

village in which the schoolhouse was, did not prevent us from becoming acquainted with nearly all the families in its neighbourhood, and certainly did not prevent me from knowing every boy and girl living within a radius of four miles from the village post-office. The truth is, young as I was, I was already on speaking terms with the most of them, and, whether intimacy breeds contempt or not, I had, by the time of my going to school, come to recognize them as but ordinary elements in my environment, whom to dread would be impolitic.

No, neither the possible comforts or discomforts of the schoolhouse, nor the curtailment of my personality by the personality of those of my own age, troubled me very much as we came in sight of the village. The central point or pivot on which all my thoughts seemed to turn was the being into whose hands I was about to be committed. The teacher was to me the man of my destiny. All my future was to radiate from him. What kind of a man was he? Was he godlike in stature? Was he kindly or tyrannical? What were these floggings I had heard so much about? Would I have soon to undergo the torture? Were my hands to be blistered and my body bruised? Would the lessons be hard? Was I really being sold in slavery to the hardest of taskmasters? These and a hundred similar queries flooded my mind, all depending for solution, moreover, on the character and disposition of my schoolmaster.

And, fellow-teachers, I beg of you, do not make light of these predilections of the young people who are to be with you for a longer or shorter period as your pupils. Crude as these predispositions are, they are not to be overlooked. Corrected they have to be, modified, developed, but never rudely insulted by a lack of dignity on your part. The true king knows how to condescend, but his amiability is always the condescension of a king, the sunshine in which true loyalty delights to bask. Overstraining breeds disrespect in kingcraft and in schoolcraft as well. In a word, amid all the many failures in the schoolroom, there is no more fertile source of failure than the enervating of the teacher's prerogative by self-betrayal. The dignity of authority maintained is of more service than a hundred regulations, being but the predilection verified of those over whom the authority is expressed. The pupil's opinion of the teacher is seldom a sound one, but it nearly always embodies an element of rectification for the conscientious teacher, who is patient enough to analyse it.

The hum of industry, or whatever the censorious disciplinarian may call it nowadays, was heard as we approached the building.