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whence looking down, she saw every last solitary lingering boy in that school district dancing and yelling about Master Bilderback, who was dancing higher and singing louder than any other boy in the caucuses. Her heart sank within her; but she braced up and went down stairs to quiet the bedlam, and in five minutes learned the dreadful truth. Master Bilderback had met with a reaping machine accident, but the papers had reported it incorrectly. He had climbed into the seat the moment his uncle, on whose farm he was spending the vacation, got down. He prodded one of the horses with a pin in the end of a stick, and made the team run away. The terrified animals ran the machine over twenty stumps and mashed it to pieces; one of the horses ran against a hedge stake and was killed, and the other jumped off a bridge and broke a leg; Master Bilderback's uncle, chasing after the flying team, had dashed through a hornet's nest, and the sociable little insects came out and sat down on him to talk it over, until his head was swelled as big as a mail-keg and he couldn't open his eyes for a week; a farm hand, who tried to stop the horses by rushing out in front of them, was hit by the tongue of the reaper and knocked into the middle of an Osage orange hedge, where he stuck for three hours, and lost his voice by screaming, and was scraped to the bone when they finally pulled him out with grappling hooks. And Master Bilderback, the author of all this calamity, was thrown from his seat at the first stump and fell on a shock of grain, and wasn't jarred or bruised or scratched a particle. And that night, when his aunt handed his blinded uncle the halter strap, and held Master Bilderback in front of him to receive merited castigation, that graceless young wretch seized his aunt around the neck after the first blow, and, wheeling her into his place, held her there, drowning her piercing explanations and pleadings in his own tumultuous, but deceitful, howlings and roarings, until her back looked like a war map, and the exhausted uncle laid down the strap with the remark that he "guessed that would teach him something." And so the teacher, when she saw Master Bilderback at school again, felt weary of life, and sighed to rest her deep in the silent grave—if she could find one that was for rent, and didn't cost more than a quarter's salary.

It being the young man's first day at school that term, he was feeling pretty well, thank you. He had a fight and a half before the bell rang; the half fight being an unsuccessful attempt on his part to pull enough hair out of the back of another boy's head to stuff a mattress, and a highly successful effort on the part of the other boy to claw enough hide

off Master Bilderback's nose to make a pair of boots of, at which discouraging stage of the war Master B. drew off his forces, and in a conciliatory spirit informed the audience that he was only in fun. Then, before the opening exercises were half through, three boys in his neighbourhood rose up in their seats, and with bitter wails began feeling about in their persons for intrusive pins. When the first class filed out to its place, the circling grin told the anxious teacher that Master Bilderback had inked the end of his nose. Then he induced the boy next to him to lean his head back against the wall, just as Master B. did; and when that complaisant boy was suddenly called on to rise and recite, he lifted up his voice and wept, for he had pulled a piece of shoemaker's wax and about two inches of blackboard slating and plaster out of the wall with his back hair. Then he spread out the tail of another boy's coat on the seat, and piled a little pyramid of buck-shot on it; and when the boy stood up to recite, he was waltzed out on the floor—bathed in innocent tears and protesting his innocence—for throwing shot on the floor, and was told that he was growing worse than that Bilderback boy. He tied the ends of a girl's sash around the back of her chair, and when she tried to stand up she was almost jerked out of existence. He was sent out with a boy who was taken with the nose bleed, and found occasion to mix ink in the water he poured on the sufferer's hands; so that, on his return, the sufferer's appearance created such howls of derision that it started the nose-bleed afresh and threw the teacher into hysterics. He enticed a gaunt hound into the girl's side of the yard, and clapping a patent clothespin on one of its pendent ears, raised the alarm of "mad dog!" and laughed till he choked to see the howling animal rushing around trying to paw the clothes pin off; while the shrieking girls wrecked themselves in desperate and frequently successful attempts to climb over an eight foot fence. He put a pinching-bug as big as a postage-stamp down a boy's back. He got a long slate-pencil crossways in his mouth, and it nearly poked through his cheeks before they could break it and get it out. He tossed a big apple hard as a rock, out of the third story window at random, and it struck an old lady in the eye as she was walking along admiring the building; and she came up and gave the poor tortured teacher a piece of her mind as long as the dog-days. He dropped into the water-bucket a lot of oxalic acid, that had been brought to take some ink splotches out of the floor, and came within one of poisoning the whole school before they found it out; and, finally, he poked a bean so far up his nose that they thought it was