

O. She uses the word "letter" without defining it, knowing that the children will learn its meaning, as they do that of other words, from its use, and that a formal definition would only confuse them.

"What does this letter look like?"

One suggests a wheel; another a round cake; others a cent, the moon, &c.

"Now, Susan, come and see if you can make a round letter."

Susan tries, and after her the rest. To each one Miss K. has a kind word for the effort, if not for the performance. They are then sent to their seats to try to make "round letters" upon their slates; some of their first attempts are, of course, rude and odd enough.

At their next lesson, after some preliminary conversation, Miss K. goes to the blackboard, where the O has remained as a model for the class since the last lesson, and says to them:

"Now I will show you how to make another letter. You must first draw a straight line, so," suiting the action to the word; "and then you must draw another straight line across it, so," making by the two lines a large X in its simplest form. "What does this letter look like?"

"Like father's saw-horse," says little Peter.

"Now, how many letters have I made?"

"Two."

"And these two letters mean ox. Henry, come and see if you can write OX."

Henry tries, and all the rest. They then return to their seats, and engage in attempts to write OX upon their slates. Miss K., as she passes them, notices and directs their work, and encourages them by kind words.

The time arrives for their third lesson. "What have you been learning to write?" asks the teacher.

"Ox."

"Now, all say as I do: ox, ox, (not pronouncing the names of the letters, but separating their sounds,) ox; ox, o-x; o-x, ox; o x, ox."

When, by repetitions, her pupils have fully learned to separate these sounds into utterance and in their minds, Miss K. proceeds:

"This round letter means o," giving it the short sound of o; "and this letter like a saw-horse means x," giving not the name, but simply the sound of the letter. "Now, William, you may take the pointer and point to the letter which means o; and you, Sarah, may point to the letter which means x."

The exercise is continued under a variety of forms, until the association is fixed in the minds of the children, between the written letters and their primary sounds. Miss K. then feels that the corner-stone has been laid for the building she has undertaken, and dismisses the class. Of the names of the letters not a word has yet been said. "It would only confuse the children," says Miss K., "to attempt to associate a letter with different sounds at the same time. And we shall have no need whatever of the names of the letters till we come to oral spelling, or to different sounds of the same letter.—*Massachusetts Teacher*.

### 3. THE WHITTLED DESK; OR, AN APPEAL TO THE BOYS' WORD AND HONOR.

"Tell us a story, father, this evening, do."

Mary made this request on behalf of herself and her two brothers—Henry, who was twelve years old, and Andrew, who was only seven; her own age being about midway between theirs.

"Well what shall it be, a made-up story, or a true one?"

"Oh, a true one, if you please, we like those the best."

"But if I tell you a true story, it may not be very wonderful, nor near so marvellous as something I could make up; perhaps you will not think it interesting."

"Oh, I know we shall, we always do."

"Well, then as you have chosen a true story I will give you one that I know was all true. I was a school master once, and twenty years ago this winter, I was teaching a large school in Michigan. As I was passing around the school-room one morning, I saw a notch that had been newly cut in the desk, just before William C—. I pointed to it and asked:

"William, do you know who did that?"

"Yes, sir, I did it," he very frankly replied.

"Did you not know that it was against the rules of the school to whittle the desks or the seats?"

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose you must punish me, sir," he said, looking very much troubled.

Now William was about ten years old, was one of my best scholars, a very bright and generally obedient boy. He did not own a pocket knife, but had that morning borrowed one at home, and the temptation to try it on the new desk before him had proved too much for him. But his frankness in confessing his fault and condemning himself, added to his general good character, made me wish, if possible, to avoid

punishing him. Yet how could I avoid it without appearing partial to William? The school-house was a new one, and I was anxious to leave it in good order at the end of the term. I turned the matter over a moment in my mind and then said to him:

"William, I can't bear to think of punishing you, for you are one of my best boys. But what can I do? If I let you go unpunished, how can I enforce the rule? And if that rule is disregarded we shall have a sorry-looking school-house when spring comes."

"I know it will be so sir," said he, looking more disconsolate.

"But is there no way that I can let you go and still save the desks?"

"I don't think there is, sir."

"You may lay aside your books and think about it for a while, and see if you cannot contrive some way, and I also will see if I cannot find one."

I turned away and engaged in other duties for some time, and then came back to him.

"Well, William, have you thought of any plan to save the necessity of that punishment?"

"No sir, I cannot see how you can do anything else with me?"

"Well, I have devised a plan which may possibly succeed. The boys are now to take their recess; and if, while you are out with them, you can induce them to pledge their word and honor that they will not whittle the seats or desks if you are not punished, I can let you go."

William seemed very little encouraged by that proposition. He evidently doubted whether the boys would give such a pledge. I stated the plan in presence of them all, and then gave them their recess. As I afterward learned, William had not the courage to ask any body for the pledge, but one of the older boys gathered them all around him and made a stump speech in William's behalf. "Boys," said he, "we don't any of us want to see Will whipped, and we can prevent it by just giving our word and honor that we won't whittle the school-house. Now what do we want to whittle the school-house for? I'd rather have a good smooth desk before me than one all cut up, and so had any of you. Besides we ought to have some pride in keeping the house decent as well as the master. In giving this pledge we only promise not to do what we ought not to do any way."

"If we don't give it, Will must be whipped, and then if we cut the desks we shall be whipped with him. For my part, I am for giving the pledge with all my heart—who votes aye? He then put it to vote; and every one shouted "aye."

William came in with the cloud gone from his face, and said that the boys had all given the pledge. Others confirmed this report, so I dismissed him to his seat, and I was as glad as he at the success of the plan.

"But father," interrupted Mary, "did the boys keep their promise?"

"Yes, that they did, like real men of honor, I did not have to speak again on the subject during the whole winter, and in the spring you could not find on the desks, beside that one notch, anything worse than pin scratches.

"I guess," said Henry, "they obeyed the rule better than if you had whipped William for breaking it."

"Yes, I have no doubt they did; but what do you think made them?"

"I guess," said Mary, "it was because they thought more about the rule, and saw how good and reasonable it was."

"And I guess," said little Andrew, "that they loved you more when they found out that you didn't want to whip them."

"I think, also," said Henry, "they felt glad to have you trust them like men, as you did when you asked William to get from them a pledge on their honor."—*Maine Spectator*.

### 4. PATIENCE.

A STORY FOR MOTHERS.

"Try again," said Mrs. Brown, encouragingly.

"I have tried again, and still again, until I am fairly discouraged, and its of no use."

"Every day,"—Mrs. Edwards had proceeded thus far, when romping little Jenny, a merry child of six years, burst into the room, followed by Willie, two years younger, who, in his eager haste, stumbled over the baby, seated upon the carpet, and threw him prostrate, upon which the little one set up a series of cries and screams in no way pleasant.

Mrs. E. sat still a moment, with compressed lips, and darkening brow; then springing from her chair, she caught Willie, and put him out of the room, and closed the door violently, saying, "There, don't let me see you again for an hour." Then seizing Jenny by the arm, she placed her, not very softly, upon a chair near the door, and said, "You are enough to craze one, now see if you can behave a moment." Picking up baby, she gave him his playthings, not once noticing the little eager, outstretched arms and sorry look, as she left him to himself, and went back to her rocking-chair, and her