

## A Page for Young Folks at Home.

THE SPELLING SCHOOL.—Spelling Schools! Have you forgotten them? When, from all the region round about, they gathered into the old log school-house, with its huge fireplace, that yawned like the main entrance to Avernus. How the sleigh-bells, the old-fashioned bells, big in the middle of the string, and growing "small by degrees and beautifully less" toward the broad, brass buckle—chimed, in every direction, long before night—the gathering of the clans. There came one school, "the Master"—give him a capital M, for he is entitled to it—Master and all, bundled into one huge, red, double sleigh, strown with an abundance of straw, and tucked up like a Christmas pie, with half a score of buffalo robes. There half a dozen "cutters," each with its young man and maiden, they two and no more. And there, again, a pair of jumpers, mounting a great out-landish looking bin, heaped up, pressed down, and running over, Scripture measure, with small collections of humanity, picked up *en route*, from a great many homes, and all as merry as kittens in a basket of wool. And the bright eyes, the ripe, red lips, that one caught a glimpse of, beneath those pink-lined quilted hoods, and the silvery laughs that escaped from the wollen mufflers and fur tippets they wore then—who does not remember?—who can ever forget them?

The school house has been swept and garnished; boughs of evergreen adorn the smoke-stained and battered walls. The little pellets of chewed paper have been all swept down from the ceiling, and two pails of water have been brought from the spring, and set on the bench in the entry, with the immemorial tin-cup—a wise provision indeed, for warm work is that spelling!

The "big boys" have fanned and replenished the fire, till old chimney fairly jars with the roaring flames, and the sparks fly out of the top, like a furnace—the oriflamb of the battle.

The two "Masters" are there; the two schools are there; and such a hum, and such a moving to and fro! Will they swarm?

The oaken ferule comes down upon the desk with emphasis. What the roll of the drum is to armies, that the "ruler" is to this whispering, laughing, young troop.

The challenged are ranged on one side of the house; the challengers upon the other. Back seats, middle seats, low, front seats, all filled. Some of the fathers, and grand-fathers, who could, no doubt, upon occasion,

"Shoulder the crutch, and show how fields were won." occupy the bench of honor near the desk.

Now for the preliminaries: the reputed best speller on each side "chooses." "Susan Brown!" Out comes a round-eyed little creature, blushing like a peony. Who'd have thought it! Such a little thing and chosen first.

"Moses Jones!" Out comes Moses, an awkward fellow, with a shock of red hair, *shockingly* harvested, surrounding his brow. The girls laugh at him, but what he doesn't know in the "Elementary," isn't worth knowing.

"Jane Marray!" Out trips Jane, fluttered as a bride, and takes her place next to the caller. She's a pretty girl, but a sorry speller. Don't you hear the whispers round the house? "Why, that's John's sweetheart." John is the

leader, and a battle lost with Jane by his side would be sweeter than a victory won without her.

And so they go on "calling names," until five or six champions stand forth ready to do battle, and the contest is fairly begun.

Down goes one after another, as words of three syllables are followed by those of four, and these again, by words of similar pronunciation and divers significations, until only Moses and Susan remain.

The spelling-book has been exhausted, yet there they stand. Dictionaries are turned over—memories are ransacked, for

"Words of learned length and thundering sound," until, by and by, Moses comes down like a tree, and Susan flutters there still, like a little leaf aloft, that the frost and the fall have forgotten.

Polysyllable after polysyllable, and by and by Susan hesitates just a breath or two, and twenty tongues are working their way through the labyrinth of letters in a twinkling.—Little Susan sinks into the chink left for her on the crowded seat, and there is a lull in the battle.

Then, they all stand in solid phalanx by schools and the struggle is, to spell each other down. And down they go, like leaves in winter weather, and the victory is declared for our district, and the school is "dismissed."

Then comes the hurrying and bundling, the whispering and glancing, the pairing off and the tumbling in. There are hearts that flutter and hearts that ache; "mittens" that are not worn, secret hopes that are not realized, and fond looks that are not returned. There is a jingling among the bells at the door; one after another the sleighs dash up, receive their nestling freight, and are gone.

Our Master covers the fire, and snuffs out the candles—don't you remember how daintily he used to pinch the smoking wicks, with fore-finger and thumb, and then thrust each hapless luminary, head first, into the tin socket?—and we wait for him.

The bells ring faintly in the woods, over the hill, in the valley. They are gone. The school house is dark and tenantless, and we are alone with the night.

Merry, care-free company! Some of them are sorrowing, some are dead, and all, I fear, are changed. SPELL! Ah! the "spell" that has come over that crowd of young dreamers—over you, over me—will it ever, ever be dissolved? In "the white radiance of Eternity."

### The Head and the Heart.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

The Head is stately, calm and wise,  
And bears a princely part;  
And down below, in secret, lies  
The warm, impulsive Heart.

The lordly Head that sits above,  
The Heart that beats below,  
Their several office plainly prove,  
Their true relation show.

The Head, erect, serene and cool,  
Endowed with reason's art,  
Was set aloft, to guide and rule  
The throbbing, wayward Heart.

And from the Head, as from the higher,  
Comes all-directing thought;  
And in the Heart's transforming fire  
All noble deeds are wrought.

Yet each is best when both unite  
To make the man complete—  
What were the heat without the light?  
The light without the heat?