

LAYS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

THE OLD STAIRCASE.

It is old, and bare, and paintless;
Smooth-worn by tramping feet;
I see the old school staircase,
In dreams half-sad, half-sweet,
And sometimes sigh for the old-time ways,
The old-time hopes and fears;
With the surge and strife
Of the gay school life,
About those flights of stairs.

On the high and broad-silled windows
Some used to lean and talk;
While others through the hall-ways
In groups were wont to walk.
But what we loved the best of all,
When freed from studious cares,
Was to sit and chat
On the topmost flat,
Above those flights of stairs.

On the first floor we learned Latin—
Ah me! those days are past,
When Cæsar and Enneas
Their spells around us cast.
And in another room we learned
To mind our own affairs:
So that soon from "D's"
We might pass as "C's"
Up two of those flights of stairs.

There were many deeds enacted
Upon those four old flights,
Such scenes of deadly conflict!
Such scrimmages! such fights!
Sweet secrets, too, were whispering told,
To sympathetic ears,
And 'twas with a sigh,
That we said good-bye,
To those dear old flights of stairs.

FLORENCE ANCIENT.

HOW I DIDN'T GET MY LICENSE.

Yes, I have come to the conclusion that I will let the world know. My bosom burns with indignation when I think upon the baseness of the whole matter. I have been the victim of a fraud which will stand out unique in the annals of crime, and be handed down to posterity as an example of the degradation to which mankind can descend. Bribery and corruption have reigned, and doubtless still reign, in high places, (they say it rains frequently on the mountains), and to expose the matter and make the world tremble like a frightened jelly-fish, I, Theophilus Gum, consider it my bounden duty.

Like a great many other misguided victims I had been persuaded to take the annual Government Examination held at the Academy, in order to get a license. Having thoroughly prepared myself for this examination three days beforehand, I went up in due course. Being so well prepared, I had every confidence in myself; then, again, these examinations are largely a matter of luck, and you must rely a great deal on your own native wit and readiness, of which I, Theo. Gum, have a large share. "Therefore" as our Euclid master would say, I repeat, I had every confidence in myself and was greatly surprised to find my fellow-seekers after licences didn't seem so sure. Still, everybody isn't equally brilliant, and if people will elog their brains with study months before the Exam., what can you expect?

Having seated myself at my desk (kindly provided for the occasion by the Nova Scotia Furnishing Co.—price 50c.), I proceeded to survey the Exam. paper which was on Latin. The first question was:

"Would you call Latin a live or a dead language?"

With my usual sagacity I promptly wrote *both*; but then I paused for a moment. "Surely this must be a catch" I said to myself. "Consider for a moment, is Latin a dead language?" Of course I knew what a dead language was—one which wasn't alive; and on the other hand, a live language was one which wasn't dead. But Latin couldn't be dead and buried, because it was taught in all the schools to the best of my belief; and it couldn't be alive, because I never saw a language alive and kicking yet. This was plainly a catch, so with great satisfaction I crossed out *both* and added *neither*.

The next question on the programme was:

"Give the meaning of *bonus*, *In Africa*, *olim*. Write a full explanation." Really this was absurdly easy. Of course everybody knows what *bonus* means, so I wrote:

Bonus—a premium, as on a loan or other privilege (*vide* Dictionary, English).

In Africa. As far as I could see there was nothing in *Africa*, so I confined my attention strictly to the *in*, which as far as I know is a wayside pub, so I wrote accordingly.

Olim. This means in English "oil him." While Homotius was defending the bridge against an immense army, "in the brave days of old," he went quite faint all of a sudden like. The fact of the matter was a fly had bitten his nose and raised a lump thereon, and the crowd shouted with a mighty shout from the walls of Rome "Oil him!" "Oil him!" (N. B. If you don't believe this look up "Brays from distant Home," by a Mr. Muckorby).

Next we come to the third question:

Who was Brutus?

I wrote: "Brutus was so called because he was a brute. His history runs thus: He and Cæsar were great friends until they played a game at poker one night, and Cæsar won all the money. Then they quarrelled, for Brutus was a mean cuss, and stingy as an old miser. From words they came to blows, and Brutus, pulling out his pocket-knife stabbed Cæsar in his right eyebrow. Whereupon Cæsar sank to the ground as gracefully as a hippopotamus, exclaiming with his last breath; "Hate-you-brute."

Then came:

"Parse, crudeliter, puniebam, Vere, De, quercus."

What! Could I believe my eyes! What did it all mean! Was I dreaming? Brilliant thought—of course these were evidently misprints. Yes, these were mistakes made by some Johnny or other, I said to myself. Look at the last word "quercus." The printer while typing must have been watching a brother printer, and, having come to the conclusion that he was a "queer cuss," promptly recorded the same on this Exam. paper in like manner (not understanding Latin—as I did) he must have garbled the others. So I went up to the Examiner, and with a smile of pained surprise, pointed out the misprints to him, saying I couldn't possibly answer that question. He *paraded* paused, I should say, eyed me with a glassy eye and a stony stare, and then to my intense astonishment advised me to try the next question, if I couldn't do that one. This I accordingly did, completely flabbergasted.

The next question was:

"What nouns of the first declension are masculine?"