

The desks, so far as any were provided in the School Room, consisted of a wide shelf, fixed at a pretty sharp angle against the wall, and extending all around the room, with an intermission only at the narrow space occupied by the Door. This primitive arrangement was sometimes supplemented with a long, flat Table composed of three or four loose planks in the rough, supported by wooden Benches, or "Horses" placed transversely beneath. The Seats were of planks, or slabs, likewise unsmoothed, constructed by driving rudely hewn legs into holes bored with a large auger, at a suitable angle, in the lower surface of the plank, or slab. These legs often projected an inch or so above the surface of the Seat. So that the Occupant was in much greater danger of being pinned fast than of slipping off. Perhaps it was better so, for in view of the great height usually given them, the fall, for a small child would most surely have proved a serious one. . . . It was certainly a strange and cruel infatuation which constrained our Grandfathers to think that the proper position for a Boy or Girl at School was upon a narrow perch, without back, or arm support of any kind, and with the feet dangling some six or eight inches above the Floor.

What a picture did the wooden Desks and walls of those old-time School Houses present, worn smooth with use, variegated with the ink, and carved with the jack-knives of the Boys. What burlesque, too, upon every intelligent idea of education were the processes carried on in them. From nine o'clock to twelve, and from one till four, six long hours, as marked by the Sun's shadow on the rude Dial marked out on the windowsill, did the work go on.

As the day wore away the School Room resounded with the loud hum of a score or two of Boys and Girls, all "studying aloud" with a most distracting din of voices.

This din, in the case of perhaps a majority would be modulated without the slightest relation to the contents of the printed page, while the thoughts of the ostentatiously industrious pupil would be busy with some projected game, or trick, for the coming recess. And yet how often would the School Master's eye gleam with pride and pleasure when he had, by dint of persuasion, or threat, succeeded in getting every Boy and Girl engaged in this monotonous chant.

Then the recitation! what a scene of confusion it often caused. Perhaps it was the column of Spellings. A few, fitted by nature with memories adapted for that kind of work, would make their way in triumph to the head of the long semicircular class. But woe be to the dullards and the dunces, under a regime whose penalty for missing a word would be, very likely, two or three strokes on the tingling fingers, or aching palm, with the pitiless hardwood ferule, this process being occasionally varied, as some noisy, or idling, youngster was called up from the back seat to be visited with a still sterner chastisement for some trifling misdemeanor.

Although such harsh disciplinarians were too often to be found among the School Teachers of the early days in Upper Canada, yet there were frequently also to be found others whose cheery and pleasant nature brought sunshine and happiness into the School of which he was Master.

As a significant comment upon the moral effects of the regime of the former class of Schoolmasters, the Speaker added that one of his most vivid memories of the mental status produced by the school training of that class of Schoolmaster referred to, was that of an intense longing of many of the Boys for the day when they should be large enough to repay that old Schoolmaster in his own coin. That day came. The flagellated Boy transformed into a tolerably lusty youth, would at length find himself face to face with his quondam Tormentor. But his long cherished wrath speedily gave place to pity