

It is not always the less ludicrous that is the more genuine. The great fault of the newspaper child is his precocity. School-room humor is largely unconscious.

Some of the things that struck me as funny when I taught in the West grew out of my attempt to teach some boys and girls some poems which even men and women must be not only mature but fairly well read to enjoy. Paraphrase in this case became a frequent source of unconscious humor. The lines from Sir Launfal :—

“ At the Devil’s booth all things are sold,
Each ounce of dross gets its ounce of gold,”

elicited the startling declaration :—

“ In hell we pay for all we get.

The lines in the “ Cathedral,” addressed to the poet’s Imagination :—

“ Oh, more than halfway turn thy Grecian front
Towards me, while in self-rebuke I spell,
On the plain fillet that confines thy hair,

* * * * *

The ‘ Naught in overplus,’ thy race’s badge,”

became :—

“ Turn your hair around till I see what is written on your hair-string.”

Many amusing things are interesting as revealing the character of the pupil. Is it not easy to read between the lines of this composition the mind of the girl who wrote it for me : “ Elizabeth was a very great queen. She was fond of dress and show and was the first to introduce fashion.” Do we need this other confirmatory sentence : “ During her reign great literature was wrote. Shakespear was among these ?”

The mistakes children make in words are frequently laughable. We have all heard the story of the youngster who came home from church with the proud boast that he could say the text, which he stated was, “ Many are cold, but few are frozen.” A chorus from my primary room rehearsed for some time the well-known “ Maple Leaf Forever,” before we noticed this somewhat sarcastic reference to the heroes of 1812 :—

“ At Lundy’s Heights and Lundy’s Lane,
Our brave fathers, side by side,
For Britain, home and loved ones dear,
Firmly stood and nobody died.”

But pupils are not alone in their contributions to the humor of the school room. A clergyman visited a school in England, where the pupils were nearly all the children of fishing folk. With the usual clerical view of the fitness of things, he talked to the children about the miraculous draught of fishes. He had described graphically how Peter, drawing the breaking net carefully over the boat’s gunwale, had got it in safely ; how he counted the fish and found a hun-