

It was after ten o'clock by this time; the people of the mill, the place where I was to board for the first three months, were all in bed, and the furious barking of a dog at the side of the house did not awaken them. I trembled at the dog, whose chain rattled threateningly, but I could awaken no one by my knocking. After some time, during which I threw bits of wood at windows, and assaulted the door vigorously with my foot, a window opened and a woman enquired what I wanted. I told her, and without a word she shut the window, and immediately opened the door. She said my trunk must "lay" till the morning, and then lighted a smoky lamp, and took me to my bed-room.

I found it a six-by-nine apartment, destitute of carpet, curtain or furniture, save a bed, a chair and an old table, used as a wash-stand. There was a tin basin, a china soap dish, but no towel. The woman, who said she was Mrs. Smith, my hostess, gave me a short "Good night!" and left me.

I should have been thankful for some refreshment, but none was offered. I was glad to put the smoky little lamp out and lie down on the comfortable feather bed.

The loud ringing of a bell awakened me from the shortest night's sleep I had ever known, but I knew that it meant breakfast, and that it was more than likely if I did not have it with the family I should not have it at all; teachers being regarded in the districts I had known with neither fear nor favour. I made a hearty meal, despite the stares of six male men and the furtive sneers of three young women, who retired into privacy the moment the meal was over, and returned to society with their hair a la Weatherbee just as I set off for the school, a mile away, at the back of the mountain.

Such a school-house as it was! A log building surrounded with weeds! The only trace of occupation being its well worn front steps, and a dilapidated swing like a gibbet, on which a little girl of seven, bare footed and uncombed, was swinging. Entering, I found it furnished with high oak benches and double sided desks, a row of ink pots in holes along the partition line. The teacher's desk had no stool, and was flanked by a black-board covered with rude lines. Not a trace of neatness or attractiveness anywhere. No wonder the scholars were rude! I had lunch and a towel with me, and the latter I utilized at once as a duster. Then, as the boys and girls began to "drop in," I entered upon duty. I spoke to those who had entered, asking their names, and getting a giggle or guffaw in reply, and standing by the open door "received" for the next half hour. Thirty boys and girls, from seven to twenty years of age, formed the quota of attendance, apparently, and after closing the door I went to my desk. There was a dreadful din, and when I struck the desk sharply with an old ruler that I found therein, it stopped suddenly, and was resumed immediately, as I supposed it would be.

But I had observed two girls and one boy who seemed

to think a teacher's authority worth regarding, and I had formed a plan.

Obtaining silence, I began exercises by announcing that we should spend the morning singing, and after dinner they would have a holiday lasting two days. Sometimes standing and sometimes seated we sang nearly every hymn known to the average Sunday scholar, and then I announced "God save the Queen". Not one could sing it. Then I told them I would have a melodeon brought to the school, and teach them the National Anthem and a great many more songs. The looks of my scholars were indescribable; smiles, anticipations, sneers, sulks, and in some cases an utter indifference characterised the crowd.

When I dismissed them at noon they would not be dismissed. They had been accustomed to make a rough-and-tumble-play-ground of the school-house, and they began to take the same liberty now. I called them to order, told them to eat their lunch quietly while I ate mine, and that then I should have something to say to them. Sulks again!

Then I began to describe to them the nice school-house I had left, with a few touches of imagination thrown in, and asked them how they would like to make their own school-house look as nice. A few didn't care, but the majority of them—all the girls being of it—did. The school-yard also came in for a share of consideration, particularly when I talked about cricket and foot-ball. The end of it was that the yard was cleared of its weeds that afternoon, and a bonfire made of them. Some of my boys smoked, I was sorry to find, but I did not tell them so on that occasion. Next day the girls cleaned all the windows, the boys patched up the steps and did other odd jobs of carpentering. Lumber was cheap in Jig-saw, and nails could be had for the asking. I set the boys also to making picture frames at home, which some could do very well, and ornaments also, with acorns and pine cones, to be varnished afterwards. The girls asked to be allowed to scrub the desks and floors, and the boys offered to paint the door and window panes. I sent home for a large picture of Her Majesty the Queen, wearing her crown and the broad blue ribbon of the garter, and sundry other pictures, large and bright. I made window curtains of pieces of calico and print the girls begged of their mothers, and when all was done we had a social. But I had made enemies. At the first meeting of the trustees I was hauled over the coals for wasting their childrens' time instead of "makin' of em learn".

After a few weeks some of the bad ones began to try on some of their old tricks. I punished them, and as they did not receive any support from the sympathy of the majority of their companions, they hated me yet the more. One big hulking fellow of twenty dared me to use the "gad" on him, but I had determined from the first never to use corporeal punishment, and I confess to being non-plussed when the wretch actually snapped his fingers in my face, called me "nawthin' but a schule teacher, and only a 'third' at that".