

DICK DURDLE'S PHANTOM.

By Thomas Swift.

When Dick Durdle was fourteen years old, he was of the belief that, if he had not sufficient learning to carry him through life, he had at least enough of it to carry through life. So he left school to help his father on the farm. At twenty-one he had changed his opinion, and, like many another young fellow, determined to attend school again through the winter.

School section No. 3, of Sari-possa, boasted a well-to-do lot of farmers, who could easily afford to pay a handsome salary for a live teacher and maintain a good school.

The customary advertisements in the big Toronto papers' Saturday issues brought to hand a goodly number of applications from teachers of both sexes, and the trustees had considerable difficulty in making a choice.

One of the ladies, with a face-tiousness not understood by wise Farmer Deane, but with an innate modesty which went far to capture the good-will of the other school-guardians, signed herself simply "A Gold Medallist." Whether it was the golden chink of the signature as read by the secretary lingered pleasantly in his ears, or that he was merely caught by the strangeness of the name, will never be known; but Farmer Deane suddenly and decisively said:

"Supposing we try this 'A Gold Medallist.'" A laugh followed, the propriety of which did not appeal to Farmer Deane's sense of dignity; but his advice was none the less

acted upon. "A Gold Medallist's application was unanimously accepted. On such a trifle does a teacher's career sometimes depend.

Now, in view of Dick Durdle's honesty of purpose, it is only fair to state that, when he determined to resume his school-work, he was entirely ignorant that a lady had been selected to take charge of School No. 3. No ulterior motive, therefore, can be attributed to him, when, after learning this fact, he persisted in his pre-formed resolution.

So one bright, crisp morning Dick, spruced up for the occasion, with his clean-shaven, wholesome face, looking young enough for a handsome lad of sixteen, betook himself to the unpretentious little temple of learning.

Some forty children of various ages had already assembled in the clean, bright school-room; and the new-comer, under a few stray glances of surprise, glided with becoming modesty into a back seat, opened his reader and tried to persuade himself that he was a school-boy again.

"I say, Mike, ain't she just nice?" came in a whisper from a rosy-cheeked urchin in the seat in front of him.

"You bet. She's just immense. She looks too good for anything. Guess she won't whip much," was the ready reply.

Whereupon Dick Durdle looked up from his book, and in a moment to him the whole school-room