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What the Boer Intended to Say

A detachment of soldiers was engaged in clearing a certain district in the Orange River Colony of supplies, and during the operations Colonel Shovelton's staff officer came up to a Boer farmer sitting at the door of his cottage, with a large stack of oat straw in the background. "I have orders either to buy or destroy all forage and food in this district," said the officer. "I therefore give you notice that I am about to set fire to that pile of oat straw."

"'Bod I tell you—" began the stolid Boer, as he removed his pipe from his mouth.

"Oh, you may as well know straight off," interrupted the officer, "that resistance and objection are alike futile."

"'Bod would you please—" once more began the farmer.

"I can listen to no excuses; I have neither time nor inclination," was the impatient rejoinder of the officer as he hurried away.

"Well, my dear," said the Boer to his wife, as the stack of straw burst into flame and the officer went on his way rejoicing, "dese Khakis has strange peoples. I wanted to hull him dot dis was de oat straw I had sold to de colonial half an hour ago."

Thus saying, he meditatively jingled the British sovereigns in his pocket.

Old-time School Committees

Fifty years ago the men who made up the school committee in a rural community left something to be desired in the matter of scholarship, but the Maine worthies, sketched by W. S. Knowlton in "The Old Schoolmaster," must have contributed not a little gaiety to the dull round of teaching. While a certain committee man came in Mr. Knowlton always reduced to a minimum the noise in the school of which he was the master, so as not to disturb the good man's slumbers. For he would sleep so placidly, with such a childlike expression on his face, that the young schoolmaster had not the heart to disturb him.

When the time for speech-making came a stick of wood was dropped upon the floor to awaken him.

"He always commended the good order," is Mr. Knowlton's shy comment.

"I gave another man, who pretended to know Greek, a German reader while the class read Homer," confesses Mr. Knowlton, "and he did not know the difference. He said the class translated admirably!"

"One man asked the pupils if they would be ready to be examined the first day of September, and they said they thought not.

"Well," said he, "that day will convene me best, and I hope you will be ready."

The pupils were too polite to smile, and so the committeeman passed out of the schoolhouse feeling sure that he had carried a point, and had corrected Julius Caesar and all the popes.

In one school eight weeks of the session had elapsed, and there were four weeks remaining. The superintendent asked what fractional part of the term had passed.

"Two-thirds," answered the school. "No," said he, with a knowing look upon them and a disapproving scowl upon the teacher. "You are wrong. I will ask you again before I leave."

When he was about to go he repeated the question, and the school gave the same answer.

"You are wrong again," he said. "The correct answer is eight-twelfths."

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