee. "Miss Fenton took an excellent examination, but she's such a mild little body I'm afraid some of the toughs up there will be too much for her." Mr. Williams, of the committee, to whom these remarks were addressed, chuckled quietly and finally drawled out: "Well, you remember Josh Billings says, 'You can't always tell how far a toad'll jump by looking at him.' Perhaps she's got more sand than you think for. Anyway she's engaged, and there ain't no use in being sorry about it now. Perhaps she'll turn out all right."

Miss Fenton's manner certainly did seem placid. She was scarcely twenty years old, and a trifle below the average in height. But if her face did not indicate it she was nevertheless a person of unusual spirit and determination. In less than a fortnight after her introduction into the school she had instituted several reforms, disciplined the unruly spirits and placed her school on a good working basis.

In the belief that her pupils would do better work and would be more tractable if they could all be brought together and become interested in a common cause, she conceived the idea of inviting their co-operation in an effort to procure a flag for the school. Into this project all the boys and girls entered with great enthusiasm. They went to work earnestly to find ninety persons who would become shareholders in the flag. The curious little "certificates of stock," which were prepared by Miss Fenton with painstaking care, sold readily. After a few days' canvass the ninetieth investor had exchanged his dime for the last certificate, of which the following is an exact copy:

> THIS CERTIFICATE
> entitles the holder to a
> SHARE
> in the patriotic influences of the
> SCHOOL FLAG.

The ten cent pieces were gathered together and a splendid bunting flag of ample size was ordered. Then half a dozen of the older boys selected a straight young tree for a pole, cut it down, trimmed off the branches and in a short time the flagstaff, properly fitted with halyards, was raised.

It was decided to raise the flag on Oct. 17, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the admission of their state into the Union. The boys and girls worked like beavers during the days that intervened to arrange a demonstration which would be a credit to Columbia Corners.

The eventful day came at last, and it seemed as though everybody in the county was on hand to see the flag raised. Cheer after cheer went up when its stars and stripes were thrown to the breeze. The band swelled the chorus with the "Star Spangled Banner." Then came the presentation, the address of acceptance and the pledge of allegiance. The closing number on the programme was the recitation of Mr. Butterworth's poem, "Raising the School House Flag," by Willie Piper, the school joining in the refrain:

> Flag of the sun that glows for all,
> Flag of the breeze that blows for all,
> Flag of the sea that flows for all,
> Flag of the school that stands for all,
> Flag of the people, one and all.

But the flag and staff which had cost so much effort were not long allowed to grace the school undisturbed. One morning about a week after the raising the staff was found cut off level with the ground. One of the school windows had been forced open and the flag was gone. An impudent note in a miserable scrawl fastened to the stump of the staff bore testimony to the spirit of vandalism which had inspired the act. It closed with the words, "We'll cut down your poles and lug off your flags as fast as you hist 'em."

For the moment the young teacher was stunned. She was not only thoroughly indignant, but she felt the keenest disappointment. This latter feeling was due not so much to the loss of the flag and the destruction of the pole, but rather to the realization that there were wanton characters in that community who would disregard the national emblem. She knew that a second flag would probably share a similar fate. The school building was too far removed from the village to permit its being kept under very close guard. Nevertheless she was determined that a flag should fly over her school.

The news traveled through the village. It was on every one's tongue. The local paper, in a highly colored half column article, recounted every detail of the occurrence. The state papers noted the episode, berated the miscreants and warmly commended Miss Fenton's announced determination to raise a second flag and protect it herself.

The pupils were now thoroughly in earnest, and not many days elapsed before their accumulated savings were sufficient to buy a flag exactly like the first one.

During these days a taller and straighter tree than the first was transformed into a staff and occupied the old place of honor in front of the school. When the flag arrived it was promptly raised, and the Columbia Corners school was again shadowed by the national colors.

The local paper chronicled the fact that another flag had been raised, and indiscreetly added that the miscreants who carried off the first one would scarcely have the nerve to carry out the threat to serve other flags which might be raised over that school after a like fashion.

It was not, however, generally known that Miss Fenton was well prepared to defend the flag from molestation during school hours. Only a few were aware that a Winchester rifle was locked in her small closet in the entry. These friends knew the resolute spirit which Miss Fenton possessed, and not one doubted that, if occasion required, she would make use of it.

For over a week following the arrival of the new flag the routine of school work was unbroken. At the opening of school each morning the flag was raised, the entire school joining in a salute. At the close of the day's work it was lowered from its lofty position and given into the keeping of its stanch defender. Then occurred an incident which proved the determined little teacher equal to the emergency.

It was Friday afternoon and the school work for the week was about over. One of the boys was listlessly erasing the written exercises from the blackboard, when, chancing to glance through the window, he saw something which at once made him all attention. Two men, whom he recognized as Pete Johnson and Jack Welsh, were entering the schoolyard. They were both notorious characters and had been arrested some months before charged with having set fire to a barn. There was not sufficient evidence upon which to hold them and the sheriff had reluctantly released them.

They entered the schoolyard with a swagger, Johnson carrying in his hand an ax. The purpose of their visit flashed through the boy's mind. In an instant he was at Miss Fenton's desk. Breathlessly he told her what he had seen. The color left the teacher's face as she listened, for Johnson and Welsh were well known as reckless and lawless men. For a moment she felt unable to carry out the resolution she had formed that the flag should not be disturbed. But it was only for a moment. Quickly leaving her chair she stepped to her closet and brought forth the rifle which she had provided for the emergency she must now face. An instant later she passed through the door, closely followed by the boy who had espied the men. The other pupils remained in their seats, scarcely conscious of what was passing.

"Touch that flag if you dare!"

Both men looked and were startled to find themselves confronting the dangerous end of a gun barrel, which in the hands of the plucky little teacher looked cold and unsympathetic. A hasty glance was sufficient to assure Johnson that he was in an undesirable locality. His courage might be equal to forcing an entrance into a deserted school building in the night, but it did not stand the test of a rifle in the hands of the little teacher, who handled it as though she knew how to use it, and he slunk toward the gate. Welsh, however, stood his ground. He had come there to take down the flag and level the pole with the ground and he hated to be thwarted. He looked into the resolute face of Miss Fenton, and his eye caught the glint of the gleaming barrel. He flinched as he met her steadfast gaze and stood irresolute.

"Leave here at once!" ordered Miss Fenton.

He heard the command and dared not disregard it. He turned, and with an attempt at a defiant air moved toward his companion, who was already skulking down the road.

Miss Fenton watched them until they had put a considerable distance between themselves and the flag. Her face was pale and her agitation showed how great had been the strain upon her. Trembling, she turned toward the little school building, dazed by what had occurred during the last few minutes.

The pupils had in the meantime come into the yard and the girls huddled around her, while the boy who first espied the intruders, true to the boy nature, proceeded to take to himself the glory of their defeat.

The news was not long in reaching the town, where the theft of the first flag still furnished a topic for speculation.

Johnson and Welsh were seen no more in the neighborhood.

The people in Columbia Corners found many ways in which to express their appreciation of Miss Fenton's worth. Her heroism had captured the hearts of the people. She not only had gained the confidence of the parents and the devoted allegiance of the pupils, but she also found herself the recipient of various sorts of testimonials from the several orders and organizations of the neighborhood, who fell into a way of outdoing one another in evidence of their admiration for her courage.

The story of her undaunted confronting of the ruffians in the defense of the flag traveled through the newspapers of all the states, often given, it must be admitted, with original variations of coloring. But she had become a heroine of the people. The unique opportunity which had been thrust upon her of doing a really daring thing for the national emblem was of the sort that appealed to the imagination, and made for her a happy fame. But in spite of desirable invitations to other schools Miss Fenton remained at her humble desk at the Corners for two years. Then the principalship of the Aurora Literary Institute for young ladies was pressed upon her in such terms that she could no longer refuse to accept the larger responsibilities.

Mr. Williams is still a member of the school committee of Columbia Corners, and he never drives by the school house without stopping to look at the stars and stripes which are raised every morning of the session. If a friend is with him he always relates the story of Miss Fenton's school flag movement and her defense of it. "And now the young ones get out and cheer 'Old Glory' every day. And when there is an anniversary of anything big in the history of the country they have to have a time over it around the flagpole. Columbus Day is coming, and we're not going to be outdone here by any school in the state. All the folks 'round in the district are going to come here and help the school celebrate old Columbus. We've got to get a new flag for that day, I reckon; that one is getting to look like one of our old battleflags." Then he goes back to Miss Fenton, who started it all, and after vividly describing how the mild looking teacher balked the two ruffians, usually winds up by remarking, "You remember Josh Billings says you can't always tell how far a toad'll jump by looking at him."

HAROLD ROBERTS.

MILES AND MILES OF SALT.

The Saline Incrustation of the Famous Persian Desert.

One of the natural curiosities of Asia is the Great Salt Desert of Persia, which covers a large territory about 70 miles south of Teheran. C. E. Biddulph, who recently visited this place, says that Darya-i-Namak is an extensive tract of ground, sloping on all sides toward the center, covered with an incrustation of solid salt several feet thick in most places, while in some parts it is of unknown depth. As he saw it from the mountain top it stretched away for many miles, appearing like a vast frozen lake. It extended as far as the eye could reach toward the south and west, and glistened in the sun like a sheet of glass.

His party finally approached the margin of the salt plain and decided to cross it. They found swampy ground for a mile or so and then entered upon the sheet of salt itself. Near the edge the incrustation was thin and the salt sheet was soft, sloppy and mixed with earth. At a distance of three or four miles from the edge the salt looked like solid ice as it is seen on any pond in northern latitudes during the winter. The surface was not quite level, but resembled that of ice which had partially thawed and then frozen again after a slight fall of snow. Of the solidity of this incrustation there could be no doubt, for camels, horses and mules were traveling over it without a vibration of any kind being perceptible.

After marching for about eight miles upon this unusual surface the party halted to examine its composition. They tried, by means of a hammer and an iron tent peg, to break off a block of salt to carry away as a specimen. The salt, however, was so very hard that they could make no impression upon it. They managed at last in another place to chip off a lot of fragments which were of the purest white. In two or three days they had absorbed so much moisture that they became soft and slaty-blue in color.—Goldthwaite's Geographical Magazine.

Foreign Paper Money.

The Bank of England note is five inches by eight in dimensions and is printed in black ink on Irish linen, water-lined paper, plaid white, with ragged edges.

The notes of the Banque de France are made of white, water-lined paper, printed in blue and black, with numerous mythological and allegorical pictures and running in denominations from the twenty-franc note to the one thousand franc.

South American currency, in most countries, is about the size and general appearance of American bills, except that cinnamon brown and slate blue are the prevailing colors, and that Spanish and Portugese are the languages engraved on the face.

The German currency is rather artistic. The bills are printed in green and black. They run in denominations from five to one thousand marks. Their later bills are printed on silk fiber paper.

The Chinese paper currency is in red, white and yellow paper, with gilt lettering and gorgeous little hand drawn devices. The bills, to the ordinary financier, might pass for washing bills, but they are worth good money in the Flowery Kingdom.

Italian notes are of all sizes, shapes and colors. The smaller bills—five and ten lire notes—are printed on white paper in pink, blue and carmine inks, and ornamented with a finely-engraved vignette of King Humbert.

The one-hundred rouble note of Russia is barred from top to bottom with all the colors of the rainbow, blended as when shown through a prism. In the center, in bold relief, stands a large, finely executed vignette of the Empress Catherine I. This is in black. The other engraving is not at all intricate or elaborate, but is well done in dark and light brown and black inks.

The Australian bill is printed on light-colored, thick paper, which shows none of the silk fiber marks or geometric lines used in American currency as a protection against counterfeiting.

Animals' Lack of Sense.

Some animals exhibit a queer lack of sense, says a man who has observed them. Put a buzzard in a pen about six feet square, and it is as much a prisoner as though it were shut up in a box. This is because buzzards always begin their flight by taking a short run, and they either can not or will not attempt to fly unless they can do so. Again, take a common bumble bee and put it into a goblet. It will remain a prisoner for hours, trying to escape through the sides, without even thinking of escaping from the top. So also a bat can not rise from a perfectly level surface. Although it is remarkably nimble in its flight when once on the wing, and can fly for many hours at a time without taking the least rest, if placed on the floor or on flat ground it is absolutely unable to use its wings. The only thing it can do is to shuffle helplessly and painfully along until it reaches some trifling elevation, from which it can throw itself into the air, when at once it is off like a flash.

Expense No Object.

Tantivy Tooler—You ought to go to Europe this year; it's cheaper than staying home.

Jack Lever—Yes; that's why I prefer to stay home.—Puck.

For Lack of Food.

First Seaside Girl—There's a great man-eating shark down on the beach, dead. What do you suppose killed him?

Second Seaside Girl—Starvation, probaly if he was a man-eating shark.—Life.

In the Theater.

"Confound that woman and her hat!"

"Never mind, old man. Her halo in heaven will not be big enough to get in any one's way."—Puck.

In the School for Scandal.

Mrs. Gossip—Yes; they are matched, but not mated.

Mr. Quiz—Er—; sort of friction-match, eh?—Puck.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.

Estate of Ezekiel Cole, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary on the estate of Ezekiel Cole, deceased, have been granted to H. H. Grotz, to whom all persons indebted to said estate are requested to make payment, and those having claims or demands will make known the same without delay.

H. H. GROTZ,
Executor.