

In a group apart are standing,
 Two or three in converse low,
 Surely more than "*fun*" is pending,
 How much more they little know !
 "Let us try if we can scare him,
 Oh ! to see him in a fright !"
 "Hurt him ? No ! Will you come, Aleck ?
 We will do it then to-night."

In the quiet of the school-room,
 Pacing slow with darkened brow,
 Is their teacher ; and he wrestles
 As with unseen foeman now.
 What has bowed so brave a spirit ?
 What has wrung the anguished prayer,
 "Thou who knowest all, deliver !
 Thou mine innocence declare !"

'Twas a spark by "restless mischief"
 'Mid impulsive natures cast ;
 Fanned by breath of idle whisper,
 'Tis become a flame at last.
 Trifling word in thoughtless moment,
 But the tale again is told,
 Gaining strength at each recital,
 Power which cannot be controlled.

"When with public fund intrusted,
 That committed to his care,
 Was not found"—so said the rumor ;
 So, to-night, he answers there
 To appointed school commission.
 True, the gold was not their own,
 He among them was a stranger,
 And before them stood alone.

"But with such a stigma resting
 On his name in such a way,
 As a 'Board of Education'
 Would it do to let him stay ?"