



LET no man value at a little price a virtuous woman's counsel.  
—Chapman.

## A City Lad's Delusion

By Mrs. J. G. Eastman.

(From the Nebraska Farmer.)

ELMER said half to himself, "I always thought the country was a dull stupid place, but I'm just finding out what an awful lot of things I don't know."

Jean's wish for snow enough for one more good sleigh ride was granted and the whole family glided off to church next morning. The bob-sleds fitted out with two spring seats. Both the sleigh ride and going to church were unusual to Elmer and when the girls said he would be in their father's Sunday school class he hadn't the slightest idea as to what they meant.

At the church they found only a few early arrivals and Cousin John piloted Elmer to the corner where his class sat and introduced him to the single occupant, a boy about Elmer's age, but larger. Elmer was at a loss for something to say, but not so Billie Lane; he had ever thought about it he would have said his tongue had been given him for a purpose and it would be an insult to Providence not to use it.

"You had a long train ride, didn't you?" Billie began. "Dorothy said at school Friday you were coming. Say I'll bet you like it fine at Linsey's, don't you? I wish Mr. Linsey was my cousin. I pretend he's my big brother. He'd be a dandy one. You haven't got any dog, have you? Their old Sheep died last fall. I tell you what; I've got two pups and ma says I can't keep but one, so I'll give you the other one."

After church a family of neighbors named Jennings went home with the Linseys for Sunday dinner and as they had a boy a year younger than Elmer and a girl just Dorothy's size, they all had a pleasant day. It was vastly different from Elmer's usual Sundays. They explored the frozen creek and the snow-laden branches overhanging. It made a picture Elmer never forgot.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Country School Days.

Elmer hadn't thought about going to school, but as the neighbors drove away in the sunset glow, Harry Jennings called back with true boyhood fervor, "See you at school to-morrow, Elmer!"

The next morning without a word of protest Elmer picked up the lunch pail that Cousin Beth had filled so well, and trudged away with Dorothy and Jean. "Windy Hill" school did not resemble the Lowell school of Elmer's earlier training very much. It was the typical one-room school house so familiar to country dwellers, but appeared straggled to the city lad. Some of the boys were there making a figure in the snow, to resemble a great wagon wheel. Elmer thought.

"Come on, Elmer," shouted Billie Lane; "we're goin' to play fox and goose soon as we get the ring made." "He's got to see Miss Davis first so she'll know we're coming to give him," objected masterful Miss Dorothy. Billie went with them into the school room to give manly support to Elmer

whom he admired and for another reason that he made known as soon as the teacher had been introduced to Elmer.

"Miss Davis, can Elmer sit with me? We'll be good," he said at the first possible second. Miss Davis was jelly-looking and was the youngest teacher Elmer had ever known. She smiled at the eager petitioner.

"Yes, just as long as you don't whisper, Billie Roy. You know what talents you have in that line."

The boys were still busy arranging their desk when the nine o'clock bell sounded and all the scholars came trooping in. It seemed very queer to

he came back to his seat, and he could hardly wait until recess to have his seatmate enlighten him.

"Sure," said the cheerful Billie. "That's what a kid gets for playing in school. He's got to recite physiology all week instead of havin' manual training Tuesday and Thursday. The girls have sewing Monday and Wednesday. Say, you'll have to have some tools—a hammer, a saw, a ruler, and a plane, too. I'll ask Miss Davis and see if I can show you mine. We're going to start makin' seed corn testers to-morrow."

Elmer wondered how he could get any tools and decided he must wait until his mother sent the promised ten dollars, but a month seemed a terrible while. Energetic Dorothy changed all this by rushing to her father as soon as they reached home, exclaiming:

"O father, you forgot Elmer didn't have any tools for manual training! What would he have done if this had been Tuesday?"

"I shudder to think of it; why, he might have had to borrow half of Billie Lane's hammer. But I beg Elmer's pardon; come on down to the shop and we'll see what can be done to make the matter right."

Besides the tools mentioned, he also gave Elmer a small square. "It's harder than a ruler," he said.

"I can't pay you for them now, Cousin John," Elmer said shyly, "but mother's going to send me some money after a while and I will then."

"I'll tell you a better way. You split wood enough to pay for them; you

with it?" inquired ignorant Elmer.

"Oh, it's a very ancient belief, certainly; when we see the reason for rather we must scratch our heads till they bleed and mangle our blood. I won't take except at new moon, you know."

Choosing secret signs, names and oaths exhausted them so that they fell asleep immediately afterward and had to be called three times the next morning. For several days thereafter they went about whispering mysteriously and making mystic gestures, but before the new moon changed the electric friends into brood brothers something happened that shook Elmer's faith in Billie's protestations of loyalty.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### Was Billie a True Friend?

"Hurry up, kids! Miss Davis has the plans for the bird houses; let's get busy!" cried Elmer, pulling out the box which contained his tools at the beginning of the manual training period one afternoon early in March. "I heard a robin this morning and I want to get a house ready for him."

As he spoke he opened the box and gave a gasp of surprise. The box and his treasured square lay before him, eyes, broken. Looking up he saw Billie eyeing him with a queer expression which with an effort he managed to assimilate as with the others he crowded up to see the ruined square, but at that seeing instant Elmer knew that Billie had known what he would see when he opened his tool box. He knew he wouldn't tell; that's the kind of a chum he is, was the thought that so filled his mind that he hardly heard so Miss Davis say quietly yet sternly:

"While the breaking of the square was no doubt an accident you all know you have no right to touch each other's tool boxes; a wrong has been done and now is the time to right it." Then after a moment's pause, "It's hard to admit it, I know; yet each hour that passes will make it harder. As that passes and then in her usual brisk tones, "You may take your work; here is my ruler, Elmer, it will do as a substitute."

The girls related the story at home that night amid expressions of "what a shame for some one to break Elmer's square." And afterwards while they were doing chores Elmer told Linsey said in his friendly way, "What is it that bothers you so, son? Something more than the loss of the square?"

Elmer flushed. "Yes," he said miserably, "someone, a friend of mine, knows who did it and won't tell me. I don't think much of such friendship, Cousin John."

Mr. Linsey nodded with sympathetic understanding, and laid his hand on Elmer's shoulder an instant.

"I know how it feels, old man; I've been there, but maybe I'll work out right; most misunderstandings do, I've learned."

Elmer found a ray of hope in this, but he didn't answer Billie's secret till next day nor accept the latter's invitation to "come over to-morrow." The following morning which was Sunday found him whacking away at some stubborn chunks in the wood pile instead. About ten o'clock Fred Fresh, a schoolmate, appeared and perched on a rick of wood seemingly for casual chat, but after a few rambling remarks he blurted out:

"Say, Elmer, I was me that broke your square. I didn't mean to, but of course it's like Miss Davis said I hadn't any business touchin' it. I just used it a minute when I was finishin' my work after school, and the heavy hammer fell on it. Billie Lane says it happen an' he said I'd better tell Miss Davis and you right away next morning, but I wouldn't and I told him he was a fake if he did, so he kept it till last night an' then he said I didn't tell you to-day, he'd tell my father. Dad's so particular that he'd never get over it. If someone else tells a secret oath to make it bindin' that's all 'til we see the new moon."

(Continued next week)



Fences upon which Weather and Years have had no Effect.

There are miles and miles of this type of fence around the town of Galt in Waterloo Co., Ont. They stand as a lasting monument to the heavy toll of the pioneers who cleared the land and made homes for themselves in the face of difficulties that might have daunted men of lesser courage. Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

Elmer to see all sizes gathered in one room and he wondered how one teacher could ever handle them and with no principal to send the unruly before either. He and supposed country schools to be very backward, but while they were conducted very differently the work was just as difficult as that of the same grade in the city, so he had little time for speculating about Miss Davis' mode of discipline. When she put on wraps and overshoes at noon and joined the rollicking game of fox and geese he nearly made up his mind that she had no mode at all.

However, an incident after noon caused him to change his views in that respect. A boy was busily constructing a bean-shooter behind his geography when suddenly a quiet voice said:

"Edward, you may bring what you have here." When he stood before her, she added, "You may leave it on my desk."

Then after a pause in a still lower voice she said, "I'm sorry, very sorry, but you know our rule."

That was all, and to Elmer there seemed nothing about that to make a fellow look so white and shaken when

can do it every morning between breakfast and school time."

Elmer thought that a fine arrangement and when Mr. Linsey said he should have his choice of the little winter pigs if he would feed them, Elmer felt rich indeed, and when Billie brought him the promised dog and stayed all night, Elmer's cup of joy ran over.

Elmer had never had a boy chum to stay all night with him; in fact, he had never had a real chum. After he and Billie had gone upstairs and after due discussion of the various objects in the room, Billie said:

"Say, did you ever read 'Seth Samson the Sioux Scout'?" He and Ken knife swore eternal friendship. Let's you and me do that Elmer."

"All right; how do you do it, Billie? I never read many Indian stories."

Billie had, and he proceeded to instruct his "eternal friend-to-be."

"First, we choose a secret sign so we know each other with dark without speaking, and a secret call, too; then we each take a name that only the other knows so we can defeat treacherous enemies an' we must wear a secret oath to make it bindin'. That's all 'til we see the new moon."

"What's the new moon got to do

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