

HOME CIRCLE.

HOW MISS JENKINS "GOT OUT OF IT."

It was "writing afternoon,"—said Miss Jenkins,—and my scholars were new. If you had ever been a teacher, my dear, you would realize what the combination of those two simple facts implies—the weariness of body and the utter vexation of spirit. First, there's the holding of the pen. If there's one thing more than another in which scholars exhibit their own originality, it is in managing a pen-holder. Then, the ink: To some it was simply ink, nothing more. To others it seemed an irresistible tempter, whispering of unique designs, grotesque or otherwise, to be worked out upon desk or jacket, or perhaps upon the back of one small hand.

Well, upon the afternoon of which I am going to tell you, I had had more correcting to do than usual, for some of the scholars were stupid, and couldn't do as I wished; and others were careless, and didn't try. What with the looking, and stooping, and continual shewing, I felt my patience giving way, and when I saw that three of the largest boys had left the page upon which they should have been practicing, and were making "unknown characters" in different parts of their books, I lost it utterly. "That I will not have," said I, sharply, "I will punish any boy who makes a mark upon any but the lesson page."

They were very still for a while. Nothing was heard but the scratch, scratching of the pens, and the sound of my footsteps as I walked up and down the aisles. Involuntarily I found myself studying the hands before me as if they had been faces. There was Harry Sandford's large and plump, but flabby withal, and not over clean. His "n's" stood weakly upon their legs, seeming to feel the need of other letters to prop them up.

Walter Lane's, red and chapped, with short, stubbed fingers, nails bitten off to the quick, had yet a certain air of sturdy dignity; and his "n's," if not handsome, were certainly plain, and looked as if they knew their place, and meant to keep it.

Tummy Silver's, long and limp, besmeared with ink from palm to nail, vainly strove to keep time with a tongue which wagged uncertainly, this way and that, and which should have been red, but was black, like the fingers. His "n's" had neither form nor comeliness, and might have stood for "v's," or even "x's," quite as well.

Then there was Hugh Bright's hand, hard and rough with work, holding the pen as if it never meant to let go; but his "n's" were "n's" and could not be mistaken for anything else.

At length I came to Frank Dunbar's desk—dear little Frank, who had been a real help and comfort to me since the day when he bashfully knocked at my door with books and slate in hand. His hand was white and shapely; fingers spotless, nails immaculate, and his "n's"—but what was it that sent a cold chill over me as I looked at them? Ah, my dear, if I should live a thousand years, I could never tell you how I felt when I found that Frank Dunbar had written a half dozen letters upon the opposite page of his copy book!

"Why, Frank," said I, "how did that happen?"

"I did it."

"You did it before I spoke?" said I, clinging to a forlorn hope.

"No, m; I did it afterward. I forgot."

"Oh, Frank! my good, good boy! How could you? I shall have to punish you."

"Yes, m,"—the brave blue eyes looking calmly up into my face.

"Very well; you may go to the desk."

He went, and I walked the aisles again,—up and down, up and down, giving a caution here or a word of advice there, but not knowing, in the least, what I was about. My thoughts were all with the flaxen-haired culprit, who stood bravely awaiting his penalty. Vainly I strove to listen to my inward monitor. It seemed suddenly to have become two-voiced,—the one tantalizing, the other soothing,—and, of course, the tones were conflicting.

"You must punish him," said one.

"You mustn't," said the other.

"He deserves it."

"He doesn't."

"He disobeyed you flatly."

"But he forgot—and he has always been so good."

"But you promised. You have given your word. Here are thirty boys to whom you should be an example. Do you think they are not watching you? Look at them!"

I did look at them. Walter Lane's sharp black eyes and Harry Sandford's sleepy orbs were fixed curiously upon me. Nor were these all. Gray eyes, blue eyes, hazel and brown eyes—all were regarding me intently; I almost fancied that they looked at me pityingly. I could not bear it.

"Attend to your writing, boys." Then I walked slowly up to the desk.

"You see how it is," said the troublesome voice. "You will certainly have to punish him."

But I had thought of a possible plan of escape. "Frank," said I "you have been disobedient, and you—you know what I said, but—you are such a good boy that I cannot bear to punish you—not in *that* way, I mean. You may go to the foot of your class, instead."

"I'd rather take the whipping." The honest, upturned face was very sober, but betrayed not the least sign of fear, nor was there the slightest suspicion of a tremble in the clear, childish voice.

"Bless your brave little heart," thought I. "Of course you would! I might have known it," and again I walked the aisle, up and down, thinking, thinking.

"You will have to do it," repeated the voice. "There is no other way."

"I cannot,—oh, I can't," I groaned, half aloud.

"The good of the school requires it. You must sacrifice your own feeling and his."

"Sacrifice his feelings! Loyal little soul!—good as gold, and true as steel!"

"No matter, you must do it."

"I won't!"

I walked quickly to the desk and struck the bell. The children looked wonderingly. "Listen to me, boys," said I. "You all know that Frank Dunbar is one of our best scholars."

"Yes, m,—yes, m!" came from all parts of the room, but two or three of the larger boys sat silent and unsympathetic.

"You know how diligent he is in school, and what a little gentleman, always."

"Yes, m. That's so. We know." Only two unsympathetic faces now; but one of them, that of a sulky boy in the corner, looked as if its owner were mentally saying: "Can't think what your driving at, but I'll never give in—never."

"You all know how brave he was when Joe Willis dropped his new knife between the boards of that unfinished building on Corliss street. How he did what no other boy in school would do—let himself down into the cellar, and groped about in the dark until he found it for him."

"We know that—yes, m. Hurrah for—"

"Stop a minute. One thing more."

Sulky-boy's companion was shouting with the rest, and Sulky-boy's own face had relaxed.

"You all know," said I, "how he took care of Willie Randall when Willie hurt himself upon the ice. How he drew him home upon his own sled, going very slowly and carefully that poor Willie might not be jolted, and making himself late to school in consequence."

"Vea, m. Yes m'am. Hoo-ray for little Dunbar!" Sulky-boy was smiling now, and I knew that my cause was won.

"Very well," said I. "Now let us talk about to-day. He has disobeyed me, and—of course I ought to punish him."

"No m, you oughtn't. Don't punish him! We don't want him whipped!"

"But I have given my word. It will be treating you all unfairly if I break it. He has been such a faithful boy that I should like very much to forgive him, but I cannot do it unless you are all willing."

"We're willing. We'll give you leave. We'll forgive him. We'll—"

"Stop! I want you to think of it carefully for a minute. I am going to leave the matter altogether with you. I shall do just as you say. If, at the end of one minute by the clock, you are sure you forgive him, raise your hands."

My dear, you should have seen them! If ever there was expression in human hands, I saw it in theirs that day. Such a shaking and snapping of fingers, and an eager waving of small palms—breaking out at last into a hearty, simultaneous slapping, and Sulky-boy's the most demonstrative of all.

"Disorderly" do you say? Well, perhaps it was. We were too much in earnest to think of that. I looked at Frank. His blue eyes were swimming in tears, which he would not let fall.

As for me, I turned to the blackboard, and put down some examples in long division. If I had made all the divisors larger than the dividends, or written the numerals upside down, it would not have been at all strange, in the circumstances.

And the moral of this—concluded Miss Jenkins (she had just been reading "Alice in Wonderland")—is that a teacher is human, and a human being doesn't always know just what to do.—*Mary C. Bartlett in St. Nicholas for August.*

BEST FRUIT AT THE TOP.

O, the apple trees up in the orchard!

Like we chubby faces I see

The ruddy and pippins, sly peeping,

Between leaves a-twinkle at me!

And on the crisp breeze, as I'm longing

In vain for the beauties to drop,

A blithe, haunting song seems to whisper

"The best fruit is found at the top!"

O, the gnarled and moss'd boughs upward tossing!

They cradle me now in their arms,

And onward I gaze on the orchard,

The rivers, the uplands, and farms.

So, gazing far, far out from childhood,

That blight, breezy song ne'er will stop;

Fame, station, are won but by climbing;

"The best fruit is found at the top!"

—George Grefer.

WE MOTHERS.

O, what mischievous, troublesome children we have! How difficult it is to manage them, and to enforce obedience. How much patience we mothers need, and what a hard life we have! But the fault after all is really not so much in the children as in ourselves. Worn out with petty vexations and cares, burdened with secret sorrows and pain, we bring to the work no vitality, no enthusiasm, no heart, and gradually we come to move through the same routine of every-day duties in a sort of mechanical way, weak and spiritless, till the home seems like a tomb. No wonder the children eagerly seek to escape from it. No wonder that their pent up vitality and energy finds vent in noise and confusion distracting to their weary mothers.

But suppose we mothers hear some special good news, which animates our spirits and lifts the shadows from our hearts. O, how different then does all appear. Mother's face is radiant with smiles: she walks with an elastic step, and speaks to her children in cheerful tones; they catch the spirit and it pleases them. They are no better than they were yesterday, in one sense, yet they love their mother better, and that makes all the difference in the world in their outward conduct. They say to themselves, "How kind mother is! How pleasantly she smiles on us! She is not

cross to-day." And even though they may be as noisy as yesterday, she is too happy to notice it, or at least to be troubled by it. She looks upon the children's faults with a lenient eye, and as they, in a measure, really try to please her, she says to herself, "How much better they behave to-day?"

O, it is not the sea—

It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,

But ourselves,

That rock and rise with endless and uneasy motion.

We sympathize with each other. We cannot help it. Eye speaks to eye more plainly than ever tongue speaks, and the fire of enthusiasm which burns in our own spirits will flash through the windows of our souls to light up the eyes of our children and enkindle in them a similar fire which, though but a spark at first, may be fanned into a flame which shall burn with a steady and constant light, shedding cheerfulness on all around.

The mother may almost regard her children as a mirror. In their gloomy and listless looks she may see the reflection of her own trouble and perplexities. In their indolence or mischievous tricks she may see her own weariness or flagging health and spirits. The machinery is out of order, or she has neglected to wind it up. In their noiseless, cheerful diligence, their animated, happy looks, she beholds her own health and happiness, her own quiet, unwavering zeal, and unflinching love and patience.

Does not love beget love, gloom create gloom, mirth provoke mirth, cheerfulness send forth sunshine, and earnestness rouse the energies of all who behold it? So as true mothers we must seek to attain that self-command that shall enable us to keep our own trials and perplexities, our sorrows and anxieties, buried in our bosom, that outwardly we may be cheerful and bright. We must have that deep love for our children that shall lead us to enter into all their little joys and sorrows as if they were our own.

A heart at leisure from itself

To soothe and sympathize.

For our children's sake as well as our own it is important for us to keep ourselves in such a physical condition, by means of fresh air, rest, recreation, and all such means as are desirable and in our power, that we may enjoy life, and may have mental, moral and physical force enough to enter upon our life-work with enthusiasm; and last but not least, we must rely continually upon a help and strength beyond ourselves. Let us seek aid and direction from Him who is "an ever present help in time of trouble," and in His strength will we be strong.

A true mother never separates her own interest from her children's interest. She feels for them, she sympathizes with them, she assists them, ever firmly, gently, unwaveringly, guiding them in the right way. She rouses their dormant energies. She finds the secret spring which shall set the machinery to work in the right direction, and then puts it in order. If possible she so cultivates their moral feelings, the nobler part of their nature, that they may love to do right for the right's sake. All may not be influenced by the same motives. Resting assured that there are none who cannot be influenced, let the mother by close study of the characters and dispositions of her children search out those motives which seem best adapted to influence them for good. And then, while with unwearied hands and heart she sows the seed, let her learn to wait patiently for the harvest.

What though difficulties and trials sometimes cross our path? Is that any reason why we should despair or give up our interest? With no obstacles, no difficulties, no evils to contend with, there would be no victory, no virtue, no success. "Rome was not built in a day." By steady adherence to the fixed principles of right, enforced in firmness and gentleness, and by an unflinching fund of love, and sympathy, and patience, if our enthusiasm fail not, we may accomplish all we desire. To us most of all is the promise and exhortation, "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

ANCIENT MARKETS.

Markets were originally gatherings of merchants and traders who came together for a general traffic in merchandise. They were a necessity in a disorganized state of society, when intercourse was dangerous. They probably originated in Asia, and were found to be the mode of commercial intercourse in Mexico and Peru when the Spaniards first discovered those countries. They were known in Europe in the seventh century, and had become widely spread in the twelfth century. From the fourth to the eighth century Europe was devastated by barbarian hordes, and the constant wars of four centuries destroyed commercial intercourse. Safety was found only in walled towns or near the castles of feudal barons; people living near each other were strangers to one another. Travelling was difficult and dangerous—the fine Roman roads had been broken up for military reasons or had fallen into decay; a habit had arisen of living by plunder, and predatory bands, which became so numerous and aggressive that the merchants were forced to unite and move in large bodies, well armed, selecting those seasons most favourable to travel. The romantic ruins of the Rhine were then the castles of the barons, who mercilessly extorted toll from passing merchants. Commerce was under a check. It is probable that the great fairs had their origin in the circumstance that the merchants from various countries encountered each other at the same places at about the same period of the year, and were thus enabled to exchange their articles of commerce. In the Middle Ages, also, a devotional spirit prompted people to visit the shrines of saints, about which grew up the abbeys and monastic institutions. These pilgrimages were usually made at the time of the great religious feasts. The trafficker in merchandise was religious, but with an eye to business, and he usually managed to carry with him a tempting assortment of goods. The religious exercises were not more striking than the busy scenes at the fairs established in connection with them—scenes which are reproduced to this day at the fairs at Mecca.