

Autobiography of a Desk.

I was born many years ago in a large factory at Preston, Ont., and had a number of brothers and sisters about the same age as myself. After I had grown up I was dressed in a shiny coat of varnish; my legs were painted black and they piled me up with many more desks in a dark and dingy store-room.

Many weary weeks we kept wondering what they would do with us, for we were getting tired of this cramped position.

One day I overheard a conversation between two men, who said they would send the whole of our family to St. Catharines for Ridley College, and I felt very happy at the prospect, little thinking how homesick I should be in a very few days.

Finally we were nailed up in large crates and shipped.

After being nearly jolted to pieces in a wagon, then almost deafened by the puffing and some horrible monster that whirled us along in a cold, dirty box, we were at length rattled through some streets in another wagon. It was a cold day and I shivered in my varnish coat. One of my brothers and myself managed to steal a glimpse through the bars of the crate at the City of St. Catharines. He said he didn't like the looks of the place much, but his remarks were cut short by our being dumped on the ground in front of our new home.

We did not rest here long but were taken into a room and screws put through our feet into the floor. It hurt a great deal, but we were *quite set up* after it. You should have seen how nicely we looked. I can tell you we were very much stuck on ourselves; *also on the floor*.

In January the school opened and the boys came trooping in admiring us very much. A very fat boy came up to me, rubbed me down and said he meant to have me. He didn't, because I happened to be in the back row, and his masters said they'd like him up in front.

During my class-room life I have been very much sought after, being in the last row; but this attention, though very flattering, has worn me out before my time, and many of my brothers are still in the front looking as young as ever.

My troubles soon commenced. A careless boy emptied an ink-well over my nice clean face. He got an hour's detention. I did not know then what this meant, but it seemed to console my tormentor as little as it did me.

After a time some *silly fellow* carefully cut his initials right into my cheek. I was pleased when one of the masters gave him the strap and fined him fifty cents. I thought the money was to pay my doctor's bill, but the wounds were left undressed and the scars still remain.

One lad, especially, I remember, had a new knife, and to test its point, started to jab me with it. You may laugh, but you wouldn't like to have it done to you. Soon the cuts became quite large and he stopped. When a master noticed them and asked if he had done it, "No," he replied, "it was my knife." Great joke, wasn't it? He got detention and was fined too. I was neglected as before.

I do not know how long I have been here. The class has changed many times and many different boys have used me. Some were smart—some dull. Ah! how I enjoyed hearing the masters scold some of them. None seemed to have any respect for me, however.

I remember the names of a few who worked over me at one time or another. There was the mighty Angus "Armstrong," Miller, as the boys called him; then "Lily" Hills, who weighed on me so heavily that I felt quite relieved when he got his promotion (after some length of time). Next was a boy named Davis. He always made little toys in class when he was not ill in bed, for he was a confirmed invalid and was "nigh unto death" (except on holidays). Next came George Gooderham, a nice little fellow. He rode a bicycle and could converse for hours upon athletics; but lessons—well, let's change the subject.

But I suppose all my old boy friends are like the rest of the world, and don't care a pin about one after one has served them faithfully. I say long, for some of them were my companions for more than one year when they failed in their "exams."

Now, I must tell you about my downfall. One summer morning before class had commenced some boys entered the room to study. Before long one of them threw a book at another in way of a joke. The object of this attack resented the insult and in retaliation threw his enemy across my back and a free fight ensued, the result being that after a great deal of shaking and straining one of my legs suddenly gave way and down I went to the floor with a crash, carrying the boys with me. The next day a man took my fractured body to the carpenter shop, to repair me if possible. A consultation was held over my crippled frame, and alas! I finally heard the sad news that I was fatally injured and was of no more use.

Then came the most humiliating experience of my life—I was carried from the carpenter shop to an old coal pile—not only cruel, but I consider it thankless treatment for a poor old desk who had battled and struggled on so long as a sort of instructor of youth. Little or nothing now remains to be told, for, on my side, half smothered in coal and rubbish, I am passing the last, unhappy days of my life.