

THE OLD-TIME SCHOOL

By Hon. James H. Fletcher

"Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitable, gay,
There in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school."

Goldsmith.

I AM not a very old man and yet I can remember the log school-house that dotted many a hill by the road-side. It was indeed an old fashioned building, having little regard to the health or convenience of either the master or his pupils. It was invariably located where the land was of the least value, but an effort was nevertheless usually made to place it as near as possible in the geographical centre of the district. It would sometimes be built so near the road that a large stone had to be set up at the most exposed corner to protect it from passing vehicles. The main object of its builders appeared to be to see how small a space a large number of children could be crowded into. When the school was in it bore a strong resemblance to a box packed with sardines. I once thought that it was a wonderfully spacious structure, but twenty-five years later when I went into it, I could scarcely bring myself to believe that this dingy, dirty, old shack was the stately building that I in my youth conceived it to be. And yet I have profound reverence for the old log house, for from its hard seats and unfriendly walls many of the greatest men obtained most of their education. But the men and women who excelled, to tell the truth, were largely self-made. They dynamited themselves to the front in spite of their surroundings. The old teacher did but little to help his pupils along beyond