

petre, until the wood is devoured through, like the sinking of a well-shaft. Now well may it go with the head of a boy intent upon his primer, who betides to sit there-under! But, above all things, have good care to exercise this art before the master strides up to his desk, in the early gray of the morning.

Other customs, no less worthy, abide in the school of Blundell, such as the singeing of nightcaps; but though they have a pleasant savour, and refreshing to think of, I may not stop to note them, unless it be that goodly one at the incoming of a flood. The school-house stands beside a stream, not very large, called Lowman, which flows into the broad river of Exe, about a mile below. This Lowman stream, although it be not fond of brawl and violence (in the manner of our Lynn), yet is wont to flood into a mighty head of waters when the storms of rain provoke it; and most of all when its little co-mate, called the Taunton Brook—where I have plucked the very best cresses that ever man put salt on—comes foaming down like a great roan horse, and rears at the leap of the hedgerows. Then are the gray stone walls of Blundell on every side encompassed, the vale is spread over with looping waters, and it is a hard thing for the day-boys to get home to their suppers.

And in that time, old Cop, the porter (so called because he hath copper boots to keep the wet from his stomach, and a nose of copper also, in right of other waters), his place it is to stand at the gate, attending to the flood-boards grooved into one another, and so to watch the torrents rise, and not be washed away, if it please God he may help it. But long ere the flood hath attained this height, and while it is only waxing, certain boys of deputy will watch at the stoop of the drain-holes, and be apt to look outside the walls when Cop is taking a cordial. And in the very front of the gate, just without the archway, where the ground is paved most handsomely, you may see in copy-letters done a great P.B. of white pebbles. Now, it is the custom and the law that when the invading waters, either fluxing along the wall from below the road-bridge, or pouring sharply across the meadows from a cut called Owen's Ditch—and I myself have seen it come both ways—upon the very instant when the waxing element lips though it be but a single pebble of the founder's letters, it is in the licence of any boy, soever small and