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DARREL of THE BLESSED ISLES

By IRVING BACHELER.
Author of "Eben Holden,"
"D'ri and I," Etc.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THERE was much doing that winter in the Linley district. They were a month getting ready for the school "exhibition." Every home in the valley and up Cedar hill rang with loud declamations. The impassioned utterances of James Otis, Daniel Webster and Patrick Henry were heard in house and field and stable. Every evening women were busy making costumes for a play, while the young rehearsed their parts. Polly Vaughn, editor of a paper to be read that evening, searched the countryside for literary talent. She found a young married woman who had spent a year in the State Normal school and who put her learning at the service of Polly in a composition treating the subject of Intemperance. Miss Betsey Leech sent in what she called "a piece" entitled "Home." Polly herself wrote an editorial on "Our Teacher," and there was humming and hawing when she read it, declaring they all had learned much, even to love him. Her mother helped her with the alphabetical rhymes, each a couplet of sentimental history, as, for example:

A is for Alison, a jolly young man;
He'll marry Miss Betsey, they say, if he can.

They trimmed the little schoolhouse with evergreen and erected a small stage where the teacher's desk had been. Sheets were hung for curtains on a ten foot rod.

A while after dark one could hear a sound of sleighbells in the distance. Away on drifted pike and crossroad the bells began to ring their music. It seemed to come in rippling streams of sound through the still air, each with its own voice. In half an hour countless echoes filled the space between them and all were as one chorus, where-in, as it came near, one could distinguish song and laughter.

Young people from afar came in cutters and by the sleigh load; those who lived near, afoot with lanterns. They were a merry company, crowding the schoolhouse, laughing and whispering as they waited for the first exhibit. Trove called them to order and made a few remarks.

"Remember," said he, "this is not our exhibition. It is only a sort of preparation for one we have planned in about twenty years the Linley school is to give an exhibition worth seeing. It will be, I believe, an exhibition of happiness, ability and success on the great stage of the world. Then I hope to have on the programme speeches in congress, in the pulpit and at the bar. You shall see in that play, if I mistake not, homes full of love and honor, men and women of fair fame. I'm fairly sure you shall see, then, some whose names are known and honored of all men."

Each performer quaked with fear, and both sympathy and approval were in the applause. Miss Polly Vaughn was a rare picture of rustic beauty, her cheeks as red as her ribbons, her voice low and sweet. Trove came in at the audience for a look at her as she read. Ringing salves of laughter greeted the play and stirred the sleighbells on the startled horses beyond the door. The programme over, somebody called for Squire Town, a local pettifogger, who fung his soul and body into every cause. He often sored his knuckles on the court table and racked his frame with the violence of his rhetoric. He had a stock of impassioned remarks ready for all occasions.

He rose, walked to the center of the stage, looked sternly at the people and addressed them as "fellow citizens." He belabored the small table; he rose on tiptoe and fell upon his heels; often he seemed to fling his words with a rapid jerk of his right arm as one hurls a pebble. It was all in praise of his "young friend," the teacher, and the high talent of Linley school.

The exhibition ended with this rare exhibit of eloquence. Trove announced the organization of a singing school for Monday evening of the next week, and then suppressed emotion burst into noise. The Linley schoolhouse had become as a fount of merry sound in the still night; then the loud chorus of the bells, diminishing as they went away and breaking into streams of music and dying faint in the far woodland.

One Nelson Cartright—a jack of all trades they called him—was the singing master. He was noted far and wide for song and penmanship. Every year his intricate flourishes in black and white were on exhibition at the county fair.

"Waal, sir," men used to say thoughtfully, "ye wouldn't think he knew beans. Why, he's got a fist bigger'n a ham. But I tell ye, let him take a pen, sir, and he'll draw a deer so nat'ral, sir, ye'd swear he could jump over a six rail fence. Why, it is wonderful!"

Every winter he taught the arts of song and penmanship in the four districts from Jericho to Cedar hill. He sang a roaring bass and beat the time with dignity and precision. For weeks he drilled the class on a bit of lyric melody, of which a passage is here given.

"One, two, three, ready, sing," he would say, his ruler cutting the air, and all began:

Listen to the bird and the maid and the humbles,
Tra, la la la, tra, la la la la;
Joyfully we'll sing the glad melody,
Tra, la la la la.

The singing school added little to the knowledge or the cheerfulness of that neighborhood. It came to an end the

last day of the winter term. As usual, Trove went home with Polly. It was a cold night, and as the crowd left them at the corners he put his arm around her.

"School is over," said she, with a sigh, "and I'm sorry."
"For me?" he inquired.
"For myself," she answered, looking down at the snowy path.
There came a little silence crowded with happy thoughts.

"At first I thought you very dreadful," she went on, looking up at him with a smile. He could see her sweet face in the moonlight and was tempted to kiss it.

"Why?"
"You were so terrible," she answered. "Poor Joe Beach! It seemed as if he would go through the wall."

"Well, something had to happen to him," said the teacher.
"He likes you now, and every one likes you here. I wish we could have you always for a teacher."

"I'd be willing to be your teacher always if I could only teach you what you have taught me."

"Oh, dancing," said she merrily. "That is nothing. I'll give you all the lessons you like."

"No, I shall not let you teach me that again," said he.

"Because your pretty feet trample on me."

Then came another silence.
"Don't you enjoy it?" she asked, looking off at the stars.

"Too much," said he. "First, I must teach you something, if I can."

He was ready for a query if it came, but she put him off.

"I intend to be a grand lady," said she, "and if you do not learn you'll never be able to dance with me."

"There'll be others to dance with you," said he. "I have so much else to do."

"Oh, you're always thinking about algebra and arithmetic and those dreadful things," said she.

"No, I'm thinking now of something very different."

"Grammar, I suppose," said she, looking down.

"Do you remember the conjugations?"

"Try me," said she.

"Give me the first person singular, passive voice, present tense, of the verb to love."

"I am loved," was her answer as she looked away.

"And don't you know I love you?" said he quickly.

"That is the active voice," said she, turning, with a smile.

"Polly," said he, "I love you as I could love no other in the world."

He drew her close, and she looked up at him very soberly.

"You love me?" she said in a half whisper.

"With all my heart," he answered. "I hope you will love me some time."

"Their lips came together."

"I do not ask you now to say that you love me," said the young man. "You are young and do not know your own heart."

She rose on tiptoe and fondly touched his cheek with her fingers.

"But I do love you," she whispered. "I thank God you have told me, but I shall ask you for no promise. A year from now, then, dear, I shall ask you to promise that you will be my wife some time."

"Oh, let me promise now," she whispered.

"Promise only that you will love me if you see none you love better."

They were slowly nearing the door. Suddenly she stopped, looking up at him.

"Are you sure you love me?" she asked.

"Yes," he whispered.

"As sure as I am that I live."

"And will love me always?"

"Always," he answered.

She drew his head down a little and put her lips to his ear. "Then I shall love you always," she whispered.

Mrs. Vaughn was waiting for them at the fireside. They sat talking awhile.

"You go off to bed, Polly," said the teacher presently. "I've something to say, and you're not to hear it."

"I'll listen," said she, laughing.

"Then," he said, "Trove answered."

"That isn't fair," said she, with a look of injury, as she held the candle.

"Besides, you don't allow it yourself."

"Polly ought to go away to school," said he, after Polly had gone above stairs. "She's a bright girl."

"And I so poor I'm always wondering what'll happen tomorrow," said

embarrassed—"fact is, I love Polly."

In the silence that followed Trove could hear the tick of his watch.

"Have ye spoken to her?" said the widow, with a serious look.

"I've told her frankly tonight that I love her," said he. "I couldn't help it, she was so sweet and beautiful."

"If you couldn't help it, I don't see how I could," said she. "But Polly's only a child. She's a big girl, I know, but she's only eighteen."

"I haven't asked her for any promise. It wouldn't be fair. She must have a chance to meet other young men, but some time I hope she will be my wife."

"Poor children!" said Mrs. Vaughn. "You don't either of you know what you're doing."

He rose to go.

"It was a little premature," he added, "but you mustn't blame me. Put yourself in my place. If you were a young man and loved a girl as sweet as Polly and were walking home with her on a moonlit night—"

"I presume there'd be more or less foreboding," said the widow. "She is a pretty thing and has the way of a woman. We were speaking of you the other day, and she said to me: 'He is ungrateful. You can teach the primer class for him, and be so good that you feel perfectly miserable, and give him lessons in dancing, and put on your best clothes, and make biscuits for him, and then perhaps he'll go out and talk with the hired man.' 'Polly,' said I, 'you're getting to be very foolish.' 'Well, it comes so easy,' said she. 'It's my one talent.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEXT day Trove went home. He took with him many a souvenir of his first term, including a scarf that Polly had knit for him and the curious things he took from the Frenchman Leblanc and which he retained partly because they were curious and partly because Mrs. Leblanc had been anxious to get rid of them. He soon rejoined his class at Hillsborough, having kept abreast of it in history and mathematics by work after school and over the week's end. He was content to fall behind in the classics, for they were easy, and in them his arrears gave him no terror. Walking for exercise, he laid the plan of his tale and had written some bits of verse. Of an evening he went often to the Sign of the Dial and there read his lines and got friendly but severe criticism.

"Is there anything you do not know?" Trove inquired.

"Much," said the tinker, "including the depth of my own folly. A man that displays knowledge hath need of more."

Inded, Trove rarely came for a talk with Darrel when he failed to discover something new in him—a further reach of thought and sympathy or some unsuspected treasure of knowledge. The tinker loved a laugh and would often search his memory for some phrase of hard or philosopher apt enough to provoke it. Of his great store of knowledge he made no vain use.

Trove had been overworking, and about the middle of June they went for a week in the woods together. They walked to Allen's the first day and after a brief visit there went off in the deep woods, camping by a pond in thick timbered hills. Coming to the lilted shore, they sat down awhile to rest. A hawk was sailing high above the still water. Crows began to call in the treetops. An eagle sat on a dead pine at the water's edge and seemed to be peering down at his own shadow. Two deer stood in a marsh on the farther shore looking over at them. Near by were the bones of some animal and the fresh footprints of a panther. Sounds echoed far in the hush of the unbroken wilderness.

"See, boy," said Darrel, with a little gesture of his right hand, "the theater of the woods! See the sloping hills, tree above tree, like winding galleries! Here is a coliseum old, past reckoning. Why, boy, long before men saw the Seven Hills it was old. Yet see how new it is, how fresh its color, how strong its timber! See the many seats, each with a good view, and the multitude of the people, yet most of them hidden. Ten thousand eyes are looking down upon us. Tragedies are enacted here. Many a thrilling scene has held the stage—the spent deer swimming for his life, the painter stalking his prey or leaping on it."

"'Tis a cruel part," said Trove. "He is the murderer of the play. I cannot understand why there are so many villains in its cast. Both the cat and the serpent baffle me."

To Be Continued.

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FOR FATHER.

The four-year-old customer came up to the counter with a brazen confidence. "Please, ma'am," he asked, "can I have a pipe for father?" But the storekeeper, says a writer in Punch, was experienced in such dealings.

"What does father want it for?" she asked.

"Blowing soap-bubbles," said the customer, promptly.

When you want BLACK silk, you don't say "a spool of silk." When you want Windsor Table Salt, say so—"WINDSOR."

Bind together your spare hours by the cord of some definite purpose.

HIS HUMAN SIDE.

Poet Longfellow's Letters Reveal a Happy Home Life—His Love For Children Was Deep.

That the home life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was an uncommonly happy one is generally known, but a new and interesting glimpse of the relations of the great American poet with his children is given by a series of Longfellow letters which have just been purchased by Messrs. Henry Sotheran & Co., the London bookellers and autograph dealers.

The correspondence was written to a Miss H. Davis of Ware Cottage, Lyme Regis, Dorset, who was for ten years governess in Longfellow's family in America, and who, the poet says, "faithfully looked after and carefully educated my three daughters."

Throughout the letters, which have never heretofore been published, Longfellow continually refers to "the little ones," and in many of the passages there are real touches of deep feeling.

For instance, in a letter from Cambridge on June 17, 1862, Longfellow says:

"Charley has gone to town, Erny is in bed, Alice is practicing our piano-forte, and I stand writing at this desk. How natural it all seems, but how dreary to me is this bright, cool June day."

This last sentence is mournfully interesting. In the year 1861 Longfellow lost his wife, whose death caught fire in his own house. She was burned to death, and the poet's "dreariness" spoke of in the letter undoubtedly referred to his sad loss.

His Love For Children Deep.

Longfellow's deep and abiding love for his children, whom he wrote of as

Grave Alice and laughing Allegra And Edith with the golden hair,

is shown in this letter as in others. He says:

"Erny is feverish and ill this morning. If he feels better toward noon or Dr. Wyeman thinks lightly of the matter I shall take Alice with me to Portland this afternoon and bring the little one back to-morrow afternoon."

The "Erny" referred to is now Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow, a well known artist in New York. Writing from Nahant in the United States on July 24, 1866, Longfellow says:

"I send you a little of the seaside drowsiness in the shape of a letter. Edith and Annie have returned from Portland, and Erny and Alice have gone to the White mountains. Charley is here."

Bathing goes on with vigor. Sally has even been on horseback, quite out into deep water, still the horse sways and threw her off, and she came ashore by her own skill in swimming, not a bit frightened but eager to mount and try it again."

In a charmingly piquant passage he says:

"Lessons are reduced to a minimum, but the little ones are conscientious and faithful. We are also just as good as we can be."

Another extract evidently has reference to a little love affair of one of his children. He writes:

"Amadiah is becoming intense. The young lady in the red shawl appears on the borders of the lake as in the dream, and O, dear! how interesting it is!"

Admired Patriotism of British.

Longfellow had a love for British patriotism. In a letter to Miss Davis on Oct. 15, 1860, from Cambridge, he says:

"It would be a thousand pities if such a true and loyal Briton as you are should not have a sight of your prince. So I write to say that you will have a chance to see him on Thursday. He will pass down Beacon street on horseback to review some troops on the common, and you, from a balcony window, can wave your handkerchief and say in your heart, 'God bless him!'"

All these letters were written in Longfellow's plain, scholarly hand and signed "Yours truly, Henry W. Longfellow."

With the letters, Messrs. Sotheran bought a number of little slips of paper, covered with writing scribbled with pencil in the handwriting of the author of "Hiawatha."

His "Review of the Market."

It is evident that these were written as a labor of love for some juvenile journal, for they contain simple funny little flashes of brilliancy, and on the back of the last is inscribed "Written for 'The Secret.'" They are headed: "Commercial Intelligence, Review of the Market," and following are some of the extracts:

"Cotton, drooping; particularly in shirt collars in warm weather."

"Flour, quiet, except when mixed with yeast; then it rises and is anything but quiet."

"Hides, a shade easier; mine is since the cold weather is over."

"Mackerel, without change; but they have a good many greenbacks among them."

"Oats dull; the horses are of quite a different opinion. So are all young gentlemen who 'feel their oats.'"

"Shingles, steady; when they are well nailed down; otherwise the wind is apt to blow them off."

"Pork, heavy; it should never be eaten for supper as it is apt to produce nightmare."

"Corn, active; all corns are particularly active as the season advances."

"Whisky, unchanged; except when made into whisky punch."

"Alcohol, quiet and steady; it may be so, but it makes those who drink it noisy and uneasy."

"Wool, quiet; except when people get into each other's wool."

A Boy's Astuteness.

There was a little Scottish boy who had the quality of astuteness highly developed. The boy's grandmother was packing his lunch for him to take to school one morning. Suddenly, looking up into the old lady's face, he said: "Grandmother, does yer specks magnify?"

"A little, my child," she answered.

"Aweel, then," said the boy, "I wad just like it if ye wad tak' them aff when ye're packin' my luncheon."—*Livingston Post.*



Bole's Preparation of Friar's Cough Balsam Cures Coughs

Stops them right off. The first teaspoonful does good. In a few hours you notice that "tight feeling" disappear—the coughing spells grow farther and farther apart—the throat is easier—and the soreness gone. Cure yourself at home—for 25c—with Bole's Preparation of Friar's Cough Balsam. Sold by all druggists.

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DISTRICT

ZONE CENTRE.

Mr. Alex. Tinney and daughter Myrtle have returned home, after spending a week with friends in Michigan.

Mr. Jos. Wilcox, of London, called on friends here this week.

Mrs. Luke and son Charles, of Bathwell, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. John Lidster, New Year's.

The other night sneak thieves entered John Bourne's cellar and carried off about one hundred lbs. of pork. If more of these thieves were traced up and dealt with as the turkey thieves were, stealing would not be such a common thing.

Mr. Gilbert has purchased a 22-horse power engine for the purpose

of hauling logs and lumber to and from his saw mill here.

Bertha, the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. King, who has been quite ill, is improving.

Mr. and Mrs. George H. Lidster and children spent Christmas with friends at Whiteburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Eberlee and daughter Elsie took in the Christmas concert in Florence Christmas evening.

Roy Gordon is home from the West.

A large number here spent Christmas at home.

Mr. H. H. Eberlee spent Christmas with his son Charles in Dresden.

Mrs. John Tinney is visiting in Dover.

The Misses Jennetta and Bella Richardson, of Wallaceburg, were guests of their sister, Mrs. George H. Lidster, on Sunday.

Mr. D. Bevan, of London, called on friends at the Centre.



NORTH ORFORD.

Miss Nell Norton, of Sarnia, spent New Year's with her mother.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Hetherington, of Highgate, were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. D. McPherson on Wednesday.

School re-opened on Thursday, Jan. 3rd.

Mrs. Gregory and children, of Florence, were the guests of Mrs. J. Flood on Wednesday