

years, because, forsooth, he is a school-master; and come down upon the poor fellow without mercy, if, in some unconscious moment, he happens to act like a boy of seventeen years, that is, like himself.

I shall never forget the first visit of one of the school trustees. He raps at the door. Hark! That is no boy's nor girl's rap—too bold—too loud—too deliberate for that. Hush, boys! Hush, girls! Something is coming to pass! I open the door! Oh, length, and breadth, and quantity! It is verily he; the august being enters.—What happened the next five minutes I could never recall. I presume I offered to my visitor the chair. I only know that, when I recovered my self-possession, I was startled and horrified at the fearful disorder that reigned in my school-room. Every pupil seemed to be breaking every rule. What could it mean? Pencils dropped, slates rattled, boots grated harshly over the floor,—which, by the way, seemed, just then, to be sadly in need of sweeping—and everything seemed to conspire to ruin me, as a teacher, completely. I was utterly confounded. I felt it a duty which I owed to myself to declare to my visitor that things had never been in such a state before.

At this point, what seemed a happy thought occurred to my mind. I would call out my first class in arithmetic, a splendid class, and with it make such a diversion in my favour as to retrieve every disaster and rescue my waning reputation. The class came promptly down the aisle. But how provokingly noisy! My cheeks began to burn; but I started off with considerable confidence. The first answer, alas, was a sad blunder. I began to feel confused. My questions, I know, were wretchedly put, but they were more wretchedly answered. Hoping to find relief in change, I invited my visitor to put questions himself. He consented, and asked the class to tell him the difference between a half-inch and a half-mile. In due time the answers were called for, but, oh, horrors! what answers! They ranged all the way from ten rods to ten miles! My disaster was now complete. My best pupils had conspired to ruin me!

Mr. W., my august visitor, rose to leave me. He took me by the hand, spoke a few kind words of encouragement and advice, and left the school-room; about half my pupils, mindful of the custom of those days, rising to their feet, but in such an irregular, noisy way, that I heartily wished they had all kept their seats.

And here I will confess an act of meanness, on my part, which I shall repent of as long as I live. When my visitor had left me, I was not only confused but angry. I felt that I had given my pupils no occasion to wound my feelings so wantonly as they had done, in the presence of Mr. W. I assured them that I would now bear with them no longer. Such a disgraceful scene should not recur, while I was master of that school.

Just then a little fellow, a beautiful boy, sitting directly before me, let drop a slate, which rattled along the floor with that stunning noise which nothing but a slate can make. I lost my self-control. I seized my ferule. The poor little fellow shuddered before me; tears trickled down his fair, tender cheek, and his fine lips quivered as he faintly stammered, "I didn't mean to do it, Sir." "Didn't mean to do it," said I, tauntingly, and inflicted on his tender hand several cruel blows. Yet I do not think the boy was badly whipped—for conscience seemed to hold back my arm.

The little fellow, however, sobbed and sobbed, as if his heart would break. Even when school was done, still concealing his tears with his sleeve, he walked hastily past my desk. How I longed to put my arm about him and tell him that I was sorry. But I could not do it; I was a school-master, and my dignity must not be compromised. I returned gloomily to my boarding-place, overwhelmed with a sense of meanness and self-reproach. My mortification and chagrin at the unfortunate visit of the trustee had all passed away. I thought only of my own meanness. That evening I received two letters couched in terms of affection and respect, one from home, and one from college. "Darling boy," "noble fellow," I was disgusted with such fulsome flattery. What could my mother and my class-mate mean in applying such terms of fondness to one so heartless as I? Still, they were sincere, but they did not know me. I half resolved never to see again either college or home. I paced my room till late at night, and went to bed with a distracting headache. Towards morning I snatched a little sleep, only to be startled out of it by a fearful dream. I saw a man of rough, repulsive look, rudely holding a beautiful child, as if about to inflict upon him some cruel torture. The fearful scene produced in my heart the most painful excitement and indignation, when, in a piercing, tender voice, the child shrieked out, "Oh, spare me, Hubert." I was startled from my sleep by the cry. I was that Hubert. I could sleep no more. The consciousness of having inflicted pain upon an innocent child would not let me close my eyes. I frankly confess that for a moment I forgot that I was a school-master, and became a boy; and, as a boy, I brushed away a few childish tears.

Pardon my weakness, gentle reader, I was among strangers in a strange land, and bearing a burden too heavy for my years.

This affair, however, was not without its good results. I know I have been a better man ever since; that is, better towards little boys. I feel a kind of tenderness for them allied to pity. I do not think they are used quite fairly in this rude world. When they are about five years old, we cut off their beautiful ringlets, lay aside their graceful frocks, and bright morocco shoes, and pretty, jaunty hats, and array them in a grey woollen jacket, and pants, and clumsy boots, and turn them adrift among the rude, big boys. Of course they do not look as fair as they did before, but the fault is not theirs, and they have in them the same tender heart of childhood. Now, why should we be so rough with them? Why give all the kisses and candy to the girls, and all the kicks and cuffs to the little boys? Only yesterday I met one of these fine little fellows, his head all begrimed with dust, crying bitterly. He had just been pitched, head foremost, over a big boy's head, into the gutter. Of course it was all right; for it was only a little sun-burnt boy. But what would have been said, and done, too, had the victim been somebody's fair little girl, of the same age, and decked out with silks and ribbons? The House of Correction would be almost too good for the rude, big boy to live in.

Now, fellow teachers, both ladies and gentlemen, let me plead with you for little boys.

Don't whip them any harder because they look rough and sun-burnt. Don't whip them because you are angry and fretful yourself. Don't whip them when the large boys deserve a whipping more. If you have any "goodies," don't be partial to the girls, but let the little boys have their share. Don't, by your stern and crusty treatment of them, make them bad boys, but by kindness keep their hearts open, and tender, and gentle.

But notwithstanding the unfortunate affair which I have just noticed, the visit of Mr. W. was, in one respect, at least, of great benefit to me, as a teacher. The astounding failure of my first class in arithmetic so surprised me that I deemed it worthy of a full investigation. On the next day the members of this class were subjected to a searching ordeal. I was determined to learn why they could solve the most complicated problem of their text-book, but could not answer the simplest extemporaneous question. The explanation of the difficulty was soon found. The pupils honestly believed that they had solved their problems, but they had not. One had been aided by his father at home, another by a brother, sister, or friend. One had gone through the book in some previous winter, and recollected how the master had solved these problems, while still another had a manuscript key; and, in general, if, by any of these means, any member of the class had had the good fortune to fall upon a solution, it was kindly sent by telegraph through the whole class. There had been almost no self-reliance. The rote system had prevailed, and the pupils comprehended scarcely a single principle. I began the arithmetic anew. The members of the class felt somewhat humbled and chagrined at this, but they saw that I was in earnest, and submitted. I extemporised, to a great extent, my examples, and demanded the rationale. I laid the foundations firmly in reason. Soon an unwonted interest sprang up in the class. New light was breaking in. There is always a peculiar pleasure, to the young mind, in really understanding a thing. The class made rapid progress. What they had before learned by rote, I confess, was not useless to them. They had by it acquired a facility in manipulation; but this was almost all.

On examination day I was not ashamed of my first class in arithmetic. They knew what they could do and did it.

But, before referring further to my examination, I must mention an unfortunate affair, in course of which I was arraigned before a justice of peace, for expelling a boy from school.

Many of my pupils, both boys and girls, were wont to "stay at noon." They doubtless had some jolly times together, but, I think, gave no just occasion for some very bitter remarks of Miss B., a maiden lady, who lived and circulated, as a seamstress, in the families of my district. I would hardly notice such gossip now, but then it wounded me most painfully. Every spiteful censure of my pupils seemed aimed directly at me, and went like a barbed arrow to my heart. Still, while I hated Miss B., I determined to show to the good people that I kept a vigilant eye upon the conduct of my pupils. One day I discovered a note lying upon the desk of a boy of the name of Fox, and addressed to "Miss Crow." I opened it, and read as follows:

"MY DEAR MISS CROW,—I cannot express how much I admire and love you. Beautiful creature, how happy should I be to meet you and speak to you face to face. Say, dear Miss C., will you meet me this evening at the great oak tree at the edge of the woods.

Your's truly,

Fox."

This note, I confess, perplexed me. I showed it to a friend, who most injudiciously allowed Miss B. to read it. She saw its meaning in a moment. "Miss Crow" was a Miss Crowell, one of the most worthy and most beautiful girls in my school. "Miss Crowell," said Miss B., "is a brunette, with jet black hair, and I think