

side of the table—fair, beautiful wrinkles on her brow—lines of beauty; she is sewing or knitting, and casting a glance across the table, she thought she saw the glitter of a tear. “Why, Tom, what’s the matter?” “Nothing the matter; working busy with my lesson.” “Nay, but, my boy, there is something the matter; what is the matter? There are tears on your book, my boy.” She comes around and puts her arms around him, and says, “What’s the matter with you, Tom?” “Well,” he says, “Mother I’m sorry you saw me, but I’m mad, I’m mad.” “Well what’s the matter?” “Well, I am dull and stupid, and can’t get along with my studies, and the teacher hates me, and makes it hard for me, and I get embarrassed in studying my lesson; spend three hours studying my lesson, then I go to the class and I forget, and I get confused, and the teacher tries to confuse me, I think sometimes, and the fellows laugh at me; I heard one fellow say that I was stupid, and I am; I don’t like to have him say it. There’s Charlie, he sits alongside of me; he spends about fifteen minutes on his lesson and knows it from beginning to end; he is a favorite with the teacher; the teacher praises him, and sets him forth as a model; he plays most all the time, gets the lesson in about fifteen minutes, then the teacher is all the time holding him up and putting me down, and I am mad. If it was not for you I would quit school, and never go back again.” And she says, “My darling, do you know that your father’s last request was that his boy should stay in school until he was eighteen, and then longer if he could? and do you know, my dear, that I have built all my hopes on you? Don’t leave. Just resolve to be patient. Some good Providence will happen, my boy.” And the good Providence did happen; his teacher died. (Laughter.) And a new teacher came; and the very first day that the lesson was up and Tom there the new teacher seemed to see through him—it was a woman. (Laughter and applause). This applause by the gentlemen poorly conceals their own humiliation—seen through many a time. (Laughter). The teacher instead of putting a puzzling question, asked Tom when she came to him a very simple question that anybody could answer, and said to him at the same time, “No hurry; think about it and tell me what you think,” and waited, and seemed so gentle that Tom did not get confused, but said, “Why, that’s so easy, and then she asked a second question that led up toward the main question, and Tom answered it promptly. Then she said, “Well, what would you say to this, Tom?” and he said, “Oh, I would say”—answered it correctly, and she said, “Beautifully done, Tom—next,” and then went all around, and every time she came to Tom, wisely led him, held him, helped him, drew him up, strengthened him; and Tom grew up and became brighter, and was eighteen, and was head in school; and Charlie and he went to College, and Commencement-day came, and Charlie made his little speech,—lovely, broadcloth, cuffs, diamond pin. There were ten girls in the audience that said he was “exquisite.” (Laughter.) He had a good memory, but he