

everyone was puzzled to know how he did it, as everybody said—even the scholars—that he had failed in his examination lesson; and he did not come out at the tail of the list according to prophecy either.

I speculated as I went along as to the state of the school. I pictured myself a mild state of chaos, where the master was continually apologizing to the scholars for troubling them to do anything, and the boys considering whether he had amply apologized before they set to work to do what they were requested. Then recollecting his sudden and unexpected outbursts and the fact that no one was ever certain of what course he would take under any given circumstances, I concluded that the state of the school would be mild chaos, tempered with earthquakes, but to find him in charge of a well-conducted school was beyond my imagination. As I approached there were no indications of chaos, so far as noise was concerned. There was no master's voice to be heard either commanding or apologizing, nor could any particular voice be distinguished, but there was a good all-round, healthy hum. It was a warm day and as I entered the porch I could see a good part of the school through the open door—used as a ventilator and a cooler. The boys did not seem to be killing themselves over their lessons, or on piece-work, but they were going ahead in a steady, business-like way. I had plenty of time to observe them, for I stood there more than a minute before anyone saw me. "This speaks well for the discipline of the school," I thought. I don't know how much longer I might have remained unnoticed if one boy had not closed his book and turned towards another, evidently reciting his lesson, while the other was listening intently, eye on book, to catch him if he tripped. While the recitation was going on he happened to look towards the door in search of a word, and seeing me, put up his hand. Shortly afterwards he nodded towards the door and immediately a youth of about fourteen appeared upon the scene, blushing as if he had been doing something wrong.

He had a frank, pleasing, good-natured face, and the blushes did not seem at all out of place.

"Can I see the master?"

"He's not in, sir."

I could scarcely repress an "Oh!" of surprise. "When can I see him?"

"He's been called away on important business and won't be back till two o'clock. Can you call again, sir, or will you leave a message?"

"Well, I'm an old friend of the master's and as I was in the neighborhood I thought I'd call in."

"I am sure," said the youth sympathetically, "he will be disappointed when he finds that you have called in his absence. Couldn't you call again at two?"

"Are you sure he will be here then?"

"Oh, quite sure," said he decidedly. "He said he would be back at two."

This did not seem so conclusive to me as it did to the youth, and as I hesitated, he said, "Would you like to step in for a moment and have a look at the school?" I thanked him and entered. All the boys stood up simultaneously.

"Don't let me interfere with the work," I said, and at a sign from the teacher they sat down in the same manner. Half-a-dozen furtive glances from various parts of the room and the next moment all seemed as unconscious of my presence as if I were miles away. A well-ordered school presents as pleasing a picture to the eye of the teacher as a masterpiece does to the eye of the artist. I suppose I looked pleased, for I suddenly noticed that the youth was watching me keenly and looked pleased also, and seemed not a little proud of the state of the school.

"Are you in sole charge?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you been teaching?"

"Three months."

"You seem to have them under very good control, especially as you have been only such a short time at the business."

"Oh," said the pupil teacher as eagerly as if I had accused him of some misdemeanor, and he was anxious to exculpate himself, "the boys are very good and give no trouble."

I chatted with him for some little time without scruple, as I could see that I was not interfering with the work; the boys were going

ahead like well-oiled machinery, and did not want any attention. I could see that the master was his prophet, like Mahomet with his followers. He had been keeping his eye on the clock, and he now remarked in an apologetic way, "We must change lessons." "Change," he simply said—he did not yell or shout. Immediately half-a-dozen boys were moving briskly in different directions. One class passed up slates from hand to hand, without touching the desk, with mechanical regularity. The end boy in each desk piled them up with scrupulous exactness, as if he were a bricklayer building a house, and then held them ready for a boy who came along and collected the piles. Meanwhile a boy had placed a pile of books at the opposite end of each desk—one for each boy in the seat—and the books were following up the slates. Then the class got out of their places with military precision, marched out like veterans and formed a semicircle. Meanwhile copy-books and pens were distributed in the other divisions and one boy was standing out on the floor looking eagerly about as if he was in search of some one, and then one or two hands were held up and he went and got the ink jar. In a minute or so the change was effected, the boys were at work again, and only one word had been spoken and that word was the word "change." I nodded to the teacher and went out, remarking to myself, "The best disciplined school I have ever seen, and his school, too, of all others. He is as great a puzzle as ever. But of course I should have guessed that if I had only had my wits about me. The only chance of making a correct forecast where he is concerned is to fancy the most unlikely and fix on that; and a good disciplinarian was about the last thing anyone would suspect him of being."

I called in the afternoon. The school was not nearly so quiet as it was in the morning. "The master has not come back," I thought, and the boys are beginning to take advantage of his absence. But as I looked in at the open door there was the master standing at his desk looking straight before him with a far-off expression in his eyes, far-off enough to reach Jupiter's moons, and his thoughts probably as far-off as his gaze. The boys did not seem to be doing any work; some were talking—indeed two or three in front of him were actually sitting with their backs to him in order to talk more conveniently with those in the desk behind—some were comparing treasures, and one pretty large group were busily employed in endeavouring to solve "the latest Chinese puzzle." "Ah," thought I, "the mystery is quite clear now. It is only when the master is away that the boys work and are in order. It is that wonderful genius of a pupil teacher that deserves all the credit."

The master was very pleased to see me. "Oh, it was you who called in my absence; I could not make out who it was from the description; you have changed so much since I saw you."

"You have not changed a bit," I said, "but then that is quite consistent, it is always the most unlikely thing that obtains with you."

The boys had not taken the slightest notice of my presence, and "that wonderful genius of a pupil teacher" was chattering away louder than anyone, apparently discussing the comparative merits of choice marbles, which a group of boys were submitting for his inspection. "They don't seem to be doing much work," I remarked.

"On the contrary, I think they are very busy," said the master with a smile.

"They may be very busy," I replied, "but I don't see a single boy doing any school work at this moment."

"Nor would I allow him," said the master.

"What would you do if the inspector looked in?"

"Just do what I am doing now—keeping to time-table."

"What on earth do you call this in the time-table?"

"Recreation."

"Do you let the boys have recreation in school?" I asked with astonishment.

"Yes, when it is wet; and I notice that if it is going to rain at all it generally rains just before our recreation time."

"Don't you find it affects the discipline of the school?"

"Yes, for good. It acts as a safety-valve. The boys get rid of all their superfluous talk, show each other the contents of their pockets,

and so they have no temptation to talk during lessons; and, besides, the break gives them a rest, and they go to work with renewed vigour." And, as he finished, he took up a pen and touched the bell that stood on the desk. There was a sudden shuffle, and all were in their proper position, and the only noise was that of the boys moving about who had charge of things.

"Well, I'm blest," I said, "I never expected to see you with a school like this."

"Oh, I did," he replied; "the fact is, you fellows gave me credit for a lot I did not deserve, and wouldn't give me credit for what I did deserve. I suppose I had the knack of turning my worst side out 'with care.' I never studied appearances, and when wrong impressions were formed I used to think it was no use trying to remove them, it only made them stick faster. However, if I was to spend the time over again, I would go on a different plan. The fact is, I am a true Englishman in this respect, that I have a shell round me which must be broken by an introduction before I can get on. I had a capital experience as a pupil teacher, and had read Locke, Spenser, and a lot of others on education that you fellows never heard of, but I was never at home in the practising school. I was never introduced to the boys and was never long enough with any one class to introduce myself, and so I never had any sympathy with the pupils, and never seemed able to put my heart in my work."

"Your school seems to work like machinery."

"Yes; I pride myself on its being a sort of automatic machine. I had to go away to-day—it is the first I have been absent during school hours since I left the college, and, of course, you should call—I expected the Inspector instead—and everything went on just the same as if I were here. I asked the teacher if anyone had been troublesome—I fully expected some one or another would take advantage of my absence—but he had no complaints to make, and I can tell you I feel proud of the fact."

"I suppose the school does well at examinations."

"Yes, we are at the top of the tree in this district; and it has just come to my ears that the Inspector has been throwing our schools at the heads of the teachers in the neighborhood. He has a rather high standard, and when anyone grumbles at it he holds up my school as a model to the masters, and the girl's school as a model to the mistresses; so we run the risk of either being mobbed or dynamited. If I am found dead some morning, you will be able to guess the reason. But now I supply the machine with raw material. Shall see you after school."—*The Catholic Educator.*

TESTING IRISH WIT.

THERE was an English gentleman who did not believe in Irish wit. He said that all the funny stories were made up by others and fathered upon Pat. A friend took a different view, and this led to a wager. He was to travel through Ireland, and if he returned unconvinced he was to receive £100. If he was satisfied that all the funny sayings were not fathered he was to forfeit £100. It was about the beginning of this century when he started on his journey. The gallows was not an unusual feature of the landscape at that time in Ireland. He overtook a peasant in the neighborhood of one of these instruments of justice. "Where would you be, my man, if the gallows got its due?" he asked. "Faith, I'd be going along the road by myself," said the peasant. Shortly afterwards he saw a man working in a field and he shouted out, "Ah, Pat, you're sowing, but I'll reap the benefit." "I hope you will," says Pat, "for it's flax I'm sowing." He said to himself that he had dropped upon the only witty men in the country, or else hangings were so frequent that people had got up stock jokes on the subject. Anyway their jokes did not hang fire, he thought, and this tickled him very much; he began to think he was getting witty too. Soon after he met a beggar coming along the road. (They were even more plentiful in those times than gallowses.) "Tell me the biggest lie you can think of and I'll give you a half-crown." "Oh, be jabers! yer honor is a gentleman," said the beggar. The gentleman sorrowfully gave the beggar the half-crown, and went back to England to scrape together the £100 forfeit.—*Catholic Educator.*