

A Story for Teachers and Scholars.

IN the autumn of 1842, I received a visit from one of the Superintending School Committee of the town of G—, in the State of New Hampshire. He introduced himself as Mr. Brown, and at once proceeded to his business. He wished to employ a teacher for one of the schools in his town. He ran his eye over my frame, and I saw the result was satisfactory, for he immediately expressed a desire to secure my services. I asked him what sort of a school it was.

"Well," he said, with a peculiar nasal twang, and a pronunciation not set down by any of our lexicographers, "it's a pooty tarnation hard school, now, I tell ye. But ye've got the bone an' muscle, an' I reckon as how ye might dew it."

He again ran his eyes over my large, sinewy frame, and rubbed his hands with evident satisfaction.

"Have scholars been in the habit of gaining control of the school?" I asked.

"Lord bless ye, yes. Why, no master can stand it a week. Ye see, Squire, thar's some pooty all-fired stout boys in that ere school. Ye see they work in swamps, an' they're kind o' rough in their ways. We heard tell o' ye, an' I was sent to see ye. An' I was privileged to offer ye forty dollars a month of ye'd only come and keep it. That's more'n twice as much as we've ever paid afore."

"How large is the school?" I asked.

"Well—thar's nigh onto sixty scholars all told, when they come—some boys an' girls."

I had heard of the school before, and been acquainted with an excellent teacher who had been thrown out from the school house and rolled in a snow bank by the large boys; yet I resolved to go and try it. Of personal danger I had no fear, for I happened to possess a large frame and a proportionate amount of nerve and muscle. I exercised freely in a gymnasium, and there was not another man in the place who could at all hold his strength by side of mine. Nature had been lavish in her favors, and evil habits had not impaired the faculties God had given me.

I told Mr. Brown I would keep the school. It was to commence the first day of December, and to continue three months. But I told him I must have my own way. That in all things appertaining to the school, I must be master—that my will must be absolute, even to casting out of half the scholars. He said I should have my own way; and he pledged his word that the committee should not interfere in any way, not under any circumstances.

At the appointed time I packed up my wardrobe and school books, and started for G—. When I reached the village I learned that my school was in a distant part of the town—in a rugged region known as Rawbone Hollow. On the following morning Mr. Brown took me "over" in his sleigh. I found my school house on the edge of quite a settlement, which was located in a wide valley, with high black mountains upon all sides. I was taken at once to the place where I was to board, and in this latter respect I was fortunate.

My host's name was Elias Bonny. He was a well-to-do farmer—about forty-five years of age, a firm, intelligent man, and one of the select men of the town. He had five children that were to attend the schools—the oldest being a girl of nineteen, named Lydia, and the youngest a boy of seven.

Mr. Brown remained for dinner, and then took his leave; and as soon as I was alone with Mr. Bonny, I began to inquire particularly about the school. My host shook his head with a dubious expression.

"You know what boys are," he said, "especially if they've had their own way for a long time. For six winters we've had no school here that could be called a school. There's quite a number of stout boys, and they generally contrive to get the master out at the end of the week. But I think they will find it hard to put you out."

"I don't know," I replied. "But I really shouldn't want them to try it, for I'm not apt to be very considerate when acting on the defensive against anere brute force."

Bonny said he should think it would be dangerous for the scholars to make the attempt. "But," he added with another dubious shake of the head, "the boys are not only stout and hearty, but there's a number of them. Once get 'em started, and they don't fear anything. They've had some pretty stout masters to deal with."

"But how many are there in the school," I asked, "who are really bad—who are ready to go ahead in any evil pranks?"

Bonny pondered a few minutes and then replied:

"Why, there's only two of them that are really ugly; and even they ain't ready in cases of need, but they seemed determined to resist the master."

We kept up the conversation at inter-

vals, until bed-time, and when I retired for the night I had about made up my mind as to the nature of the work I had to do. I had learned enough to assure me of several important facts. In this first time, each succeeding master had gone into the school house with the firm conviction that he had to fight his way through. This very feeling had served to excite his combativeness, so that his position to the scholars was an antagonistic one. The result had been inevitable. At fighting, the large scholars were handy, they had prepared for it, and expected it, and, consequently, were easily led to an exhibition of their pugnacious qualities.

On the next morning, I went to the school house a little earlier than the usual hour for commencing. I found the building nearly new, and looking clean and neat. I liked that. I went in and arranged my books on the desk. Mr. Bonny had given me the key to this desk, at the same time informing me that he believed there were some implements there I might need. I found a heavy rock maple ferule, some two feet long by two inches wide, and three-quarters of an inch thick.

It was a perfect club, and was more-over, enough to excite the ire of any decent person who might see it brandished about in the hands of a superior. It was not alone. It had a companion in the shape of a long, stout heavy rawhide or "green hide," as they are sometimes called. I left them remain in the desk.

At nine o'clock I rang the hand bell with which my host had supplied me, and the scholars took their seats. The school was full, and as I glanced carefully around I was pleased with the appearance of most of the scholars. They were a comely, intelligent looking set for such a place. But among the larger boys were some faces which I wished to study.

John Putney and Stephen Oliver had been so thoroughly described to me that I recognized them the moment I put my eyes upon them. They were two hard looking customers, especially the former, Putney was tall and stout, with a head and shoulders not unlike those of a bull. He wore a scowl upon his face, and seemed to lean back in his seat like one who held sway over all around. When I first came to him in my sweeping glance I caught his eye. He tried hard to keep up his glance, but in a very few seconds, his lips trembled and his eyes sank. I knew I could conquer him in any way.

Stephen Oliver was not so tall as John Putney, though some said stronger. But he was a better man. His face was more intelligent, and he had some pride.

As soon as all was still I made a few remarks. I opened my desk and drew forth the ponderous ferule and rawhide.

"Do these belong to any one in school?" I asked, holding them up.

No one answered. I then asked Lydia Bonny if she knew to whom they belonged. She said she believed their last teacher brought them. I then stepped down and put them both into the stove.

After this I told the scholars that I had come there to teach them—to help them to an education which should fit them better for the various paths in life they might be called upon to pursue. I pictured to them the educated man and woman in contrast with the ignorant, and urged them to weigh well the considerations I gave them. I called up all my powers of imagination and simplification in portraying the happy results of education. "And," said I, "I have come to help give you this education, if you only receive it. And in order to gain it properly—in order to have a profitable school—we must have order and regularity. We must all behave properly. Now I am sure you don't know so much of arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, and other branches of common schools as I do; consequently I feel it my duty to impart to you all the information upon these subjects that I can. You certainly know how to behave. You know how to behave properly—how to be quiet, studious and peaceable. If there is a scholar present who does not know how to do this, will he or she rise? I am in earnest. If no one rises I shall consider that I have an assurance from each and every one of you that you know how to behave properly in school."

I waited some moments, but no one arose. But I could see that Mr. John Putney was uneasy. He seemed to be fearing that I was compromising him in advance of his will. However, I appeared not to notice him.

"Very well," said I, with a grateful smile, "I thank you for your assurance. And now I am going to place the government of the school at your disposal. You are all voters and I wish you to exercise the privilege. Shall we have, through the coming three months, an orderly, model school? All in favor of that will hold up their right hand."

The girls commenced first. "Come," I urged, "I want you all to vote one way or the other. I shall think all who

do not vote on this side mean to vote on the other. All up."

By this time every right hand was up save Putney's and Oliver's. The latter had got his hand half up when I saw Putney catch it by the elbow and pull it back.

"Down," I said. "Now are there any of an opposite mind?"

John Putney hesitated, but I saw he was anxious to raise his hand.

"If there are any who do not wish an orderly school, I should be pleased to know it," I resumed, "for I am determined not to have scholars here who need to be forced into obedience. I am not fond of punishing."

Putney's hand came up with a nervous jerk, and I saw him push Oliver's up; but I had caught the latter's eye, and he gave up to the influence of an imploring glance.

"What is your name?" I asked.

"My name is John Putney, the world over," he replied, in a coarse, impudent tone, but there was an effort in it.

"And you do not desire a good, orderly school?"

"Well, I don't care much one way or t'other," he answered in the same tone, but with increased effort, and I could see too that he was trembling his strength away fast.

"Very well," I said, in a firm, but yet kind tone, "if such is your opinion, then your presence here will not only be useless to yourself, but a great detriment to the rest of the school. So you can retire before we proceed any further. But should you at any time make up your mind to come in with the determination to be orderly and gentlemanly, you can return."

As I spoke I stepped down and opened the door.

"You can leave," I said.

"S'posin' I'd rather stay here?" returned he, turning pale.

"But you can't stay here!" I resumed in a tone and with a look that made him start. We cannot have you here. For the good of the school alone, you must leave. I can wait but a moment longer."

The fellow seemed determined to try my strength. But he might as well have thought of facing a thunderbolt. I was nerved up to my most powerful mood. I felt in my arms and hands, that were I then where Sampson once was, I could pull down the pillars of the temple-roof.

I walked slowly up to the man's seat, (for he was a man in age and size, coming one and twenty within a month) and placing my hands upon his collar. He grasped the edge of the low desk before him and held on. With one mighty effort—an effort that surprised myself—I tore him from the seat and raised him above my head. I strode on to the outer entry, and when I had gained the door-stone, I cast him down upon the snow. He scrambled to his feet, and with an oath rushed toward me. I struck him between the eyes and knocked him down. I went and lifted him up, and then told him to go home. He cast one look into my face, from out his already swelling eyes, and then with mutterings of vengeance walked away.

I returned to the school room, and found, of course, the scholars all at the windows, or rather rushing back to their seats.

"Now," said I with a kindly smile, "suppose we try that over again, for really, I feel a deep, earnest desire to have the school with me. All who are desirous of having an orderly, model school, and who are resolved to labor to the end, will raise the right hand."

Every hand went up in a moment.

And so I commenced my school. I went to Stephen Oliver, and asked how far he had advanced in his studies. He told me, and I then informed him that any evening when he wished for assistance which I might not be able to render during school hours, I should be happy to grant it if he would call upon me at my room. He was as grateful as I ever saw a person.

I made the scholars understand that there would be no whipping going on. If any one would not behave he must leave school. I had come to teach the various branches of common English education, and those who had not yet learned to behave properly, were not far enough advanced to be admitted to that school where the scholars themselves had determined to keep good order.

I never had a better school. I have sometimes found it necessary to punish children, but I knew that that school had altogether too much of it, and I resolved at self-defense, and to turn from school every child that would not obey.

Oliver was of great assistance to me. When I wished to leave the room for a short time, I felt perfectly confident of order in leaving him in charge. He studied hard, and ere long he became really thirsty for knowledge. He spent many evenings with me, and they were profitable to both.

I had kept the school three weeks. On the Sabbath evening following the

third Saturday, as I sat with Mr. Bonny and family, some one knocked at the door. One of the children answered the summons, and returned followed by John Putney. He said he wanted to speak to me. I led the way to my room where a good fire was burning.

I bade the young man good evening, and told him he had taken a stormy season for a walk.

"Yes, sir," he returned, in a half-choking tone, "it does storm hard, very hard. But, sir, I don't mind that, I'm used to it. I wanted to see you, sir, I—"

He stopped and gazed upon the floor.

"Don't be afraid to speak plainly, John," I said, "for I assure you that you are speaking to one who would be your friend under all circumstances."

"I want to come back to school, sir," burst from his lips spasmodically.

"I thank you, John—I thank you," I cried, extending my hand which he took at once. "Since I came to this place, nothing has occurred to afford me as much pleasure as this. Come to-morrow morning, and you will find one of the best schools in the country. We won't think of the past—we will only try for improvement in the future."

The stout, hard youth cried like a child.

Mr. Bonny said, "It beats all."

"Why," said he, "here's a school that's being going to rack and ruin for years, because they couldn't find a master strong enough to conquer the big boys, and now they're all conquered without even so much as a blow. And yet," he added, after reflecting awhile, "taint the nature of man to be good under blows, and I s'pose children have all the feelings of men. The lash may keep 'em under while it's over 'em, but it don't produce an effect that you can depend upon."

"That's it," I replied. "The obedience produced by the lash can never beget one iota of respect for the one that wields it. I am not prepared to say that the lash is never, under any circumstances, necessary—society is in such a warped and unchristian state; but there is one thing I will say, I will never keep another school that I cannot govern without the rod. If there chances to be a boy that will not behave properly, then the school shall not suffer by his presence. I will send him back to those whose duty it is to teach him the first rudiments of behavior."

People were astonished at the result of my efforts. The committee were forced to report "the school kept in the district known as 'Rawbone Hollow' to be the best in town."

So much for the "Hard School."

A Curious Theory.

The late Professor Faraday adopted the theory that the natural age of man is 100 years. The duration of life he believed to be measured by the time of growth. In the camel maturity takes place at eight, in the horse at five, in the lion at four, in the dog at two, in the rabbit at one. The natural termination is five removes from these several points. Man being twenty years in growing lives five times twenty years—that is, 100; the camel is eight in growing, and lives forty years; and so with other animals. The man who does not die of sickness lives everywhere from 80 to 100 years. The professor divides life into equal halves—growth and decline—and these into infancy, youth, virility and age. Infancy extends to the twentieth year, youth to the fortieth, because it is in this period the tissues become firm, virility from fifty to seventy-five, during which the organism remains complete, and at seventy-five old age commences, to last a longer or shorter time as the diminution of reserved forces is hastened or retarded.

An Exchange of Brides.

Daisy Shoemaker, the pretty daughter of a farmer living near Richmond, Va., had agreed to elope with Westland Pierce, but when the critical moment arrived she feared to transgress her parents' wishes, and would not go to the rendezvous. Her sister Jane, two years her senior, begged her to keep her tryst with her lover, but all in vain. "Well, if you do not keep your word with West Pierce, I'll do it for you," she said, and indignantly leaving her sister she got into the buggy and dashed off despite the screams of her sister. Miss Jane reached the waiting place, explanations were made, and she said that she was willing to take her sister's place. The story goes that the lover, touched by her pluck and captivated by her determination not to let the plan fall through, did actually marry her.

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