

The Evolution of Dodd eBook

The Evolution of Dodd

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Page 1

THE EVOLUTION OF “DODD.”

CHAPTER I.

There was joy in the Weaver household when the child was born, and when it had been duly announced that it was a boy. The event was the first of the kind in this particular branch of the Weaver family, and, as is always the case, there was such rejoicing as does not come with the recurrence of like episodes. A man hardly feels sure of his manhood till the magic word father is put in the vocative case and applied to him direct, and the apotheosis of woman comes with maternity.

There is nothing remarkable about all this. It is the same the world around. But it is the usual that demands most of our time and attention here below, whether we wish it so or otherwise; and although we are everlastingly running after the strange and eccentric in human nature, as well as in all other branches of creation, it is the rule and not the exception that we have to deal with during most of our lives.

This Weaver family, father and mother, were much like other young fathers and mothers, and their child was not unlike other first-born children. His first low cry and his struggle for breath were just such as the officiating doctor had witnessed a hundred times, and doubtless his last moan and gasp will be such as the attending physician will have seen many a time and oft.

It is not the unusual that this brief tale has to deal with.

Yet, with all of these points held in common with the rest of the race, the hero of the adventures herein chronicled had an individuality that was his own, and most thoroughly so. This, too, is common. Most people have an individuality, if they can only find it! A good many men never do find this quality in themselves, having it crushed out by the timid or designing people who take charge of their education, so called; but for all that, to every man is given a being unlike that of any other in all the world, and it is the business of each, for himself, to make the most of his own peculiar gift, and for all his teachers and all systems of education to help him in his heaven-ordained task.

The young Weaver, whose advent has just been mentioned, was an individual. The nurse became conscious of it before he was an hour old, and the same impression has been received by all of his since-acquired acquaintances. He was a boy with a way of his own. He came into a world where there are crowds possessed of the same characteristics. It is a marvel, how, in such a multitude of differences, either he or the rest of us get along, even as well as we do.

When it came to naming the child, he was called “Dodd.”



“Dodd” was the short for Doddridge, and the full appellation given to the youth at his christening, when he was two months old, was Doddridge Watts Weaver, a name which the officiating clergyman pronounced with great unction, and in the prayer after baptism made mention of again, asking heaven to grant that the mantle of both the old worthies whose names the child bore might fall upon the little body wrapped up in an embroidered blanket and held on the shoulder of the good woman who stood before the altar.



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That is not just the way the preacher said this, but it is substantially the idea that he tried to convey to the Lord, and perhaps he succeeded in doing so better than I have succeeded in conveying it to you, dear reader; but then, he had this advantage: The Lord is quicker at taking a point hinted at than the public is! Though this needs to be added: that if the Hearer of Prayer did catch the meaning that lay around loose somewhere in the jumble of the parson's petition, that morning, He did not see fit to grant the request, for no scrap of a rag that ever had graced the backs of those dear old hymn-makers fell, either soon or late, upon the form of the boy whose wriggling little body the mother tried to keep in order while the parson prayed.

The father of this bit of humanity was Parson Weaver, a man of some ability, as was evinced by the fact that he joined the church, got married, went to preaching, and became a father, as noted, all within a twelve-month. He was shrewd, and generally had sufficient reasons for his actions. He even had a purpose in naming his first-born. He was fresh to the ministry, and young. The elders of the church were somber men, and feared that their pastor might be too much given to levity. Mr. Weaver got wind of this, somehow, and to impress upon the pillars of his church and the payers of his salary the fact that he was "sober, righteous and godly," he named his first-born out of the hymn book.

But the boy never liked the name. When he began to go to school the other boys used to laugh at him when he stood up and told the teacher what his name was, and, a tease among the girls, who had an old grandmother who used to sit in a corner and read old books, once nick-named the youth "Rise and Progress." As soon as he could write, he always signed his name D. W. Weaver, and insisted that the initials stood for Daniel Webster.

As already noted, the child was the first born of his parents. He was not the last, however, for, like a faithful clergyman of the old school, that he was, Parson Weaver ultimately had a family, the number of which could not be told by any one significant figure. The children came into the household in quick succession too, for when "Dodd" was four years old he had four brothers and sisters, two pairs of twins having blessed the good parson and his wife within the first half decade of their wedded life. These trifling facts may seem irrelevant to this record, but due reflection will doubtless show that they are worthy to be set down as pertaining to the case.

Perhaps first children are more apt to be individual than those of later birth. Be this as it may, "Dodd" had a much more marked individuality than his brothers and sisters. Not to attempt to trace the ways of nature too far, it is perhaps true that in a first-born child are joined the individualities of the young father and mother to a greater extent than in the younger members of a family. The untamed currents of youthful blood that course through the veins of the bride and groom, and their unmodified natures—all of which mellow with years,—leave marks upon their eldest which the younger children escape.



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At any rate, "Dodd" was a wayward boy from the first, a typical preacher's son. He was rebellious, belligerent, and naturally deceitful. This last trait, matched with a vivid imagination, made him a great liar as soon as he grew old enough to use the two faculties at the same time. In this regard, however, he was not so wonderfully unlike a great many other people. He had bursts of great generosity; was brave and daring even to foolhardiness; had friends, and would stand by them till death, if need be, when the good impulse was on; or perhaps betray them in their greatest extremity if the opposite passion got control at a critical moment.

Intellectually he was bright, even to keenness; physically he was lazy and a shirk; morally his status is best represented by the algebraic sign 0-0; spiritually he was at times profoundly reverent and aspiring, or again, outrageously blasphemous, and reckless almost to desperation.

This is a partial catalogue of the characteristics with which "Dodd" was originally endowed. The character that was evolved from these, by means of the education that fell to the lot of this individual, is the business of these pages. To take such timber as is furnished in this specimen, and fashion from it a temple of the Lord, is a task that might puzzle angels. To make a decent child, a boy, or man out of "Dodd" Weaver, was the thing that worried everybody that had anything to do with him, and may, some day, perhaps, prove too hard a task for that individual himself. Yet his case is no uncommon one in many of its phases, for every day sees thousands quite like it in the school houses of America, as elsewhere.

And the question is, what are we to do about it?

Not to detail carefully all the events pertaining to the home life of "Dodd" up to the time he was six years old, it is enough to say that after the time he was able to creep, he lived much in the street. He was usually in mischief when not asleep, and his overworn mother and somewhat shiftless and careless father were so taken up with the other children and with family and pastoral cares, that "Dodd" grew up by himself, as so many children do; more is the pity.

A man seldom gets so many calves, or colts, or pigs that he cannot take good care of them, every one; but for his own children—well, it need not be said what, the cases are so frequent that everybody knows all about them.

"Dodd" was a youngster for everybody to tease. When he first began to toddle along the sidewalk in front of the house, the folks who came along would pull his little cap down over his eyes, and then laugh at him when he got mad and cried. All this tended to develop him, and doubtless the evolution of many points in his character took rise in these and similar events.

At last the morning dawned when “Dodd” was six years old, and there was joy in Parson Weavers household in the fact that now one youngster could be got rid of for six hours a day, and ten months in the year, Saturdays and Sundays excepted.



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Gentle teacher, you who read these lines, you know who was to take care of this specimen, don't you? Alas! alas! what herds of six-year-old babies there are thus to be taken care of, many of them coming from homes where they have never known what care meant, but every one to be got into shape somehow, by you, my dear school ma'am, or master, all for a handful of paltry dollars per month, while you wait to get married, or to enter another profession. "To what base uses do we return!"

So, on a leaden morning in November, when the mud was deepest and the first snow was shied through the air, whose sharpness cut like a knife, "Dodd" Weaver came into the schoolroom alone, his mother being too busy to go with him. He had waded across the street where the mud and slush were worse than anywhere else. His boots were smeared to their very tops, and the new book that he started with had a black daub the size of your hand on the bright cover. He came late and, without a word of hesitation, marched to the desk, and remarked to the woman in charge: "Mam said you was to take care o' me!"

CHAPTER II.

Miss Elvira Stone was teaching the school that year. Miss Stone was above the average height of women, and carried her social much higher than she did her physical head, while there was a kind of nose-in-the-air bearing in both cases. She had beautiful, wavy black hair, a clear complexion, black eyes, and narrow, thin lips, which were always slightly pursed up, as the groundwork or main support of a kind of cast-iron smile that never left her face for a moment while she was awake. Her dresses always fitted her perfectly, and her skirts trailed at the proper angle, but yet there was a feeling, all the time, that she had been poured into the mould that the dressmaker had prepared, and now that she had got hard, you could strike her with a hammer and not break her up, though you could not help thinking that it must have taken a very hot fire ever to melt her.

She wore glasses, too. Not spectacles, but a dainty pair of eye glasses, set in gold, that sat astride of her nose in a very dignified fashion and crowned the everlasting smile that was spread out below them. In fact Miss Stone was so superior a person that one wondered how it ever happened that she should condescend to teach school at all.

But this was only a general view of the case.

When viewed in detail the fact appeared that although Elvira was proud she was also poor!

This accounted for her being in the schoolroom.

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But she had made the most of herself in her profession, as she had in other directions. Her motto was to aim high, even if her arrow should light in the mud at last, and she always shot by that rule. When she decided to be a teacher rather than a clerk in a store, she began to look about for the best opportunities in the direction of her choice. It should be remarked that the alternative of store or schoolroom came to her only after several unsuccessful seasons in society, in which the moulded form, the wavy hair, and the constant smile had been used to their best possible advantage, but all in vain. The hook on which her bait was hung was so rigid and cold that no gudgeon, even, ever thought of biting at it; though the angler thought it a clever and tempting bit to bite at.

How apt we all are to be deceived—by ourselves.

So Elvira resolved to make a school teacher out of herself.

Being somewhat dull intellectually, and detesting severe study, she abjured all paths that would lead her to teach the higher branches of learning, and bent her rather spare and somewhat stale energies to fitting herself for primary work. This, too, in the face of the fact that she naturally despised children, except sweet little girls in their best clothes, with long curls, freshly made up, and hanging like a golden flood over neck and shoulders; or bright little boys, also well dressed and duly curled, for about a minute, when they came into the parlor where Miss Stone used to sit with her smile. For these she had a fancy merely, it could not be called an affection. Miss Stone was not affectionate.

She went to St. Louis and associated herself with the Kindergarten of that far-famed city.

Far be it from this record to intimate that this is not a good thing to do, on occasion. With this point I have naught to do. But history is history, and facts must be duly recorded; and the fact is, Miss Stone went to St. Louis, as before stated, and let out the job of being fashioned into a Kindergarten, to certain persons who dwelt in that city, and whose business it was to do just this sort of thing.

Neither can it be here set down what her ultimate success might have been had she confined herself to Kindergarten work proper. Indeed, it is an open question how any one ever succeeded in this particular way, or, in fact, whether any one ever did do Kindergarten work proper for a week at a time. It is one of the peculiarities of this kind, that it is never met with in all its purity. Like the old-fashioned milk-sickness, you can never come to the place where it really exists. Any one can tell you just where you will find it, but when you pursue it, and come to the place, like the end of the rainbow, it evades you and goes beyond.

But this is getting on slowly. Miss Stone got on slowly, too.

This was the woman to whom “Dodd” committed himself, in the words of the last chapter. The lady turned towards the boy and brought the full force of her smile to bear upon his luckless head.

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“My dear little child,” she said, “go and clean your feet!”

This, vocally. In mental reservation she remarked at the same time: “Drat the little villain, I’ve got to take him at last,” for she had heard of “Dodd” and his exploits before she had been in her place a week.

“I don’t haf to,” returned the youth, scraping a piece of black loam off his left boot with the toe of his right, and rubbing the sticky lump into the floor.

But Miss Stone had faith in her training. She hastily ran through all the precepts and maxims of Froebel, and also such others as his American followers have added by way of perfecting this highly wrought system, but though she thought a great deal more rapidly than usual, she found no rules and regulations duly made and provided for a case just like this.

For the first time in her life she realized that there was one thing in this world that even a German specialist, backed up by St. Louis philosophy, had not reached; neither Froebel nor his followers said a word about poking mud off one boot with the toe of the other, nor of rubbing mud into the floor, nor what to do with a saucy little boy who said defiantly, “I don’t haf to.”

Had she been teaching in a large city she might have sent for the principal, and he might have telephoned the superintendent, who might have called a meeting of the Board to consider the case, and so overcome the dilemma; but Circleville had a school of only three rooms, and the principal, so called, heard twenty-two recitations a day, in his own room, and had little time for anything else. So there was no help from that quarter, and for the time Miss Stone was dumb.

There is a tradition that her smile left her for a moment, but the fact is not well authenticated and should not be too freely believed.

How long this teacher would have remained in her unfortunate condition it is impossible to tell, for just at this instant Esther Tracy, a motherly little soul, aged seven, who had been conscientiously trying for half an hour to see in how many different ways she could arrange four wooden tooth-picks upon the desk, according to a modified form of Froebel’s canons, as interpreted by Miss Stone, took the ends of her fingers out from between her lips, where she had thrust them during the moment of her doubt, and raising her hand, said:

“Please, Miss Stone, let me take ‘Dodd’ and I’ll take care of him.”

Without waiting for a reply, she came forward, took the boy by the hand and led him out of the room.



O, Nature, Nature! How inexorable art thou! As people are born, so are they always, and what do all our strivings to change thy decrees amount to? Esther Tracy, aged seven, who had never heard of a Theory and Art of Teaching, and who scarce knew her letters; indeed, has put to shame Miss Elvira Stone, the handmade disciple of Froebel and the St. Louis Kindergarten system! She knew what to do with “Dodd,” and Miss Stone didn’t. This was the success of one, the failure of the other. The principle obtains always.



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CHAPTER III.

It was fully fifteen minutes before Esther and “Dodd” returned to the schoolroom. It takes a large reserve force of both patience and scraping to make presentable such a specimen as “Dodd” was on this memorable morning. But when the two appeared again, the boy’s boots were clean, and his hair was smoothed down, while the book cover showed only a wet spot, of deeper tint than the rest of the book, in place of the black blot that had been so prominent a few minutes before. The girl led the boy to a seat not far from hers and then returned to her own little desk.

While the children were out Miss Stone had time to collect her thoughts, and she began at once to consider what she should do to amuse the child. It had been a primary principle with those who constructed this female educator, that the chief end of a primary teacher was to amuse the children placed under her charge.

This precept had been drilled into Miss Stone, and nothing less than a charge of dynamite could have dislodged it.

She was taught that it was little less than wicked to impose tasks upon young shoulders; that the “pretty little birdies” (this always said with a smile) “enjoyed themselves, hopping about in God’s blessed sunlight, and that it was Nature’s way to have her children happy.”

“Happiness,” in this case, seemed to mean doing nothing, but simply being amused—a definition that finds general recognition among many, there being those who dream of heaven as a place where they can be as everlastingly lazy as they choose, through all eternity, with the celestial choirs forever tooting soft music in the distance, and streams of milk and honey flowing perpetually to their lips, all for their amusement and delectation. Perhaps this last is the correct idea. It might as well be confessed that on this point we are not well posted in this world, though many profess to be. The Father will show us this some day, as he will all else, but till then we can wait.

But, be the employment or enjoyment of heaven what it may, it is evident that in this world a man or a child has something to do besides being amused. We are all born destined for work, rich and poor alike. It is our reasonable service, and the best thing we can do is to fit ourselves for the task, from the very first. Not that our work shall be mere drudgery, though it may be that and nothing more, and, even so, be better than idleness or being amused; but it is the fate of every soul born on earth to be called upon constantly to do things which it had rather not do, just then, anyhow, and whenever such a condition exists, work is the word that describes what has to be done. It is the business of life to work. The Book has it that, “The Father worketh hitherto.” Even the new version has failed to reveal the phrase, “The Father is amused,” and the Master, when a boy, declared that he must attend to the “business” that lay waiting for him.

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But the pedagogic preceptors of Miss Stone did not draw their system of education from so old a book as the one just referred to. It is perhaps true, also, that German philosophy was evolved merely that people might be amused by it!

Quietly she glided down the aisle, her dress rustling along the seats, and an odor of “new mown hay” exhaling from her clothing. “Dodd” hung his head as she approached—perhaps it was to dodge her smile—and waited developments.

“What is your name, my dear?” came from between the pursed-up lips.

“Doddridge Watts Weaver,” said the boy, in a loud tone.

There was a titter all over the room. The name was very odd, and an oddity is always to be laughed at by the average person, boy or man. Did you ever think of that, my dear pedagogue; you who would fain amuse children, and yet will spit them upon the spear of public ridicule by asking them to tell their names out loud in public, before all the rest of the boys and girls? It is doubtful if any one ever likes to tell his name in public. I have known old lawyers to blush when put upon the witness stand and obliged to tell their names to the court and jury, all of whom had known them for the last fifty years! If such is the effect on a dry old stump of a lawyer, what must the effect be on a green, sensitive child?

“Dodd” heard the titter and it made him mad. He was not to blame for the name, and he felt that it was mean for the folks to laugh at him for what he couldn’t help. He cast an angry glance out of the corner of his eyes, as if to say he would be even for this some day, and then hung his head again.

“That’s a very pretty name,” said Miss Stone, thinking by this thin compliment to amuse the boy.

“Tain’t nuther!” returned the youth.

Miss Stone ventured no further in that line.

“I am glad you have come to school, and I hope you will be a very nice little boy, because we all love nice little boys,” replied Miss Stone.

“Dodd” glanced across the aisle to where sat a “curled darling” and wished he could pull his hair till he howled.

“Now here is something that will amuse you a little while, I am sure,” pursued Miss Stone, and she laid a handful of beans upon the desk.



The boy glanced up and giggled just a little—such a knowing giggle, too, as much as to say: “What do you take me for? Here’s a go! Come to school to be amused with beans!”

Miss Stone caught the glance, and in her inmost soul knew all it meant, and realized its full force; but she checked the truth that she felt within her and proceeded by the card. And why not? Was she not acting in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by those who had fashioned her for this very work, and were not these same warranted to keep in any climate, and not to be affected by dampness or dry weather? She had put her faith in a system and had paid for what she received; and she didn’t propose to be beaten out of her possession by any little white-headed son of a Methodist preacher, in a town of a thousand inhabitants.

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She showed “Dodd” how to divide the handful of beans into little bunches of three each, and how to lay each pile by itself along the top of the desk, and then left him to be amused according to the rule in such cases made and provided.

Now it is admitted, right here, that beans are not a strictly Kindergarten “property”—to bring a stage term into the schoolroom—but one seldom sees genuine Kindergarten properties, or hardly ever, even in St. Louis, and beans are so commonly used as above stated, that it can hardly be the fault of the harmless vegetable that Miss Stone’s plan did not succeed exactly as she wished it to. The fact is, “Dodd” knew how to count before he went to school, and could even add and subtract fairly, as was shown by his doing errands at the store for his mother and counting the change which he brought back to her. The bean business was therefore mere nonsense to him. He turned up his nose at the inoffensive kidney-shaped pellets before him, and his reverence for the dignity of the schoolroom and his faith in Miss Stone fell several degrees in a few minutes.

Perhaps it would not have been so in Boston. In that city, I am told, the bean is held in such reverence by all grown-up people that one might well expect to see the quality descend to all children, as a natural inheritance. But Circleville is not Boston, and there are thousands of other towns in these United States that are like Circleville in this respect.

However, “Dodd” sat idly moving the beans about for some time. He was quiet, and gradually Miss Stone forgot him in the press of other thoughts. To be plain, she had recently joined an Art Club, an organization composed of a few ladies in the little village, women whose husbands were well-to-do, and who, being childless, were restless and anxious to “become developed.” Miss Stone was a member of this club, and in a few days she was to read a paper on “Giunta Pisano, and his probable relation to Cimabue,” and the subject was working her mightily, for she was anxious to have her production longer than Miss Blossom’s, read at the last meet, and to secure this was no small task. She had been to the “up-stairs room” during recess and brought down the cyclopedia, and, happily, had found a page and a half regarding Giunta Pisano therein, which she was copying verbatim. To be sure, there was no word in it about Cimabue, or the relation of the one to the other, but this was not taken into account. There were plenty of words in the article, and that was the chief end just then.

So Miss Stone was soon busy with her pen, the index finger of her left hand noting the line in the cyclopedia which should be next transcribed. The children whispered and played a good deal, but she paid little heed. There was little danger of visitors, for no one visited schools in Circleville (how like all other towns it is in this respect!) and Miss Stone knew how to hustle classes through recitations and make time on a down grade just before dinner, and so took her time at her task of writing up poor old Giunta.



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She was presently conscious, however, that something unusual was going on, and on looking up, found the eyes of the pupils fastened on “Dodd.” She ran down to his desk, hoping to find the beans in order. But alas for human expectations! We are all so often doomed to disappointment! Not a bean was to be seen, and “Dodd” hung his head.

Miss Stone reached for his hands, thinking he was hiding them there; but his hands were empty. She tried his pockets. They yielded ample returns of such things as boys’ pockets are wont to contain, but no beans appeared.

Miss Stone was alarmed, and she almost trembled as she asked:

“‘Dodd,’ where are the beans?”

The boy did not look up, but with a kind of suppressed chuckle, he muttered, “I’ve eat ‘em all up!”

CHAPTER IV.

For some cause or other Miss Stone and “Dodd” did not get on well together as their acquaintance progressed. The boy was impulsive, saucy, rude, and generally outrageous, in more ways than can be told or even dreamed of by any one but a primary teacher who has become familiar with the species.

Miss Stone had no natural tact as a teacher, no gift of God in this direction, no intuition, which is worth more than all precepts and maxims combined. She knew how to work by rule, as so many teachers do, but beyond this she had little ability. This to her credit, however: she did, ultimately, labor hard with the boy, and tried her best to do something with him, or for him, or by him, but all to little purpose.

It seemed to be “Dodd’s” special mission to knock in the head the pet theories of this hand-made school-ma’am. She had him up to read on the afternoon of the first day of his attendance at school. Being but six years of age, and having just entered school, it was proper, according to the regulations, that he should enter the Chart Class. So to the Chart Class he went.

The word for the class that day was “girl,” and the lesson proceeded after the usual manner of those who hold to this method of teaching children to read.

A little girl was placed upon the platform (the prettiest little girl in the class, to be sure), and the pupils were asked to tell what they saw. They all answered in concert, “a girl;” and it is to be hoped that this answer, thus given, was duly evolved from their inner consciousness by a method fully in harmony with the principles of thought-development, as laid down in the books, and by Miss Stone’s preceptors. A picture girl was then displayed upon a card-board which hung against the wall. There were many of these

card-boards in the room, all made by a book-concern that had some faith and a good deal of money invested in this particular way of teaching reading—all of which, I am sure, is well enough, but the fact, probably, ought to be mentioned just here, as it is.



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The pupils were asked if the girl on the platform was the same as the one on the card-board, and there was a unanimous opinion that they were not identical. The analysis of differences was not pursued to any great length, but enough questions were asked the children, by Miss Stone, to develop in them the thought that “structurally and functionally the two objects, designated by the common term, were not the same!” When this diagnosis had been thoroughly mastered by the children, a third member was added for their serious consideration, Miss Stone having duly explained to the class that “there is still another way to make us think girl.”

“You know,” she said, “we always think girl when we see ‘Lollie’”—the little girl on the platform—“and we always think girl when we see the picture; but now you all watch me, and I will show you one other way in which we may always be made to think girl.”

Then, with much flourish of chalk, Miss Stone printed “*Girl*” upon the board, and proceeded to elucidate, as follows:

“Now, this that I have written upon the board is not ‘Lollie,’ for she is on the platform yet; nor is it the picture, for that is on the card-board, but it is the word ‘girl,’ and whenever I see it, it makes me think girl. Now, ‘Lollie’ is the real girl, on the card-board is the picture girl, and on the blackboard is the word girl. Now, who thinks he can take the pointer and point to the kind of girl I ask for?”

Several little hands went up, but “Dodd’s” was not among them. Miss Stone noticed this and was “riled” a little, for she had tried doubly hard to do well, just because this tow-head was in the class, and now to have the little scamp repudiate it all was too bad.

She called on one and another of the children to point, now to the real girl, now to the picture girl, now to the word girl, and all went very nicely, till finally she asked “Dodd” to take the pointer and see what he could do. But the boy made no motion to obey. Gently she urged him to try, but he hung his head and would not budge.

“Why don’t you want to try, ‘Dodd?’” asked the lady, bending down over the child.

O fatal question! Quick as thought the lad replied, as he raised his head:

“Coz, I’ve knowed that always!”

It is not the intention of this chronicle to pass judgment upon any system of teaching children to read. This record does not concern itself with one system nor another. But in the evolution of “Dodd,” Miss Stone used the word-method of the charts, as before stated, and using it just as she did, she failed to reach the boy as she hoped to, and her failure was very unfortunate for the child. She was aware of this, but she had not strength enough, in her own right, to change the result.

So it was that day after day went by, and the antagonism between teacher and pupil grew.



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The boy presently discovered that he could annoy Miss Stone mightily, and he lost no opportunity to do what he could in this direction. It was contrary to the creed taught this good woman to inflict corporal punishment upon any child, and though “Dodd” aggravated her almost to desperation, and was malicious in his persecutions, yet she kept her hands off him. Once or twice she tried some slight punishment, such as making him sit on the platform at her feet, or stand with his face in the corner, but these light afflictions the boy counted as joyous rather than grievous, and did as he chose more than ever. He slyly unfastened one of Miss Stone’s shoestrings one day, when seated at her feet for penalty, and laughed when she tripped in it as she got up; and somehow or other, he would always put the whole room in a turmoil whenever placed with his face to the wall.

“Dodd” learned to read quite rapidly, however, having mastered his letters before he went to school, and having spelled a good many words on signs and in newspapers. Before the end of the third week he had read his first reader through, one way or another, though he was still in the Chart Class, and having once been through the book, it lost many, if not most, of its charms for him thereafter.

But if his reader was so soon crippled for him, what shall be said of the work of the Chart Class, over which he went again and again, always in substantially the same way?

It may be said, and truthfully, that there were some pupils in the class who, even after going over and over the same lesson, for days and days, still did not master it, and so the class was not ready to move on; but it does not follow that therefore “Dodd” was not ready to move on. This did follow, however, according to Miss Stone’s teaching, and according to the system adopted by multitudes of teachers East, West, North, and South.

I am well aware that there are teachers, plenty of them, whose spirits will rebel against the above insinuation, so, a word with you, ladies and gentlemen.

The system used by Miss Stone may have worked well enough in some other hands, but it should be remembered that it is not a system that can educate our children. Nor is it a system—any set of rules and formularies—that can make our schools, any more than it is forms and ceremonies that make our churches. These may all be well enough in their proper places, but there is nothing, absolutely nothing, in them, per se. It is the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees in the one case, and the dry bones of pedagogy in the other,

The evil arises, in the schools as in the churches, from believing and acting as if there were something in the system itself.



If human nature were a fixed quantity, if any two children were alike, or anywhere nearly alike, if a certain act done for a child always brought forth the same result, then it might be possible to form an absolute system of pedagogy, as, with fixed elements, there is formed the science of chemistry. But the quick atoms of spirit that manifest their affinities under the eye of that alchemist, the teacher, are far more subtle than the elements that go into the crucible in any other of Nature's laboratories.



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A chemist will distill for you the odor of a blown rose, or catch and hold captive the breath of the morning meadow, and do it always just the same, and ever with like results. But there is no art by which anything analogous can be wrought in human life. Here a new element comes in that entirely changes the economy of nature in this regard. The individuality of every human soul is this new factor, and because of it, of its infinite variability—because no two atoms that are cast into the crucible of life are ever the same, or can be wrought into character by the same means—because of this, no fixed rules can ever be laid down for evolving a definite result, in the realm of soul, by never-varying means.

And this is where Miss Stone was at fault. She had put her faith in a system, a mill through which all children should be run, and in passing through which each child should receive the same treatment, and from which they should all emerge, stamped with the seal of the institution, “uniformity.”

This was the prime idea that lay at the foundation of Miss Stone’s system of training—to make children uniform. This very thing that God and Nature have set themselves against—no two faces, or forms, or statures; no two minds, or hearts, or souls being alike, as designed by the Creator, and as fashioned by Nature’s hand—to make all these alike was the aim of the system under which “Dodd” began to be evolved, and with which he began to clash at once.

The boy was much brighter than most of the class in which he was placed. The peculiarity of his own nature, and his surroundings before entering school, made him a subject for some special notice, something more than the “regular thing” prescribed by the rules. Yet this he did not get, and by so much as he did not, by so much he failed to receive his proper due at this period of his life.

And this is a fault in any system, or in any teacher who works exclusively by any card other than his or her own good sense, as applied to each individual case.

It was not so much the means that Miss Stone tried upon “Dodd” that were at fault, as it was the way in which she applied them and the end she strove to reach by their use. And for you, my dear, who are walking over the same road as the one just reported as traversed by Miss Stone, look the way over and see how it is with you in these matters. And do not content yourself, either, by merely saying, “But what are we going to do about it?” Bless your dear life, that is the very thing that is set for you to find out, and as you hope for success here and a reward hereafter, don’t give up till you have answered the question.

Neither can any one but yourself answer this question. The experience of others may be of some help to you, but the problem—and you have a new problem every time you have a new pupil—is only to be solved by yourself. Look over the history of the Chart Class, over whose silly mumblings this boy was dragged till disgust took the place of

expectancy, then think of like cases that you have known, and ask yourself what you are going to do about it.

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It is true that classes are large, that rooms are full, that some pupils are severely dull, and that it is a very hard thing to know what it is best to do; but these things, all of them, do not excuse you from doing your best, and from making that best, in large measure, meet the absolute needs of the child. "Hic labor, hoc opus est."

And for you, who send your six-year-olds to school with a single book, and grumble because you have to buy even so much of an outfit, what are you going to do about it when your boy drains all the life out of the little volume, in a couple of weeks or a month? He knows the stories by heart, and after that says them over, day by day, because he must, and not in the least because he cares to.

What are you going to do about this? It is largely your business. You cannot shirk it and say that you send the boy to school, and it is the teacher's business to take care of him. That will not answer the question. Look the facts in the face, and then do as well by your boy as you do by your hogs! When they get cloyed on corn, then you change their feed, and so keep them growing, even if it does cost twice as much to make the change; and yet, the chances are that when your boy is tired to death of the old, old stories in his reader, tales worn threadbare, as they are drawled over and over in his hearing by the dullards of his class, till his soul is sick of them, even then you force him to go again and again over the hated pages, till he will resort to rank rebellion to be rid of them!

And what are you going to do about it?

Miss Stone knew none of these things. They were of little interest to her, and she bothered her head but little about them. But they were of interest to "Dodd" Weaver. In the evolution of this young hopeful they played an important part. They were hindrances to the boy at the very outset of his course in the public schools. They begot in him habits and dislikes which it took years to efface, and from which it is doubtful if he ever did fully recover. There are multitudes in like case, and what are we going to do about it?

CHAPTER V.

The severity of the duties, pastoral and paternal, that fell to the lot of Elder Weaver, wore rapidly upon the constitution of that worthy gentleman, and when "Dodd" was nine years old his father found it necessary to retire from the pulpit, for a year at least, and, as is usual in such cases, he went to that refuge for fagged out ministers of all denominations, the old homestead of his wife's parents.

From this rustic domicile he had led the youngest daughter, a buxom bride, ten years before; to it he now returned with her and with seven small children besides. An ambitious young man and a healthy young woman, a decade before, they came back to



the threshold from which they had gone out, he, broken in spirit and as poor in purse as in purpose; she, worn and faded, yet trying hard to seem cheerful as she came within the sunlight of the old home again.

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The old people lengthened the cords and strengthened the stakes of their simple home, and made the Elder and his wife, and the seven children ("seven devils," an irreverent sister once called them in a burst of indignation at the state of affairs) as comfortable as possible. To be sure grandpa and grandma Stebbins were old, and it was long since there had been children in the house, but they had enough and to spare in crib and pantry, and they had lived sufficiently long in this world to accept the inevitable without a murmur.

But for all of that, the children were a source of a good deal of annoyance to the old people, especially until they were brought somewhat under subjection by the faithful hand of the old gentleman, who found that he should have to stand up for his own in the premises or submit to the unendurable.

The first real climax occurred on the second day of the quartering of the family thus, and "Dodd" was the boy who brought matters to a focus.

The month was October, and down in the yard, a few feet from the bee-hives, just beyond the shadow of the weeping-willow that stood near the well, and along the row of gooseberry bushes under which the hens were wont to gather and gossip—standing on one leg and making their toilets meanwhile—there stood a barrel, out of whose bung-hole protruded a black bottle turned bottom side up. The barrel was filled with the best cider made that season, a special run from apples that had been sorted out, and from which every worm-hole and specked place had been cut by the thrifty hand of Grandma Stebbins. This was for the family vinegar for the year, and the cask was thus left in the sun duly to ripen its contents.

"Dodd" had not been in the yard five minutes before his quick eye caught sight of this, and his eager imagination transformed it into a horse in a twinkling. He did this the more easily, too, because it was raised from the ground a foot or more, being supported by blocks of wood which in the mind's eye of the boy did well enough for legs, while a spicket, protruding from one end, below, made a head for the animal, which, though small, was available for bridling purposes.

It was the work of but a minute to jerk a string from his pocket, bridle the beast, and mount him for a ride.

"Dodd" had but fairly started on this escapade, however, when his grandfather appeared in the yard and at once saw the danger that threatened his carefully garnered cider. He quietly approached his little grandson, and, telling him that he could not permit him to play with the barrel, began gently to lift him to the ground.

But against this the boy rebelled. He clutched his little legs about the cask and held to his seat with all his might, and when at last he was forced to yield, he took the black bottle with him as a trophy.

His grandfather set him down and explained to him how the cider was turning to vinegar; that if it was jarred it would spoil it, and how the black bottle “drew the sun.”

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But “Dodd” heard little of all this, and cared less, even, for what he did hear. He was used to having his own way. He wriggled and squirmed during the explanation, and as soon as he was released, he made straight for his coveted seat again, even in the very face of the old gentleman, and when his grandfather caught him once more and led him away somewhat rapidly, he kicked the shins of his captor in a very malicious and wicked fashion, and yelled lustily the while. The old man took the boy to his mother and explained matters, assuring “Dodd” and the other children, who stood about in a ring, that they must in no case touch the cask in question, and then left the room.

Mrs. Weaver scolded her first-born roundly, told him he was “a very naughty boy,” and ended by taking from behind the clock a small and brittle switch—an auxiliary that she had made haste to provide herself with before she had been on the premises an hour, and without which she felt that her family government would be but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal—and striking “Dodd” one or two slight strokes over his hips.

This was Mrs. Weaver’s way of “training” her children. From “Dodd’s” earliest infancy he had been used to this sort of thing. His mother believed in the maxim, “spare the rod and spoil the child,” and this was her method of endeavoring to fulfill both the spirit and the letter of the precept. There was always a small, brittle switch behind the clock, and it was taken down numberless times each day, only to make a child bawl for a minute, as he was threatened or struck lightly with the harmless stick.

The usual result was that he went ahead and did the very thing he was forbidden to do.

“Dodd” yelled lustily while his mother laid on, though in truth he scarcely felt the blows, and then sulked for the rest of the day, teasing the other children and making life a burden to everybody and everything he came near.

It was the next day, about two o’clock, that the boy once more got into the yard and made straight for his coveted seat. The fact is he had never given up his purpose to return at the first opportunity.

He fastened the bridle to the spigot and mounted in hot haste, kicking his little heels into the bleached staves, and plying the riding whip like a young fury. The horse acted badly (“Dodd’s” horses always acted badly), and he jerked smartly on the bridle rein to subdue him. It was rare sport, and the lad fairly reveled in it, in his little heart defying those who had forbidden him this pleasure, and glorying in his triumph.

But “the way of sinners is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble,” and “Dodd” was destined to “take a header” forthwith. The jerks on the reins drew the spigot from its place, and the first he knew it was dangling in the air over the end of the barrel. He leaned over, fully to observe this fact, and saw the cider shooting out in an amber stream and flooding all the ground.

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“Hurray,” he yelled, “that’s a bully waterfall!” and he thrust his whip into the stream to see it spatter, hopping about meantime.

It was just at this instant that grandfather Stebbins came out of the barn, and, hearing the shout of the boy, looked over that way and took in the situation. He was over seventy, but he covered the ground from barn to barrel in most excellent time.

“Hi! hi!” he shouted as he ran. “Stop it up! Stop it up!”

“Dodd” saw the old man coming, and realizing something of the situation, he began to beat a retreat, taking the spigot with him.

“Here! you young Benjamite” (“Dodd” was left-handed, and the old gentleman was well posted in Bible lore), “bring back that spigot.”

But the boy ran like a white-head that he was, and a race of several yards ensued before he was caught. But the old man was wiry and was urged to his topmost speed by the press of the circumstances. He caught “Dodd,” and collared him with a grip such as the boy had never before felt. He dragged the young rogue back to the barrel in no gentle manner, and thrust the plug into the hole, saving a mere remnant that remained of the contents of the cask, and then devoted himself to the little scamp whom he still held.

For a few times in a lifetime Fortune puts into our hands the very thing we most want at the very time we most want it, and this was one of the times when the fickle goddess favored the old man Stebbins.

“Dodd” had dropped the riding whip that he had been using, beside the barrel, and it lay where it fell. It was a tough bit of rawhide, hard-twisted, and lithe. The old man’s hand caught it instinctively, as if drawn to it by an irresistible attraction, and before the young lawbreaker, whom he held by the collar, could say, or think, “what doest thou?” he plied it so vigorously about his legs and back that the culprit thought for a moment that he had been struck by lightning. He yelled from very pain for the first time in his life, from such a cause, and tried to find breath or words to beg for a respite, but in vain, for the blows fell thick and fast and they stung terribly, every one.

“I’ll teach you,” the old man shouted as he laid on. “Perhaps you think this is a little switch, and that I shall only tickle you with it.”

He paused a minute to let “Dodd” catch up with the general line of thought, in his somewhat distracted mind, and while the youth danced about, he proceeded.

“Young man, I have got to teach you to mind! I told you to keep away from this barrel and you paid no attention, and now I’m going to whip you till you will pay attention!”



At the words “going to whip you” “Dodd” tried to find words to beg, but they came too slowly, and once more the old man wrapped the supple lash about the smarting understandings of his grandson.

It seemed to “Dodd” as though his legs were fairly whipped off, and as if the place for the general reception of the strokes had left him altogether; as though he could not endure another blow, but still the supply was unexhausted. He fell limp to the ground, and fairly roared for mercy.

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It was the first time in his life that he had really yielded to any one, but he never thought of that; he only groaned and begged for relieve.

The old man stopped when he felt that he had quite fulfilled his duty, as he understood it, and then spoke as follows to the boy, who lay collapsed on the ground:

“There, my young man, get up and go into the house, and after this, remember and do just exactly as I tell you. That’s all I want, but that I must have, and you must understand it. I don’t want to be cruel to you, and I won’t be,—but you must learn to mind, and you had better learn it now than later. Don’t you ever do again what I tell you not to do, or I shall have to punish you even harder than this!”

“Dodd” rubbed his stinging legs and wondered if there was anything beyond what he had suffered. He staggered to his feet and went to the house as limp as a rag. He did not seek his mother, but went straight up stairs and threw himself upon the bed in the back room, where he cried for half an hour, and finally fell asleep.

As for the old gentleman, he went back to the barn all in a tremble, his hands shaking like an aspen and his heart in a flutter.

He busied himself here and there for a few minutes, but finally broke down completely and retired in to the granary, where he fell upon his knees, and with penitential tears besought the Lord to forgive him if he had done wrong, and to help him, in his last years, to keep the devil out of his heart and life. He prayed for the boy too, and asked the God in whom he trusted to lead him in the right way as he grew out of youth into manhood.

And then he rose from his knees refreshed, and went about his business. His heart was somewhat heavy, but he reviewed the whole situation and concluded that he had done the best thing, and so was content. He knew that he had not maimed the child in any way, but had only caused him to suffer intense pain for a time, a sensation which would soon pass away, but the memory of which, and the dread of a repetition of which, he trusted, would endure for a lifetime.

At five o’clock he came into the house; and finding “Dodd” in fair good humor, playing with the children in the kitchen, he asked him to go with him and fetch the cows for milking. The boy was off for his hat in an instant, and a moment later the two were seen, hand in hand, going down the lane that led to the pasture.

They chatted pleasantly as they went along. They even referred freely to the affair of three hours before. The old gentleman read him no terrible lesson as to his depravity, and his probable end of life upon the gallows if he persisted in so headstrong and wilful a course. The story of the “forty she bears” he did not repeat to the youth, and no reference was made to the awful death of Jack Ketch. He was too shrewd an observer

of human nature to present anything as attractive as these things to the imagination of his grandson!



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Tell a boy like “Dodd” that he is on the high road to ruin, the prison, or the rope, and the chances are that you puff him up with pride at his own achievement, or fill him with ambition to see the end of his own career carried out in this line.

But grandpa Stebbins gave “Dodd” none of this. He simply told him that it was the best thing for everybody that he should mind. He reviewed the facts regarding the waste of the cider, and showed him how bad he had been in doing as he had done, and why he was bad.

The boy offered no word of remonstrance, but, on the contrary, acknowledged his fault, and assured his grandfather that he would “remember” in future. With a light heart he ran for the cows, which were taking a farewell feed along the banks of the brook that ran across the pasture, and it was with a genuine pride that he headed them for home, especially one contrary heifer, that preferred to have her own way and not obey his command. He ran after her with much spirit, and was quite delighted when he forced her to do his bidding.

And for you, good people, who do not believe in this sort of thing, what about this case? It is a hard case, no doubt. There is no pleasing feature in its early stages, but does not its outcome warrant all its ugly phases?

Grant that it is all old fashioned; that to you it seems silly for the old man to go alone and pray after trouncing the boy, or that you fear the “boy’s will was broken” by this episode, yet review the facts in their entirety, and see if there is not a good in them that you are wont to overlook.

The punishment was harsh, but it was just such as “Dodd” Weaver had been needing for a long time, and the only thing that could reach him just then. It would have been a crime to treat in like manner a gentle little girl with a sweet disposition, but was it a crime in the case of “Dodd?”

And if not a crime in “Dodd’s” case, why in other cases like his? And if the punishment was right, inflicted by the hand of the grandfather, why not by the hand of the teacher who shall have occasion to resort, even to this, to put a boy into the right way? I do not mean a cold-blooded whipping, inflicted by a Principal for a trifling transgression of a rule in some department of school, under one of the assistant teachers, but a retribution, swift, sure, and terrible, that is inflicted by the person against whom the wrong is done, and which falls upon the willful transgressor to keep him from doing so again.

For this is the mission of penalty, to keep the wrong-doer from a repetition of his wrong doing.



“Dodd” Weaver was a wrong-doer, and under the treatment he was receiving from his parents, and had received from Miss Stone, he was waxing worse and worse with each recurring day. This was really more unfortunate for him than for the people whom he annoyed by his lawlessness. There was no likelihood of his correcting the fault by his own will, nor could persuasion lead him to reform, this having been worn to rags by Miss Stone, till the boy laughed to scorn so gentle an opposition to his bad actions.



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But over all these misfortunes and follies alike came the lively thrashing of grandpa Stebbins, and brought the boy to a realizing sense of the situation. The young sinner found himself suddenly confronted with the penalty of his sin, and when he found that this penalty was really extreme suffering, he made up his mind that it was something worth looking out for.

To be sure, it was not a high motive to right action, but it was a motive that led to better deeds on the part of "Dodd" Weaver, and as such is worthy a place in this record. There was one man and one thing in the world that he had learned to have a decent respect for, and that was a new acquisition at this period of his life. So long as grandpa Stebbins lived, he and "Dodd" were fast friends, and when, years after, the old man went to his reward, there was no more genuine mourner that stood about his grave than the hero of these adventures.

Quarrel with the theory of corporal punishment as much as you choose, beloved, but when you get a case like "Dodd's," do as well by it as grandpa Stebbins did by him—you can.

CHAPTER VI.

The "Fall School" in "deestrick" number four had been in session for more than a month when the Weavers moved into the country and came within its jurisdiction. Preparations were at once made to increase its numbers, if not its graces, to a very perceptible extent, from out of the bosom of the Weaver homestead; for, as the youngest twins were now "five past," they were held by the inexorable logic of rural argumentation to be "in their sixth year," and so to come within the age limit of the school law, and entitled to go to school and draw public money.

Besides, "Old Man Stebbins owns nigh onter six eighties in the deestrick, an' pays more school tax nor ary other man in Dundas township, an' it hain't no more nor fair 'at ef he wants to send the hull family, he orter be 'lowed ter, coz he hain't sent no one ter school fur more 'n ten year, only one winter, when Si Hodges done chores fer him fer his board, an' went ter school," explained old Uncle Billy Wetzel to a company of objecting neighbors, as they all stood together by a hitching post in front of the church, waiting for "meetin' to take up," whittling and discussing local affairs meantime.

So the five young Weavers, headed by "Dodd," became members of the "fall school in deestrick four, Dundas township," and were marched off for the day, five times a week, with dinner for the crowd in a wooden dinner pail, which was the special care of twins number one.

This laxity regarding twins number two would have been rebuked in a city where there is a superintendent kept on purpose to head off such midgets as these, who creep in

under the legislative gates that guard the entrance to the road to learning, but no such potentate held sway in Dundas township, so the little bow-legged pair went to school unmolested and began, thus early, the heavy task of climbing the hill of knowledge, starting on their hands and knees.



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Is it, or is it not, better so?

Amos Waughops (pronounced Wops, but spelled W-a-u-g-h-o-p-s, such is the tyranny laid upon us by those who invented the spelling of proper names, and who have upon their invention the never-expiring patent of custom), had charge of the school that fall. He had been hired for six months, beginning the last week in August. School was begun thus early for the sake of getting an extra week of vacation during the Indian summer days of November, when the school would close for a while to give the boys and girls a chance to “help through corn-shucking,” and still get in days enough in the school year to be sure to draw school money.

Amos had but one reason for being a school teacher, and that was, he was a cripple. Like the uncouth Richard, he had been sent into the world but half made up, and a club foot, of immense proportions, rendered locomotion so great a task that he was compelled, per force, to choose some occupation by which he could earn a living without the use of his legs.

He had been endowed by nature with what is commonly known as “a good flow of language.” He learned to talk when very young and his tongue once started, its periods of rest had been few. From a youth he was noted for his ability to “argy.” He was the hero of the rural debating society and would argue any side of any question with any man on a moment’s notice. If the question happened to be one of which he had never heard and concerning which he knew nothing, such a condition did not embarrass him in the least; he would begin to talk and talk fluently by the hour, if need be, till his opponent would succumb through sheer exhaustion.

He had been to school but little, and had not profited much by what instruction he had received while there. It was an idea early adopted by him that a “self-made man” was the highest type of the race, and to him a self-made man was one who worked like the original Creator—made everything out of nothing and called it all very good.

So it was that, being ignorant, despising both books and teachers, and yet being able to talk glibly, he came to the conclusion that words were wisdom, and a rattling tongue identical with a well-stored mind—a not uncommon error in the genus under the glass just now.

I am sure I shall be pardoned, too, if I still further probe in this direction, and unfold a little more the nature of the circumstances that had to do with the evolution of “Dodd” while he went to school to Amos Waughops, in “deestrick four.” As the plot unfolds, and it shall appear what kind of a pupil-carpenter Amos really was, you may wonder how it happened that such a blunderer ever got into that workshop, the school room, and had a chance to try his tools on “Dodd.” Wait a minute, and verily you shall find out about this.



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He was the orphan nephew of two farmers in the district, men who had taken turns in caring for him during his childhood. These men were school directors and had been elected to their positions for the very purpose of getting Amos to teach the “fall-and-winter school.” This had further been made possible by the fact that two winters before the young man had “got religion,” and his friends in the church had an eye on him for the ministry. To work him toward this goal they had resolved that he, being poor, should teach their school to fill his purse; and so glorify God through the school fund, and his uncles had been chosen directors to that end.

Hush! Don't say a word! The thing is done, time and again, all over the country!

The matter had been set up for the year before, but the examiner of teachers had vetoed the plan by refusing a certificate to teach to the young man who talked so much and knew so little. This official had asked the candidate, when he came for examination, to add together $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{6}$, and $\frac{7}{8}$, whereupon he wrote: “Since you cannot reduce these fractions to a common denominator, I adopt the method of multiplying the numerators together for a new numerator, and the denominators together for a new denominator= $\frac{210}{576}$! This, reduced to the greatest common divisor, or, add numerators and denominators= $\frac{17}{21}$!”

Please do not think that I am jesting, for I have copied this quotation verbatim from a set of examination papers that lie before me as I write, papers that were written before the very face and eyes of an examiner in this great State of Illinois, by a bona fide candidate for a certificate, on the 16th day of December, in the year of grace, 1875; the man who wrote them being over thirty years of age and having taught school for more than half a decade! This is a truthful tale, if nothing else.

So Amos did not teach the first year that his friends and relations wanted him to. His friends and relations, however, had their own way about it after all, for they met and resolved that it should be “Amos or nobody,” and they got the latter. That is, they asked the examiner to send them a teacher if he would not let them have the one they wanted.

The examiner asked them what they would pay for a good teacher and they replied, “Twenty dollars a month!” The poor man sent them the best he had for that money, but it was of so poor a quality that it could ill stand the strain put upon it by the wrangling and angered patrons of “deestrick four,” and it broke down before the school had run a month.

This year they had tried the same thing again, and the examiner, in sheer despair, gave them their way, as perhaps the lesser of two evils.

If any one thinks this an unnatural picture, please address, stamp enclosed, any one of the one hundred and two county superintendents of schools in Illinois, and if you don't get what you want to know, then try Iowa, or Ohio, or Pennsylvania, or even the old Bay

State. The quality is largely distributed, and specimens can be picked up in almost any locality where it is made possible by the system that permits such a condition.

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This was the teacher to whom “Dodd” came on an October morning, just preceding his ninth birthday. Amos had heard much of Elder Weaver and had boasted not a little of how he would “out argy” him the first “lick” he got at him, and he gazed on these small scions of so notable a stock with a feeling that the contest had already begun. He put the children into their seats somewhat gruffly when they appeared, as if resolved to paralyze his antagonist from the first.

“Dodd” had learned to read by this time, in spite of the hindrance imposed by Miss Stone in the chart class. Indeed, the only redeeming feature in his career as a pupil up to date, was his natural love for reading. The child had a fondness for this art, a genius for it, if you will, which triumphed over all obstacles, and asserted itself in spite of all attempts to cripple it, or to bring it down to the level of his more limited attainments, or to raise these lesser powers to a line with his special gift.

And in this respect, too, “Dodd” was like other children, or other children are like “Dodd.” Most of these individualities have special things that they can do ever so much better than they can do some other things. Why not put them at the things that they can do best, and help them on in this direction, instead of striving to press them down from the line of their special genius, and up from the line of their mediocrity, so as to have them on one common level, as some would fain have all the world?

As said, “Dodd” had a special genius for reading. When he began to go to school to Amos this fact appeared at once, and it speedily became a *casus belli* between the two, for Amos was a blockhead with a reading book, and the boy put him terribly to shame before all the school.

He could talk, but he could not read.

“Dodd” had come to school with a sixth reader. It was a world too wide for his small attainments, with its quotations from Greek and Latin orators, Webster, Clay, Hastings, *et al.*, but it was the only reader of the series used in Amos’s school that grandma Stebbins could find in the carefully saved pile of old school books that were housed in the garret, the residuum of former school generations. So, with a sixth reader, the boy went to school.

This is the common way of supplying children with school books in the rural districts. He brought, also, an arithmetic and a speller, but as his knowledge of the first branch only reached to that part of it which lies on the hither side of the multiplication table, and as “Webster” is the chief speller used by children in country schools, and he could not go astray in that point, these facts need not be emphasized.

As he brought a sixth reader, to the sixth reader class he went. This also is common in schools of this class. It is not supposed to be by those who talk learnedly before the legislature about “grading the country schools,” and all that, but it is the way things are

done in the country, as any one will find who will take the pains to go into the country and find out. It is understood by the patrons that it is the teacher's business to put the pupil to work with the books that he brings with him, and in putting "Dodd" into the sixth reader Amos only did as the rest do in this regard, that is all.

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This class was made up of four pupils, two boys and two girls, tall, awkward creatures, who went to the front of the room twice a day and read in a sing-song tone out of two books which were the joint possession of the quartette. The girls used always to stand in class with their arms around each other and their heads leaned together, as they swayed back and forth and rattled over the words of the page; and the boys leaned back against the wall, usually standing on one leg and sticking the other foot up on the wall behind them.

“Dodd” was a pigmy beside these, but he read better than any of them, and soon convinced Amos that he, “Dodd,” must be taken down a peg, or he, Amos, would find himself looked down upon by his pupils, who would see him worsted by this stripling.

He strove to nettle the boy in many ways, but “Dodd” bore the slings and arrows with a good deal of fortitude, and seemed to avoid a clash. The experience with his grandfather had had a very softening effect upon him, and he was slow to forget the lesson. He tried to be good, and did his best for many weeks.

But Amos could ill endure the condition into which affairs were drifting. Every day the boy improved in his reading, till it got so that whenever he read all the school stopped to listen. This the teacher felt would not do, and besides this, he had met the parson, and “argyed” with him once, and it was the popular verdict that he had not come out ahead in the encounter. All of which tended to make him bear down on “Dodd,” till finally he resolved that he would have a row with the boy and that it should be in the reading class.

Do not start at this, beloved. The thing has been done multitudes of times, not only in the country, but in the city as well, and many a child has been made to suffer for the sake of satisfying grudges that existed between teachers and parents.

So Amos was bound to settle with “Dodd.” He watched his chance, and along in early winter he found what he was looking for.

The reading class was on duty, and “Dodd” was leading, as he had for several months. The lesson for the day was “The Lone Indian,” and related the woes of that poor savage, who, in old age, returned to the hunting grounds of his young manhood, only to find them gone, and in their places villages and fenced farms.

“He leaned against a tree,” the narrative continued, “Dodd” reading it in a sympathetic tone, being greatly overcome by the story, “and gazed upon the landscape that he had once known so well.”

He paused suddenly, and a tear or two fell on his book.



“Stop!” exclaimed Amos Waughops, brandishing a long stick which he always carried in his right hand and waved to and fro as he talked to the children, as though he were a great general, in the heat of battle, swinging his sword and urging his men to the charge, “What are you crying about? Eh? Look up here! Look up, I say! Do you intend to mind me?”



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The boy's eyes were full of tears, but he looked up as he was bidden and fixed his eyes on Amos. This was worse than ever, and the teacher was more angry than before.

"See here, I'll ask you a question, if you are so mighty smart. The book says that the Indian 'leaned against the tree.' Now, what is meant by that?"

The question was so sudden and so senseless that "Dodd" essayed no answer. This was Amos's opportunity.

He waved his stick again—the same being one of the narrow slats that had been torn from one of the double seats in the room, a strip of wood two inches wide, an inch thick, and nearly four feet long—and swinging it within an inch of the boy's nose, he shouted again: "The book says that the Indian leaned against a tree.' What does that mean? Answer me!" and again he made the passes and swung the slat.

"I don't know," answered "Dodd," just a little frightened.

It was a little, but it was enough. Amos felt that he had Parson Weaver on the hip and he hastened to make the most of his advantage.

"Do you mean to say that you don't know what it is to lean against a tree? Why, where was you raised? What kind o' folks hev you got? Your old man must be mighty smart to raise a boy as big as you be, an' not learn him what it means to lean ag'in' a tree."

It was a savage thrust and it drew blood from the boy.

"My dad may not be very smart," he retorted, fully forgetting the "lone Indian," "but he's got gall enough to pound the stuffin' out o' such a rooster as you be."

There was a sensation in the little school room, a dead pause, so still that the little clock on the desk seemed to rattle like a factory, as it hit off the anxious seconds of the strife it was forced to witness.

This speech of "Dodd's" was almost too many for Amos. It smote him in his weakest part, and for a moment he was daunted, but he rallied, and with a few wild brandishes of the slat he felt that he was himself again, and once more led on to the fray.

"See here, young man, you mustn't talk to me like that! Don't you give me none of your Methodist lip" (Amos was not a Methodist, and, though a candidate for the ministry, he cordially hated all outside his own denomination), "or I'll make you wish you'd never saw deestrick four. Now tell me what it means to 'lean ag'in' a tree,'" and he glared at the boy and waved the slat again.

"Why, it means to lean up against it," returned "Dodd," who was bound to do his best. "That's what I think it means; what do you think it means?"

The tables were turned, and Amos almost caught his breath at the dilemma.

“What do I think it means?” he retorted; “what do I think it means? Why, it means—it means—it means what it says; that he leaned ag’in’ the tree, that is, that he assumed a recumbent posture ag’in’ the tree!”

It was a bold stroke, but Amos felt that it had brought him safely over. “Recumbent posture” was not a vile phrase, and he patted himself on the back, though he puffed a little at the exertion it cost him to hoist the words out of himself.



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But it was “Dodd’s” turn next. Quick as thought he retorted:

“Well, that ain’t half so easy as what the book says.”

The school giggled. Amos lost all control, and, starting toward “Dodd,” he shouted:

“I’ll whip you, you little devil, if it’s the last thing I ever do.”

But “Dodd” was too quick for him. He shot down the room like an arrow, and out at the open door, and was off like a deer. With his club foot, Amos Waughops was no match for the boy with his nimble legs, and, flushed and beaten, the gabbler hobbled back to his desk. He looked toward the twins, all four of them, as if to wreak his vengeance on them, but he somehow felt that they were foemen unworthy of his steel, and forebore.

As for “Dodd,” it was his last day of school with Amos Waughops. Even the persuasion of his grandfather, for whom he had the greatest reverence, was insufficient to get him into the school house again that winter. He learned to do many things on the farm, and helped in out-of-door work in all the coldest days, suffering much from cold and storm, but all this he bore cheerfully rather than meet Amos Waughops and the slat again.

Under these circumstances his parents did not force him to school, and who shall say they did wrong by letting him stay at home and work?

Long suffering reader, you may frown at the introduction of this unfortunate man, Amos Waughops, into the thread of this story, but I can’t help it if you do. I am telling the story of “Dodd” just as it is, and I can’t tell it at all unless I tell it that way. You may not like Mr. Waughops; you may not like his way of teaching school; you may say that I am cruel to harp on facts to the extent of intimating that the mere misfortune of being a cripple is not reason enough for being a school teacher; but I can’t help this either, because it is true, and we all know it is. We lift up our eyes and behold the educational field all white for the harvest and even among the few laborers that are working, we see a large per cent of bungling reapers who trample under foot more grain than they gather, and whose pockets are full of the seeds of tares, which they are sowing gratis for next year’s crop, as they stumble about. I am sure I pity a cripple as much as any one can, but children have rights that even cripples should be made to respect, and no man or woman has a right in the schoolroom merely from the fact of physical inability to work at some more muscular calling. I know there are many most excellent teachers who are bodily maimed, and whose misfortune seems to enhance their devotion to their profession and their success therein, but there are a multitude besides who are in the school room solely because they are the victims of misfortune, and for them there is little excuse to be made. Amos Waughops was a factor in the evolution of “Dodd” Weaver, and his like are found by the quantity in the rural schools of this and other States. We have had enough of them.



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It is all right for us to be kind and charitable to unfortunate people, but let us be careful whose money and means we are charitable with. When the State took charge of the schools it removed them from the realm of charitable institutions, though some people are very unwilling to acknowledge the fact, and it is a very common thing for the public funds to be still used indirectly for charitable purposes. They are so used on fellows like Amos Waughops and his cognates of the other sex. It is an abomination.

CHAPTER VII.

The white drifts of winter grew gray and then turned black under the March sun that melted them down and drained off their soluble parts, leaving only a residuum of mud along fences and hedges where, a few days before had been shapely piles of snow. April came with its deluges of rain that washed the earth clean and carried off the ruffraff of the previous season, making ready for another and more bountiful harvest. What a thrifty housekeeper nature is!

“Dodd” still stayed away from school, and through slush and mud and drenching rain worked like a little man. The fact is, he had secretly made up his mind never to go to school again, a conclusion that it is no particular wonder he had reached after his experience with Amos Waughops, as just chronicled. He observed that his ready work met the approval of both of his parents and grandparents, and he quietly hoped that they would let him alone and permit him to stay out of school so long as he continued to make himself useful on the farm.

He said nothing about this, however. His training had not been such as to inspire confidence between himself and his parents, and already he had begun to think, plan and act for himself, unaided by their counsel or advice.

Nor is it an uncommon thing for many well-meaning and well-wishing parents thus to isolate their children from the holy of holies of their hearts and force them out into the desert of their own inexperience, to die there alone, or compel them to seek help from the heathenish crowd that is always camped around about within easy reach of such wandering ones.

How is it in your own household, beloved? Look it up, if you dare to!

But one day when the boy and his grandfather were burning corn stalks in the field, making ready for plowing, the old gentleman broached the subject of school to “Dodd,” and, by dint of much persuasion, gained his reluctant consent to brave once more the trials of the school room and out himself again under the guidance of a teacher. A week later “Dodd” made his third venture in the legalized lottery of licensed school teachers. He had drawn blanks twice and he was more than suspicious of the enterprise. He had no faith in it whatever.



But the counterfeit always presupposes the genuine, and the same system that includes such specimens as Miss Stone and Amos Waughops in its wide embrace, enfolds also thousands who are the worthiest of men and women. After all, Virtue is on top in this mundane sphere; if it were not so, this old planet would have gone to ruin long ago. Let us look up!



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Amy Kelly had been awarded the contract to teach the “spring and summer school” in district four, Dundas township, on this particular year, and with timid, anxious steps she had walked six miles the first Monday morning of the term to take charge of her pupils.

It was her first school, and she was worried about it, as folks usually are about almost anything that is new to them and concerning which they are conscientious. Some people never are worried, though. They are born in a don't-care fashion; they absorb the principle from the first, and it never wears out. Others are anxious to begin with, but grow careless as they grow familiar with their surroundings. Others are always anxious. They never do so well that they do not hope to do better next time, and they would almost decline heaven if they felt it to be a place where they must forever remain as they are.

Amy Kelly was of the pattern last described.

As her name indicates, she was Irish. Her father and mother came from “the old sod” before she was born, and they had won their way up from working at day's wages to being the owners of a snug farm, which was well stocked and thriftily kept. They spoke their native tongue to each other when in the secret recesses of their home, and talked with their children and the neighbors in a brogue so deeply accented that it would be useless for them ever to claim to be “Scotch-Irish,” had they wished to make such pretensions—which they did not.

Indeed, these people would have been called “very Irish” by the average observer. The old gentleman had red hair and only allowed his beard to grow about his neck, under his chin; wore a strap around his wrist, and smoked a short clay pipe. His wife was stout and somewhat red-faced, and in summer a stray caller would be likely to find her at work in petticoat and short gown, her rather large feet and ankles innocent of shoes or stockings. But she was a good housekeeper, for all of these things. No better butter than hers ever came to market, and her heart was warm and true, even if it did beat under a rather full form and beneath a coarsely woven garment. She had a cheery voice and a pleasant disposition, loved her husband devotedly, was proud of her family, both on account of its numbers and the health, brightness and good looks of her progeny; and her good deeds toward her neighbors, together with her general thrift and good nature, made her a great favorite in all the country-side.

Such was the family from which this young school miss was sprung.

The girl was just eighteen when she went to her new work. She had received most of her education in a similar school, in a neighboring district, where she had always led her classes, but had spent two winters in a State Normal School. She was a trim body, compactly built, had black hair and eyes, and a fresh, rosy complexion that is so characteristic of her class. She could ride a fractious horse,

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milk, sew, knit and cook, and had followed the plow more than one day; while during harvest and corn-husking she had many a time “made a hand.” From this cause she was strong and well knit in all her frame, a perfect picture of young womanly health and rustic beauty. She had a soft, sweet voice and spoke without the slightest trace of a brogue, so surely does a single generation Americanize such people, and was very modest and retiring in her manners. Like her parents, she was a devout Catholic.

It was hardly seven o'clock on an April morning when this girl unlocked the schoolhouse door at the end of her long walk and let the fresh spring breeze blow into its interior. It was a small building, with one door, opening to the south, and six windows, two on each of three sides, all darkened with tight board shutters. She threw all these open and raised the sashes for a fuller sweep of the air, for the school-roomish smell was stifling to one accustomed to wholesome, out-of-door air. As soon as she felt free to take a long breath she began to examine the room in which she was to go to work.

The floor was filthy beyond description. There was a hill of dry tobacco quids on the floor under the “teacher’s desk,” historical relics of the reign of Amos Waughops, and equally disgusting debris scattered all over the room, special contributions of the free American citizens of “deestrick four,” who had held an election in the house a few days previous. Moreover, the desks were, many of them, smeared with tallow on the top, patches of grease that told of debating societies, singing schools, and revival meetings of the winter before—blots that Amos had never thought of trying to remove. The stovepipe had parted and hung trembling from the ceiling, while the small blackboard in the corner was scrawled all over with rude and indecent figures, the handiwork of the electors aforesaid. Pray do not think I have painted this picture in too high colors, you fastidious ones, who dwell in fine houses and live in towns and have never seen sights like these. I have not. There are thousands of just such schoolhouses in this and every other State in the Union, that open on an April morning just as this one did. It is a great pity that it is so, but so it is. I wish it were otherwise. But it isn't, and I sometimes wonder if it ever will be!

Amy took in the situation at a glance and resolved what to do forthwith. There was a house a quarter of a mile down the road, and thither she bent her sprightly steps. Fifteen minutes later she returned with two buckets, a scrubbing brush, a broom and a mop. She rolled up her sleeves, disclosing an arm that you well might envy, my dear, you who delight in the display of such charms in parlor or ball room—charms which no cosmetics can rival—turned up the skirt of her neat calico dress, and pinned it behind her supple waist, donned a large coarse apron that she had borrowed with the rest of her outfit, and was ready for work.



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She righted the stovepipe—without swearing—and built a brisk fire. Then she began to scrub.

She had worked an hour, when she heard a voice and footsteps, and a moment later “Dodd” and the young Weavers darkened the door.

“Good morning!” she exclaimed, pausing a moment in her work and brushing back her hair with her arm, as she raised her flushed face, which was covered with a dew of perspiration; “you had better put your dinner pail out by the well, and then you can play in the yard a while, till I get the house cleaned up a little,” and again she turned to her scrubbing.

“Dodd” stood in the door and looked at the girl in amazement. This was a new phase of the school teacher, sure enough. He thought of Miss Stone and wondered how she would look, down on her knees and scrubbing, as this girl was. He stood in the door for some minutes, till, finally, Amy arose and started to carry out a pail of dirty water and bring in a fresh one in its place. As she neared the boy he stepped to one side and let her pass, looking up into her face as she went by. She returned his glance and smiled, and “Dodd” answered back with something akin to a blush, though the expression was such a stranger to his face that the superficial observer might have failed correctly to classify it at first sight.

Amy threw the water out, far into the road, and went to the well, “Dodd” saw where she was going, and, running to the pump, he seized the handle and began pumping vigorously.

“Thank you,” said Amy, when the bucket was filled; “I hardly think you can carry the pail so full,” she added, as “Dodd” proceeded to grasp the pail with both hands to carry the water to the house. “Better let me help you,” she continued, taking hold of one side. “There, so; now we’ll carry it together,” and, one on either side of the bucket, they went into the house again.

It may safely be said that the brief space of time occupied in going from the well to the school room, carrying half of that pail of water, was the proudest moment yet experienced by the hero of this story. For the first time in his life the spirit of chivalry arose in his bosom, and though the act he performed in response to its promptings was a very simple and menial one, yet it was enough to stir all the pulses of his boyish nature and to make of him, for the time being, such a little man as he had never before dreamed of being. It is William Shakspeare, I think, who has it—

“From woman’s eyes this doctrine I derive,
They are the books, the grounds, the academies,
From which doth spring the true Promethean fire!”

or words to that effect. "Dodd," however, knew nothing of the great poet, but he did know that something in the kindly eyes of this honest Irish girl made him want to do everything he could for her, and help her in every possible way.

The most gallant knight could rise to no more sublime condition!



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When the pail was set down and Amy was once more on her knees, “Dodd” began to look about to see what else he could do. The girl took note of this, and soon set him to work. She had him go through all the desks and clean out all the places where the books were kept. When this was done she gave him something else to do, and to all her biddings he was most obedient. He worked with a will, and carefully, doing just as he was told to do, and feeling that much of the success of the enterprise on foot depended on his own exertions. It is such work as this that counts here below, and transforms the unfixed elements of human nature into character as enduring as the everlasting hills. It is a little difficult to realize this fact, just at the time of its happening, but the after years show the truth of the statement. The evolution that took place in “Dodd’s” soul that morning was a measurable quantity.

By noon the dirty, not to say nasty, school house was clean and in order, and after dinner Amy Kelly began to arrange her classes and prepare for school work. During the forenoon she had learned the names of many of her pupils from their conversations with each other, and had put herself on such terms with them that the work of organizing her classes was easily accomplished, without annoyance to herself or the children. By four o’clock she had her work laid out for the entire school, and the children went home happy, rejoicing in the newly found treasure of a school teacher in whom they delighted.

Amy knew little of many things that are well worth knowing in this world, but she did know how to manage children and how to teach school. She was a girl of resources. “Of such is the kingdom of heaven” among school teachers.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was no longer a task to keep “Dodd” in school. He went every day, rain or shine, and was always eager to go. Moreover, he studied well and learned rapidly. The multiplication table, that had been the bane of his school life, up to date, and which, under the stupid management of Amos Waughops and the over-wrought Grube methods of Miss Stone, had floored him in every tussle he had had with it, now grew tractable and docile, a creature subservient to his will and quick to do his bidding, unhesitatingly.

And what wonder, when Amy taught him this early work in numbers by use of his memory rather than his reason; using a faculty that is strong at this period of life, rather than one which has hardly begun to sprout?

Did you ever think of that, dear devotee at the shrine of Grube, or Brother Harris, or all the rest of the train who insist that a child’s reason should “develop” largely before he has finished the first decade of his existence?



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These wise ones lay down a law (take up almost any printed course of study, nowadays, and you will find it all spread out in the first and second years' work) that every number must be mastered, in all its possible arrangements and combinations, from the very first time it is taken up. Thus, one must be considered in all its possible correlations to all the universe, and the Almighty Himself, before two can be touched! So, as soon as the youth strikes a simple unit that ought to come to him like an old friend, he is straightway packed off to the ends of the earth with the digit and made to stand it up alongside of all manner of things, in the heavens above and, the earth beneath, and even in the waters under the earth. The little fellow tramps, and trudges, and compares, and contrasts, and divides, and combines, and eliminates, and expels, and extracts, and subtracts, and retracts, and contracts, and what not, until finally, he gets all mixed up and concludes that he never can know anything about it at all, and the dear old "one," that came to him at first as such a simple thing, is so tangled up with all creation that he gives it up as an entirely unknown and unknowable quantity, and begins to guess at it and when he comes to that point, look out! He has taken the first step in recklessness, and has begun his initial work as a liar!

You don't believe this? Then sit down to the following, which I clip from the "second year's work" in a "course of study" that lies before me:

"Learn to count to 100, forward and back, by 1's, 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's, and 9's, beginning to count from 0, and also from each digit, respectively, up to the one used continuously, in each case."

Just buckle down to this for a while and see how it goes. See how long it will take you to master even a tithe of this, so that you can do it, even passably well, and then compare your own powers of mind with those of the child that you would fain cram with this "course" and see if there is not a reason why the children do not take to this "method."

I know what you will say, at least to yourselves. "I have no time for such a pile of rubbish." You say well. Neither have the children time for it.

But Amy knew nothing of Grube, thank heaven, and gave none of it to "Dodd." He learned to read better than ever, learned to spell, and took pride in standing at the head of his class. He plucked flowers for his teacher as he went to school, and his cheeks flushed as she took them from his band and set them in the glass tumbler on the table. He even thought in his little heart, betimes, that, when he got grown up, he would marry Amy! Rather young for such ideas? Perhaps so; but these ideas begin to develop, often, when boys are very young. They don't say anything about it, out loud; but away down in the deep hiding-places of the heart—oh, well, we all know how it is, and what an influence such notions may have upon our lives.



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But for all of these things “Dodd” Weaver was still “Dodd” Weaver, and there were times when he suffered a relapse from his high estate. One of these times came as follows:

It was a sultry forenoon in May, and “Dodd” was restless and uneasy. He fidgeted about in his seat, teased the boy in front of him, and tripped up a little fellow who passed him on the way to a class. His teacher watched him for some time, and, at the last offense, concluded that it was best to give the boy a bit of attention. She came down to his desk and said:

“It’s a bad kind of a morning for boys, isn’t it, ‘Dodd’?”

The boy hung his head a little, and Amy proceeded:

“Come here to the door a minute; I want to show you something.”

“Dodd” wondered what was wanted, but arose, as he was bidden, and went to the door,

“Do you see that tree, away down the road?” said Amy, pointing to a large maple that was more than a quarter of a mile away.

“Dodd” said that he saw the object pointed out.

“Well, now, I want you to start here and run to that tree just as fast as you can, and then turn right around and run back again, and I’ll stand right here all the time and watch you, and see how long it takes you to go and come;” and she drew out her watch as she spoke.

“Dodd” looked at her for an instant, but the next moment he was off with a bound and ran his best, both going and coming. He returned presently, having made most excellent time. Amy told him how many minutes he had been gone, and bade him take his seat. The boy was a little in doubt as to just why he was called on to perform this feat; but, between pondering over the affair and being tired from his race, he was a good boy all the rest of the morning! The girl had simply given the child a chance to work off his superfluous animal spirits, and, with this quantity reduced to a safety limit, he was himself again.

What a pity there are not more teachers who appreciate the value of a safety-valve!

The incident is but one of a score that illustrate the resources of Amy Kelly in the management of “Dodd” Weaver. She was always taking the boy by surprise. He was wayward and wilful at times, but her genius was equal to the emergency. She won him by her divine power to do just that thing, as her class always does, and as none others can. She was born to teach, or with the teaching faculty—with a genius for that work; and her success was marked from the first. She did for “Dodd” Weaver in a single term

more than all the former years had done; she made a record in his character that will never be effaced.



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And do not say that I have overdrawn this picture, either. Don't turn up your noses, my dears, because this girl came from a very humble and unpretentious Irish family. I tell you, genius has a way of its own, and there is no accounting for it. It was a good while ago that a conservative old Pharisee thought that he had forever silenced the followers of the greatest Genius the world ever saw by putting at them the conundrum, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" But good did come out of that barren country in spite of the conundrum! And so it keeps on doing, constantly. It comes from other places, too, and that is all right. The point is that we want to open our eyes and see it, no matter where it comes from.

Amy Kelly was a godsend to "Dodd" Weaver. She came to him through the medium of a country school. She won the boy as such teachers always do win boys, and always will win them; and her reward ought to be great. It was only twenty-five dollars a month, reckoned on the order book of "deestrick four," but there is no telling what it will be on the "other side." But such as Amy can afford to wait for that.

CHAPTER IX.

"Dodd" went to school to Amy Kelly faithfully all that summer. He was neither tardy nor absent during the term, and when school was over it seemed to him as though something was gone out of his life; something that he would have liked to keep always.

But in the fall Elder Weaver was sufficiently rejuvenated to enter the field again, and after conference he once more set out on his peregrinations. For several years thereafter it was true of him as it is of so many of his kind—he was "just two years in a place, and then forever moving."

This gave "Dodd" a change of pedagogic administration on an average once a year; for each village would usually manage to change teachers on the off years, at least, when they didn't change preachers, and so keep up the principle of rotation in office, which is so dear to the average American heart. What a glorious thing the fickle will of the people is in some of its petty phases!

A change of teacher once a year, however, is not beyond the average of pupils in this country. I know of schools where the pupils, change teachers six times a day, every school day in the year, besides now and then an extra when a principal or a superintendent turns himself loose on them for an hour or two in a term! Dodd's quota of changes should not, therefore, be regarded as extravagant; that is, according to some of the "authorities."

In after years the memory of those four months with Amy Kelly remained with the boy, an oasis in the trackless Sahara of his school life. In this dreary expanse now and then a shadow of hope arose, as if to lure him on, as some new teacher came up over his



horizon, but in the main these all proved delusions, mirages that glittered at phantom distances, but faded away into empty nothingness as he took a nearer view of them. This constant cheating of his vision, this deferring of his hope, in time made his heart sick, and he gradually relapsed into his old hatred of books and schools and school teachers and all that pertained thereto.



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There was prim Miss Spinacher, thin as a lath and bony, with hands that you could almost see through and fingers that rattled against each other when she shook one threateningly at a boy or girl. She had a hobby of keeping her pupils perpetually front face, and of having them sit up straight all the time, with folded arms, so that her school room always had the appearance of a deal board stuck full of stiff pegs, all in rows, every one as tight in its place as a wedge and never to be moved on any account whatever.

Right opposite to the school house where this woman taught was a rich man's residence, in the front yard of which there stood a marble statue, a bronze deer, a cast-iron dog and a stone rabbit. "Dodd" used to look over to these when he was very tired from sitting up so straight so long, and wish that Miss Spinacher had a roomful of such for pupils. It would have been as well for her and "Dodd" and the rest of the school if she had. Perhaps it would have been better! Yet you all know Miss Spinacher, don't you, ladies and gentlemen?

Again, he fell into the hands of Mr. Sliman, whose sole end and aim in life as a school teacher was the extermination of whispering. For this purpose he had devised a set of rules, which he had printed in full and sent all over town to every patron of the school.

The "self-reporting" system was the hobby of this man. "Dodd" told the truth to him for a few evenings, at roll-call, acknowledging that he had whispered, as he and all the rest of the pupils had; but he soon observed that it was the custom of most of the boys and girls to falsify about their conduct, and that they got great glory thereby.

He took up this custom himself ere long. It troubled his conscience a good deal at first, but by dint of constant daily practice he got so that he could look his teacher squarely in the eye and answer "perfect" as well as any one, even if he had whispered the whole day through, and knew that the man who recorded his mark knew he had and set down a clean record for the sake of having a good score to show to visitors!

Oh, Mr. Sliman, you were very sharp, weren't you? You thought you did your little trick so cleverly that no one would find you out, but your kind always think that!

It did make a fine showing for visitors, this clean whispering record of yours, and it was a fine thing for you to talk about at teachers' meetings, where you boasted to your fellows of what you had done, and looked so honest, and made them all feel so envious, as you drew forth your record-book from next your shiny shirt-bosom, and showed how there was no denying your statement, for the testimony was all down in black and white! It was all very nice, but it was very, very bad, for all that.

You knew it was, too, and most of us who heard you brag knew it was; but that didn't make very much difference, because we were old and could stand it, and as for you—the less said the better.



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But not so with “Dodd.”

Here was where the harm came in, you wicked man. You evolved the lying element of this boy’s nature. Heaven knows that he had enough of this naturally, as I have plainly stated in the early chapters of this story; but you forced a hot-bed growth out of the seeds of falsehood that were lying dormant in “Dodd’s” young mind.

Amy Kelly had covered these up, under the foundation walls of truth, so deep that if you had built on what she started the germs would have died where they lay. But no, you threw down the square blocks that Amy had laid with so much care; you spread the dung of deception over the dying seeds, and by the help of the unnatural heat which this foulness generated, brooding down from above, you sprouted the germs of untruth in the boy’s soul, and set a-growing plants whose roots run down into hell!

You taught “Dodd” Weaver to believe that a lie was better than the truth; that it would serve him better; bring him more glory; make him stand better in the eyes of his fellows, and that no one could find him out in all this trickery and deception.

“Dodd” learned in your school; O, yes; he learned that which it took him many years to forget, and you are to blame for it. Some day I hope you may be compelled to face that lying old record of yours and that lightning flashes of guilt may be made to blaze into your treacherous eyes from out those pages that looked so clean when you showed them off, while the thunder of outraged truth rolls about your head till your teeth chatter in your mouth and your bones shake in your deceitful skin.

You see things must be made even somehow, and somewhere, and such a sinner as you have been deserves all this and more too.

Then, there was Mr. Sharp, who kept green and growing the shoots that Mr. Sliman had sprouted. “Attendance” was Mr. Sharp’s hobby. He kept a blackboard in the front hall of his school house, where it would be the first thing any one would see when he came into the building, and on this he scored the record of attendance every day.

There was no harm in that, I am sure; but then, this teacher used to keep the clock a little slower than town time, and besides, he had a way of ringing bells and bells at morning and at noon, and of not counting as tardy any one who got into the building any time before the ringing of the last bell, which really did not go off until some minutes after it should have done; and then there was the back way of written excuses, by which a fellow could sneak up in the rear and rub out a mark that really stood against him, and not have it count on the board down in the hall; and absences of a certain character were not counted either. So, take it all in all, “Dodd” saw clearly that the shown record and the real record were not the same things by a long way, but that it was the former on which Mr. Sharp relied for his power and glory with the patrons of the school, and

before the board of education. So it was that Mr. Sharp watered what Mr. Sliman planted, and “Dodd” had to stand it all.



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And then there was Miss Slack, and Miss Trotter, and Mr. Skimpole (a lineal descendant of the urbane Harold), and Mr. Looseley, and Mr. Rattler, and Striker, and Bluffer, and Smiley; all these took a hand at the mill that was rolling out the character of "Dodd" Weaver, and there are marks of their varied crankings upon him to this day.

One year he fell into the hands of old Mrs. Heighen. She was a widow who had been rich, but was now poor, and who had a place in the schools because she needed it. She was so much like all the rest of this sort that she need not be further described, and were it not for one characteristic she should remain in oblivion, so far as this record is concerned. But for this I must have her out.

She was poor and really a proud beggar of public charity, yet she was of such genteel and lofty birth and bearing that teaching was a bore to her. She really despised and hated her pupils, and they returned these sentiments with interest. There was always rebellion in her room, and to suppress it she resorted to all sorts of penalties and punishments. She used to make pupils stand on the floor and extend an arm on a level with the shoulder, and so hold a book till it seemed as if the arm would break off. She herself stood by with a pin in her hand, meanwhile, holding it at a slight distance below the extended arm and sticking it into the hand of the suffering one if the aching member were lowered an inch.

O Dante, you didn't begin to exhaust the possibilities of outrageous punishments in all you saw in the infernal regions. Old Mrs. Heighen could give you several points that you never dreamed of, and not tax her powers of ingenuity very much either.

Yet "Dodd" worked the genius of this respectable old beldame to the very verge of bankruptcy. She tried device after device upon the boy, till at last it got to be a kind of race between the two as to which should win. The old lady had no genuine interest in the welfare of her pupil. He annoyed her and she wanted to rid herself of the annoyance. That is a simple statement of the case from her side. As for "Dodd," he delighted in tormenting her as he would in teasing a snake. To be sure there was danger in the sport, but boys are fond of danger, especially if it promises fun.

So the days wore on, till at last the case became unbearable, and "Dodd" was "suspended." Oh! but that was hard on the boy! It hurt him terribly! The suspension came when the skating of the winter was the very best, and "Dodd" skated the vacation away, and felt, Oh, so badly about being out of school!



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When the week of suspension was over he came back, fuller of the devil than ever, and during a single forenoon did more mischief than he had before been capable of perpetrating in a month. He was fourteen now, a stout chunk of a boy, awkward, defiant, and reckless. He stayed in school two days this time, and was again suspended. He came back once more after that and was then expelled. He left school with a whoop and was on the streets most of the time thereafter. It was then that his reputation as a bad boy began to grow rapidly. He frequented the depot of the town and was on speaking terms with the railroad employes of the line. He chewed tobacco in great mouthfuls, swore a great deal, and spent his days in loafing. He had plans for going on the road as a brakeman when he became a year or two older. Every day he sunk lower and people shook their heads and said, "How his mother's heart must ache!"

But old Mrs. Heighen drew her \$55 a month just the same, right along; and her daughter Amanda, who never did an honest day's work in all her life, but lived in idleness, supported by the aforesaid \$55—she was the pride of the town. She went to church every Sunday and sang in the choir, and at charity fairs she always stood behind the prettiest table, dressed in the prettiest clothes, and smiled and blushed and seemed so innocent and coy. And there were rich young men who hung about her, and Amanda smiled on them, too, and people said, "What a lovely girl!" And her mother hoped that her daughter might marry one of these rich young men; it didn't make much difference which, so long as he was rich and could keep Amanda in idleness, while she could go and live on his bounty and quit the school room that she hated and have a rosewood coffin and plenty of carriages at her funeral.

But until all these things were accomplished the old lady "had to have a place," and Amanda lolled about in idleness.

Meantime "Dodd" "waxed worse and worse."

Do you see any relation between "Dodd" and Amanda, good folks? If you do, remember that this boy was only one of scores of pupils that had to suffer, substantially as he did, that the poor and proud Mrs. Heighen and her lazy daughter Amanda might continue to keep up appearances, and still have a chance to sponge a living off some man at the expense of a legal relation which it is sacrilege to call marriage.

Out upon such proud and lazy frauds, every one of them, whose worthless lives are sustained by the destruction of the characters of children like "Dodd" Weaver, and all the rest who fall under such tuition!

CHAPTER X.

So it was that "Dodd" got into the street and achieved the reputation of being a boy that no teacher could do anything with. In the year or two that followed he made several

starts at school, but his reputation always preceded him, and the old story was told over again—one or two suspensions, then “expelled.”



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So time went on till “Dodd” was nearly seventeen. He was almost a man grown now—a swaggering, profane, vulgar fellow, who ate his meals at home and slept there, usually, but further than that lived apart from his parents, who every day regretted that ever he had been born.

You all know this boy, don’t you, beloved? He is in every town that I know of, and there are duplicates and triplicates, not to say centiplicates, of him in some of our larger cities. I wonder if it is worth while to try to do anything with these boys, or for them? The machine has dropped them, or thrown them out. They will not run through the great educational mill known as the “graded system.” They seem destined to go to the bad, and it seems to me the tendency of the machine, and some of its managers, is to let them go. Yet they ought not to go. As there is a God in heaven, they ought not to.

But the machine does not care so very much for these things, either for the boys or for the Personage just mentioned, whose name the managers revere enough to teach the children that it should always be written with a capital letter, but further than that do not trouble themselves much about it. The machine is built on the theory that the pupils are made for the schools, rather than the schools for the pupils, and that the order of the grades must be maintained, no matter what becomes of the graded. What is it to this great mill if the pupils do fall out of the hopper? So long as the mill grinds and the grinders can hold their places at the crank; so long as they can draw their pay, escape public censure, dodge behind a stack of examination papers when individual complaints appear, shield themselves from responsibilities by records and marks, keep the promotions in order, graduate a class a year in good clothes and with pretty speeches, see each of those who have been ground through go out into the great world armed with a diploma tied up with a blue ribbon, and so following—so long as the machine can do all this, what is the use of paying any attention to “Dodd” Weaver and such incorrigibles as he, who refuse to go into the mill and be ground? What, indeed?

However, you know the story of “the ninety-and-nine.” At least you ought to know it. It has an application in these premises.

But Elder Weaver shifted his base of operations once more, and “Dodd” had another chance.

He had now got so far down on the ladder of his descent that he was counted almost dangerous. His father feared him, and he was even the terror of his brothers and sisters. In a word, he was a hard case.

It was the town of Emburg in which the parson was stationed this time—one of those towns so common all through the West, places that start out with a boom and the prospect of being municipalities of at least 500,000 inhabitants in a few years; whose founders lay out into town lots all the land that joins them and sell these at fabulous prices to those who are credulous enough to buy; and which finally settles down to a

quiet village of about 2,500 souls, with a depot, stores, seven churches, and a school requiring about ten teachers to take care of its pupils.



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Mr. Charles Bright was principal of the Emburg schools the fall that Parson Weaver came to take charge of the Methodist Episcopal church at that place. He was 30 years of age, a nervous, sensitive man, both of which characteristics had been intensified by severe work in the school room. He was less than the average height and thin in flesh, the scale beam tipping at 120 when he stood on the platform to balance the weight. His face was thin and his beard scattered, but his large black eyes were as keen as a lance, and they always seemed to see everything that came within the range of vision. He was fairly educated, but in no sense a great scholar. His patrons called him "Professor," but he made no claim to the title, and it was offensive in his ears when applied to himself. He was characterized with excellent common sense, and, best of all, was a man of resources. He was an excellent classroom worker, managed his school well, and was held in high esteem by his fellow-teachers and his pupils. Above all, he was a man whose personality impressed itself upon those with whom he associated, and whose character was strong and wholesome, making itself felt upon his pupils continuously.

To this man came Parson Weaver on a memorable morning, when the following dialogue ensued, after the two had made themselves known to each other:

"I have a son," said the parson, "whom I should like to send to school to you."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Bright, "send him along, and we will endeavor to take care of him, amongst us."

"Yes," said the Elder, "but I am grieved to be obliged to say that my boy is very wayward. He has been expelled from school so often, and has had so much trouble with his teachers that I doubt if you can do anything with him. I thought, however, that I would come and speak to you about him, and if you were willing to try him, at least for a little while, I should be under great obligations. For, really, it is a terrible thing, sir, for one to feel that he must give up a first-born son and see him go down to destruction. And yet I am compelled to say frankly to you that I fear our boy is almost beyond hope."

This was said in an agonized tone that told how deeply the sorrow had taken hold of the father's heart. There is a sentence somewhere that reads, "If thou canst, have mercy on us and save our son, for he is grievously tormented." The world is much the same now as it was a good many years ago, isn't it?

"How old is your boy?" asked Mr. Bright in a quiet, measured tone.

"Nearly seventeen," replied the parson, "but he is greatly behind in his school work. As I said, he has been turned out of school till he hates it, and, to tell the truth, he has done little but roam the streets for the last few years. I feel that I ought to be ashamed, being his father, to make such a confession, but it is the truth, and I felt that you ought to know about it."



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“Yes,” said Mr. Bright thoughtfully.

“If you could take charge of him yourself,” continued the father almost imploringly. “I know it is asking a great deal, and that perhaps it will be impossible for you to grant what I ask, for I am aware that my boy is not advanced in his studies as far as the average of the pupils that recite to you, and I have long since learned, by sad experience, the inexorableness of the present graded school system, which forces pupils into their places strictly according to their examination records, regardless of all other contingencies. I beg your pardon, if I seem to speak harshly,” he quickly added, fearing that he might have reflected too severely upon the gentleman to whom he was speaking.

“You need offer no apology,” returned Mr. Bright. “I regret as much as you can the too rigorous ways that have fallen upon our schools.”

“Well, will you give the boy a trial?” asked the parson, bringing the issue to a point.

“Most certainly,” returned Mr. Bright, and then the gentlemen wished each other “good-morning,” the parson going home and the teacher turning to his desk again.

It was not until the following Monday morning that “Dodd” Weaver made his appearance in the school room. His father had urged him to go sooner, but he cared little for the wishes of his sire, and took his time in this, as he did in all else.

“Dodd” came late to school when he did come, and evidently counted on making a sensation on his first appearance. He was very shabbily dressed, and had purposely added to his generally slouching appearance by deliberately “making up” for his debut. His hair was long, and he had tangled and frowzed it all over his head till it looked like an ungainly pile of corn silk. His face was grimy, a big quid of tobacco bulged one cheek out, while stains of tobacco juice made the corners of his mouth filthy. He wore no collar, one coat sleeve was half gone, his vest was on wrong side outwards, his pantaloons were ragged, he had a shoe on one foot and a boot on the other, the former unlaced, and the latter smeared to the top of the boot-leg with yellow clay; a leg of his pantaloons bagged down over this, being held up on the inside of his leg by hanging it over the boot-strap!

You who have not taught school, and are not familiar with boyhood at this stage of its evolution, may insist that I have made “Dodd” up like a crazy creature for his grand entry into Mr. Bright’s school room. Perhaps I have. But I have presented him to you as he presented himself to the school, for all of that. I am myself inclined to think that his mental state, at this time, bordered close upon insanity! The Book remarks about a young man at this stage of his existence, that he had to “come to himself” before his reformation, as though he had been away from himself during his lawless and

outrageous career. I am inclined to think that boys are often a good deal nearer insane than they get credit for being, at this period of their lives.

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There is a psychological condition just here that it is worth while for teachers seriously to consider.

So, tricked out in this disgusting fashion, “Dodd” slouched into Mr. Bright’s school room about ten o’clock in the forenoon, and flung himself into a seat. The pupils looked up as he entered, and their first impulse was to laugh—a result which, would have suited “Dodd” exactly. But a glance at the school from Mr. Bright’s quick eye checked the risibilities of his pupils, and, this emotion dying out, there came instantly in its place a disgust and almost a horror of the loathsome person who had dared to disgrace the school room with such a figure as “Dodd” presented. A silence like death fell upon the room, and all held their breath for an instant after the boy was seated.

Under this silence “Dodd” became embarrassed. It was exactly the reverse of what he had counted on. He meant to disturb the school. Instead of this, he found the school disturbing him. He shuffled uneasily in his seat, glanced furtively out from under the shaggy hair that was matted over his forehead, cleared his throat in a restless and seemingly defiant manner, but finally blushed to the roots of his hair as he felt the eyes of three-score decent people, all bent upon him at once. He stretched his neck up out of his collar-band a little, turned his head about as though something were choking him, then dropped his chin upon his breast, shrugged up his shoulders, and half hid his face from the eyes whose looks he fain would shun.

All this really took place in much less time than it takes for me to tell it.

Mr. Bright was hearing a class in geometry when the boy entered, and a handsome, intelligent girl was in the midst of a demonstration when the door opened and the interruption caused thereby took place. The pupil paused in her recitation, the end of her pointer resting upon the board at the angle under consideration, and she stood thus during the brief interval remarked above. As “Dodd’s” head dropped Mr. Bright turned his glance to the girl again, and said:

“If the angle at A—”

Upon which she took up the demonstration where she had broken off, and finished it as though nothing had happened. After that, other pupils recited, the lesson ended, the class was dismissed, other classes were called, and the regular routine of the day’s work went on without change, as though teacher and pupils were entirely unconscious of the presence of a stranger among them.

When recess came, Mr. Bright went down to the desk where the boy was seated, accosted him in a civil manner, and told him that if he would remain a few minutes after school was dismissed at noon he would talk with him about his work and assign him to his place in the school. Then he left him, and devoted himself to the other pupils during the brief intermission.



“Dodd” did not leave his seat during this recess. He sat as he had finally settled himself, except that he now and then raised his head and gazed defiantly over the school room. The pupils paid no attention to him whatever, and he really felt himself as much alone as though he had been in solitary confinement in a dungeon.



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The recess ended, the school was in order again; the recitations went on as usual, an hour and a quarter went by, noon came, the session closed for dinner, the pupils left the room in groups, till all were gone, and for the first time “Dodd” Weaver and Mr. Charles Bright were alone, face to face.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Bright took a small piece of blank paper from his table, a rectangular slip about four inches long by two inches wide, cut expressly for the purpose for which he proceeded to use it, and went down to the desk where “Dodd” sat sulking and defiant.

“Please write your name and age on this slip of paper,” he said to the boy.

“I can’t write!” grumbled “Dodd,” with a surly sneer and a wag of his head.

“I see! You have no pencil,” returned Mr. Bright. “You can use mine,” and he slipped that article into “Dodd’s” hand as he spoke.

As soon as he had done this, he went to the rear part of the room and began looking over some work upon the blackboard. He did not look toward the boy to see if he obeyed, but his ears were on the alert.

For a little while “Dodd” sat unmoved, and made no sign that he intended to write at all, but as Mr. Bright kept working at the board, the boy gradually relaxed his unyielding mood, and after a few minutes wrote his name in a very neat hand. He even added a little flourish in one corner of the paper.

Mr. Bright heard the pencil moving on the desk and his blood ran quicker in his veins, though he showed no outward sign of the fact. He felt that in the first crossing of swords he had won. That was all. He heard the pencil drop upon the floor, where “Dodd” let it lie. But he still devoted himself to his work on the board. He knew that the name was written. It was all he had asked.

As for “Dodd,” he almost wondered how he happened to write at all. He had made up his mind to be as mean and outrageous as possible when he came to school, and here he had done the very first thing he had been asked to do! When he replied to Mr. Bright that he could not write, he fully intended to have a knock-down with the gentleman rather than put pencil to paper. He even thought over hastily, how quickly he could “put a head on the light weight” who had brought him the bit of paper. For “Dodd” was strong now and prided himself on his skill with his fists.

But the pencil was in his hand, and, before he was aware, his fingers clasped it. His hand instinctively took the position for writing, and somehow or other, there came to his



mind, just at that instant, the memory of Amy Kelly, and of how she had held her soft, plump hand over his, as she taught him to hold a pen.

If he had observed closely, he would have seen that this was where the first break came in his rebellion. It was the sunshine of Amy's character shining down through the dark clouds that had closed in about "Dodd" Weaver's soul, that first tempted his timid, shrinking, almost forgotten real self out into the light again. Habit completed what memory began, and his hand moved, though almost against his will, as if guided by an impulse beyond himself. Perhaps it was so guided!

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He wrote the name; but he did no more. When the pencil dropped to the floor he would not touch it again. Nothing could have induced him to do so. He would have fought a duel sooner than have picked it up. His real self, so weak and so nearly dead, shrank back, exhausted by its single effort, and his bad nature took control of him again.

But Mr. Bright finished the work at the board, and then went up the aisle. He stooped and picked up the pencil, took the slip from the desk, with a courteous "Thank you," and moved on to his own table. He had tallied one point.

I wonder if he did this all by himself, or if there was another hand behind it all. Certain it is this man did not plan all this campaign that ended so successfully. He had not counted on the boy's refusing to write his name. It was like a flash, that it came to him to answer "Dodd's" refusal as he did. Nor did he really intend to put the pencil into the boy's hand when he offered it to him. But, somehow, he did just that, and it was the saving fact in the case. Had he laid the pencil on the table, "Dodd" would never have picked it up. Much less would he have reached for it, or taken it from Mr. Bright's hand. But, with the pencil in his hand, he wrote.

We say Mr. Bright did as he did "instinctively." That may be a good word for it. But I wonder if such "instinct" as this doesn't reach away over to the other side, even into the realm of inspiration, whose fountain head is the spirit of the great "*I am.*"

Be this as it may, though, Mr. Bright had won. He was thankful for his victory—thankful, but not proud. Perhaps this is another thing that goes to show that there was help from without that made for him in the fight.

"Dodd" was disappointed that Mr. Bright did not compliment him on his writing, for he had written very well and knew that he had. But this, Mr. Bright took as a matter of course, and gave no word of commendation for it. It was not time for that yet. "Dodd's" starved real self, if fed with what might once have been wholesome food for it, would have been choked, perhaps to death, by a bit of praise, just then, and a wholesome sense of merit would have been changed into a detestable conceit.

A teacher has to be so careful about these things.

Mr. Bright seated himself at the table, transferred the name to his register, then took another bit of paper and began writing on it, remarking as he did so:

"You will please occupy the seat in front of you this afternoon, and hereafter. I have written a list of the books you will need," he added, picking up the strip he had just been writing on, "and you will please procure them this afternoon. You will recite with the entering class in this room, according to the programme that is on the board behind my desk."



But “Dodd” did not move a muscle while Mr. Bright spoke. He did not look up, even when reference was made to the programme. He made no response when assigned his seat, or to his place in school. He sulked and frowned and stood out against everything, and was sullen and malicious to the last degree.



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To all this, however, Mr. Bright paid no heed. He stepped down to the boy's desk again, put the list of books upon it, then turned and left the room abruptly, without a word.

The act was so sudden, so unlike what "Dodd" had expected, that it left him, for a moment, utterly nonplussed.

He was vexed that he had not been able to get into a fight with a man who had left him alone; and yet, as he raised his eyes cautiously, to make sure that Mr. Bright was really gone, he smiled in spite of himself, at the absurdity of the situation! He felt his cheeks wrinkle up, good-naturedly, as the smile crept over his face from above (I think smiles do come from above), and was angrier than ever. He checked his rising good nature with an oath, and raising his arm, he struck the desk a tremendous blow, that made the cover bound again, and the room echo with the thud. Then he rose, grinding his teeth as he got up, and slowly and noisily banged his way out of the room.

Not till three days after this did he appear again in the school room. During this time he loafed about the town and took particular pains to be where Mr. Bright could see him and have a chance to reprove him. But though his teacher met him several times, he gave "Dodd" no other word than such greeting as true politeness dictated. This was worse than ever, for the boy, who was really "spoiling for a row" by this time. The machine, or the machine man, would have had a row with him. Mr. Bright was not a machine man.

Did you ever hook a big fish, when angling with a light rod and line? If you ever did, and have succeeded in landing your game, then you know something about the situation which I am now noting. You see, when the odds are so much against you, you have to do as you can, and not as you would like to, with the wily fellow at the other end of your weak tackle. That is, if you accomplish what you ought to wish to accomplish, if you fish at all!

Of course, there is a quick way of deciding who shall win, you or the fish, and that is to pull away, with might and main, straight for shore, and undertake to drag your captive to you by sheer muscle, brutally matching your strength against his. But if you try this, you know that the chances are a thousand to one that you will part your line and lose the best end of it, and your game along with it.

You can do this, if you choose, of course—this is a free country; but if that is your way of fishing, you had better give up any little pet idea that may be lurking about you, that heaven made you for a fisherman. Perhaps you might make a fair superintendent of school machines, but you ought not to fish!

Or, you may despise the fish, if you choose, and when he has left you, you may gloat over the fact that "anyhow you have stuck something into his gullet that will stay there, and that he can't get away from." You may hope that the trailing line will tangle to a

bush and hang the creature. All this you may do, and yet, of what avail is it all? It benefits neither you nor the fish!



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But if you know your business you can give your game his own way, suiting your motion to his, till you wear him out, and then he is yours. That is good fishing, and the good thing about it is that it gets the game!

“Dodd” was hooked. His staying away from school was the first tug that he gave the line that caught him. Mr. Bright let him run. He ran for three days, and then gave up on that tack. The fisher reeled in the line and watched for the next break.

CHAPTER XII.

But on Thursday morning “Dodd” came to school again. This time he went to the other extreme in the matter of clothes, and came into the room dressed like a dandy. He had failed to make a sensation, so far, and he had not been used to that sort of thing recently. For years he had been the cause of something unusual, every few hours, and in ways about as he chose. As it was now, he seemed to have lost his knack at this art, and to have fallen into the condition of an ordinary individual, concerning whom no one cared particularly.

This annoyed him greatly. He had come to think he was of some great consequence in the world, by reason of his being so frequently talked to, and prayed over, and reasoned with, and pampered in a thousand ways by those who were really afraid of him; and now, to be set aside without a word or a look, except such as all other pupils got, this was a sore stroke to his vanity.

You see, everybody grows proud of his own attainments, in course of time, no matter what they are, and is anxious to have his fellows appreciate them to their fullest extent, and to acknowledge their excellence in his particular case. So when he fails to secure a recognition of his supposed talents, then he is cut to the very quick.

“Dodd” felt that his eccentricity had not yet been fully acknowledged in the Emburg school, and he reached still further for the object of his desire by playing the fop rather than the tramp, on his second entry to the school room.

But it was not a success. The pupils had evidently “sized him up” pretty accurately, on his previous entry, and his second appearance was a more signal failure than the first.

He did little with his books during the day. He had not come to school to learn. That was the last thing he thought of doing. He was there to make a fuss if possible,—a row, trouble, a sensation; these were what he was after. He went mechanically to his classes, but paid no attention to what was said or done in them. He hoped, though, that Mr. Bright would put a question to him about some of the lessons. He was aching for a chance to snub Mr. Bright, or defy him, by telling him that he didn’t know. But he got no



questions from his teacher that day, nor for some days after. There are many ways, so many ways, of tiring out a fish, before landing him!

So the day wore on, the first whole day in school for “Dodd” Weaver, for several years. At recesses he unbent a little, but he was only accosted by some of the youngest pupils of the room, and he felt uneasy and out of place among the larger and more advanced members of the school.



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It was nearing four o'clock, and the closing work of the day was pressing. Mr. Bright was more than busy with his class, and the room was quiet, the pupils devoting themselves to their work assiduously. "Dodd" sat listless for some time, but he finally straightened himself up quietly, his face lighted with interest, and it would have been evident to any one watching him (no one was watching him just at this time) that he was about to do something. He was.

His desk was in the row of seats next the wall, and there was only a narrow aisle between him and the blackboard. He could reach across this easily. He reached across.

He picked up a piece of crayon and began drawing lines on the board. He moved his chalk carefully, and it made no sound. Yet his movements attracted attention, shortly, and one pupil, and another, and another, turned to watch him.

When "Dodd" found that he had finally succeeded in securing an audience he felt that his point was gained. He winked to a few of the boys about him, and even half smiled at a somewhat coquettish girl whose eye he happened to catch. He was winning his way, and he hastened to make the most of his opportunity.

He had not made a half-dozen strokes with the crayon till every one saw that his sketch was a caricature of Mr. Bright.

This gentleman was not handsome. His features were angular and somewhat irregular, and upon every one of these individualities the graceless artist enlarged at will. He turned up the nose, and set the stray bits of whiskers, and dotted the cheeks, at war one with another. He even went further, and with a few clever strokes sketched a dwarfed body for the life-sized head. He worked rapidly and turned now and then to view his subject.

And all this time Mr. Bright was unconscious of what was going on. He sat with his face more than half turned away from "Dodd," and was devoting all his energies to the elucidation of a problem that was particularly troublesome to the advanced class in algebra. He had no thought of the "order" of his school room. He was too busy trying to help the boys and girls who sat before him, to have time to trouble himself with the rest of the pupils, who were well able to care for themselves between recitations. This was his way of "maintaining order."

But presently he became aware, by soul or ear, that something was wrong about him, somewhere. For an instant he could not make out what it was, so deeply was he engrossed in his work. Then, like a flash, it came to him that it was "Dodd"! He turned his eyes quickly to where the boy sat, and had the good fortune to catch that young gentleman in the very act of adding the finishing touches to his sketch, with much flourish and circumstance.



So much elated was “Dodd,” that for an instant he forgot where he was, and for more than a minute after Mr. Bright caught sight of what he was doing, he continued to put in new lines, every one of which added to the grotesqueness of the picture.



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Meanwhile the school saw the situation and began to enjoy it hugely, though now at “Dodd’s” expense.

Presently the young man looked up from his work and, glancing quickly to the teacher, saw that he was fairly caught. Like lightning he swept the brush, which he held in his left hand, over the picture, and it was gone. Then he squared himself in his seat.

But it was too late. He had overshot the mark. He heard a sneer of disgust from the pupils instead of the laugh he had counted on. He was down again. He was vexed at the result, and his face drew on an air of injured vexation, after the manner of his kind.

Then Mr. Bright said, stepping down to “Dodd’s” desk, and speaking in a low tone, to the boy only:

“The picture was very good; very much better than I could have made. I see you have a good deal of ability with the chalk; I am glad to know it. If you care to try your hand on the board, you are welcome to do so at any time; only please do not try to take the attention of the pupils from their studies by your pictures, as you did just now,” and without another word he resumed the point under consideration when the interruption took place.

“Dodd” tried to look defiant, but to little purpose. There was nothing left to defy.

I have seen men strike so hard at nothing at all that they have fallen headlong themselves, dragged down by the force of the blow they had intended for another. “Dodd” was down, and it was his own hand that had put him there.

And it is so much better that way!

Yet two points had been gained by this encounter. Mr. Bright had discovered that “Dodd” had a genius for one thing at least, for the sketch was really a remarkably strong one—so strong that the subject of it would have been glad to have preserved it; and “Dodd” was fully convinced that he had no ordinary man to deal with in the person of Mr. Charles Bright. With these two new points developed, the party at the reel end of the line began slowly to “wind up,” yet again, and the party of the second part let him wind.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rome was not built in a day nor is a character formed in one round of the sun. A man never reaches a great height at a single stride, and many times he slips and falls back, even after he has been climbing a great while. This is a thing that is common to the race.



“Dodd” Weaver possessed this trait. I say that he did, and shall proceed to prove it, in two ways, which I plainly state for the benefit of the two classes of people who can only see the same set of facts from opposite points of vision.

For the practical people, those who believe only what they see,—the unimaginative and severely scientific, if you will,—I present in proof of the proposition stated above, the record of the boy’s life up to this point—the bare facts that have transpired. For those who bow down at the shrine of pure logic, who accept no conclusion but such as has been hoisted into place by a lever of syllogism, with a major premise for a fulcrum, and a minor premise on the long end of the bar,—for these, I submit the familiar form:



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A—All men slip and fall back into old ways, more or less (chiefly more), when striving to change a course of life that has become fixed by habit.

B—“Dodd” Weaver (Socrates) was a man (or near enough so to come within the range of the first term above).

C—Therefore; “Dodd” Weaver (Soc.) slipped and fell back into old ways, more or less (chiefly more), when striving to change a course of life that had become fixed by habit. The form will bear study.

I am glad to record just here, too, though it may be counted a digression, that for once the facts in the case and the logical conclusion reached concerning the same tally exactly. What a blessed thing it would have been for the martyrs, all through the ages, if there had always been such happy coincidence between logical sequence and actual facts! But what were the world without martyrs?

I have heard it said that pure logic has a mission to perform in this world. The record of its doings so far shows that, chiefly, it has been engaged in reaching conclusions that did not tally with actualities, and in leading its devotees to persecute those who accepted facts rather than its ultimatum. It is this that has fostered more persecution in the past than all other forms of bigotry combined. Even religion herself has often fallen a prey to this false god, and the most relentless of religious wars have been waged with a logical difference as a basis.

Nevertheless, pure logic has its use. I have used it to prove that “Dodd” Weaver did not spring from groveling to grace without some set-backs, I have done obeisance to logic. I can now move on peaceably, I trust.

Mr. Bright made a point with “Dodd” by his quick discovery of the boy’s genius with the chalk. In a few days he scored another, when he found how well he could read. Indeed, it was here the teacher and pupil first felt their souls flow together freely, for an instant.

It was the old “Sam Weller’s Valentine” selection that the class was laboring with. The boys and girls tugged at the dialogue, but in the main got little from it.

It came “Dodd’s” turn to read. He had taken in the whole scene and was full of the spirit of the piece. His place of beginning was at the words with which “Sam” begins his letter, and, commencing there, he read, assuming a high-pitched voice:

“Lovely creeter!”

The school broke out into a laugh, as did also Mr. Bright. “Dodd” raised his eyes for an instant to catch the cause of their mirth, only to meet the approving smile of the teacher,



and the slightest nod of admiration from him. He flushed with a glow of wholesome pride, and the next instant shouted, in the deep, husky guttural of "Old Tony":

"Stop! A glass o' the invariable, my dear!" and so he continued with the dialogue.

It was a revelation to the school, this reading of "Dodd's." After the first floating breath of laughter had passed over the room, every pupil was full of attention, and was listening to the reading of this proverbially bad boy.



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“Dodd” read to the end of the letter and then sat down.

Mr. Bright said, “Very well!” and marked him 9 1/2! The two walked home to dinner together, at noon!

For many weeks after this “Dodd” continued as he had begun, and grew in favor with the pupils in general and with Mr. Bright in particular. He came regularly to school, studied fairly, and advanced quite rapidly in his work. This was very satisfactory to his parents, who saw their son, whom they had mourned as worse than dead, once more “clothed and in his right mind.” The Elder was happy and felt that at last the personal influence of one good man had done for “Dodd” what a half dozen revival conversions had failed to do for him. Perhaps he did not say it just that way, even to himself; but we often hear voices within us saying things that we dare not say ourselves, even to ourselves. It was a voice within that said this to the parson. I merely record the fact without further comment. Why should anyone comment on such a fact?

But there came a day—there are always days a-coming. There came, too, a deed, and there are always deeds a-coming. It was in this wise.

School had just begun, after dinner, when suddenly “Dodd” Weaver arose to leave the room. There was nothing remarkable in this, for it was not unlawful for pupils to leave Mr. Bright’s room without special permission. They were permitted to come and go at pleasure, subject, always, to the direction of the teacher in each or every case.

Mr. Bright did not notice the young man till he had nearly reached the door; then, suddenly, it occurred to him that there was no good reason for his going out.

“Why are you leaving the room, ‘Dodd’?” he inquired, a trifle abruptly.

“To get a drink of water,” returned the boy.

“You need not go,” remarked Mr. Bright. “A young man of your years should attend to that at the proper time. You may take your seat!”

It was a little thing, but it was so sudden that it “riled” “Dodd” to the very depths. Quick as a flash he returned:

“I’ll go out whenever I —— please for all of you, you —— —— —— ——,” and here followed a string of blasphemous words which good taste says I must not write, though the truth is, “Dodd” said them, very loudly, before a whole school full of young ladies and gentlemen, who had to hear them. But then, good taste has some rights which I am bound to respect, and I put dashes where “Dodd” put most shameful oaths.



If a thunderbolt had fallen into that still school-room it would not have produced greater consternation among the pupils than did these words of "Dodd's." He turned pale with anger, and glared at Mr. Bright, as he, "Dodd," stood with his hand on the doorknob.

"All right;" returned Mr. Bright, "do just as the 'Other-Fellow' says about it," and he turned to his class again.

"Dodd" stood with his hand on the doorknob for a full minute, then turned, and slowly walking to his seat, sat down! But Mr. Bright did not even look that way.



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And this was all there ever was of this episode. Mr. Bright never once mentioned the occurrence to “Dodd” afterwards. He did not even reprimand him before the school nor did he speak to any pupil of what had happened. He had won, and yet the odds were so nearly against him that he felt it best to be silent. This might not have been your way, beloved, but it was Mr. Bright’s way, and he was able to manage it.

Some months thereafter, he had occasion one day to reprove a rough pupil for profanity on the play-ground, and the pupil came back at him with: “You’d better talk to ‘Dodd’ Weaver about swearing if you are so anxious about it. He cursed you to your face and you didn’t say a word.” But Mr. Bright only replied: “That is my affair, but you must not swear on the play-ground. Do you understand?”

The young man concluded that he understood, and said so.

And that is how this teacher was perhaps logically inconsistent, but nevertheless just, and able to take care of his school according to the individual needs of his pupils. Happy is that teacher who can do so much!

But the machine cannot do so much, nor can the men who run the machine. The machine is logically correct and consistent, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians. It “treats all pupils alike.” Allah be praised! Yet a single man like Mr. Bright is worth whole battalions of machines. Thank God!

I must take space, just here, too, to explain a phrase quoted by Mr. Bright, just above, namely, the “Other-Fellow.”

The quotation marks are there in deference to Dr. Holmes, who is responsible for the idea that Mr. Bright had made familiar in his school. That idea was as follows, when elaborated by this teacher, and was presented to his pupils on a Monday morning, a few weeks after “Dodd” had entered school. I give this as Mr. Bright paraphrased it, rather than in the words of the “Old Master” in the “Poet at the Breakfast Table,” where he first came across it.

“Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes says,” Mr. Bright remarked to the school, “that in every one of us there are two persons. First, there is yourself, and then there is the Other-Fellow! Now one of these is all the time doing things, and the other sits inside and tells what he thinks about the performance. Thus, I do so-and-so, act so-and-so, seem to the world so-and-so; but the Other-Fellow sits in judgment on me all the time.

“I may tell a lie, and do it so cleverly that the people may think I have done or said a great and good thing; and they may shout my praises, far and wide. But the Other-Fellow sits inside, and says, ‘You lie! you lie! you’re a sneak, and you know it!’ I tell him to shut up, to hear what the people say about me; but he only continues to repeat, over and over again, ‘You lie! you lie! you’re a sneak, and you know it!’



“Or, again, I may do a really noble deed, but perhaps be misunderstood by the public, who may persecute me and say all manner of evil against me, falsely; but the Other-Fellow will sit inside, and say, 'Never mind, old boy! It's all right! stand by!'”



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“And I would rather hear,” he used to add, “the ‘well done’ of the ‘Other-Fellow’ than the shouts of praise of the whole world; while I would a thousand times rather that the people should shout and hiss themselves hoarse with rage and envy, than that the ‘Other-Fellow’ should sit inside and say, ‘You lie! you lie! you’re a sneak, and you know it!’”

This was what Mr. Bright said to his pupils on a Monday morning, and it made a wonderful impression upon them. The same thought always will make an impression upon people if only it can be got to them.

After this, he let the “Other-Fellow” manage his school. You can see how effective it was, my dear, by observing what it did for “Dodd,” as I have just related. It was even more powerful, if possible, with the other pupils.

I commend this “Other-Fellow” to your notice, ladies and gentlemen, and especially to yours, beloved, who are teachers of young men and women. You can’t use him to so good an advantage among the younger pupils, but if you can once get him to take control of your larger boys and girls, you have put them into most excellent hands.

For, see; he will ply the lash when it is deserved, and lay on heavily where you would hardly dare to lift a finger. Does Mary whisper too much? Quietly ask her to settle the score with the “Other-Fellow.” Is John doing something that he should not do? Hand him over to the same authority. And if you can do this, and can succeed in making this personage the Absolute Monarch of your school, whose assistant you are, then be happy, and teach school just as long as you can afford to. You are a god-send to any company of young people among whom your lot is cast.

But if you are a stranger to the “Other-Fellow” yourself, don’t try to introduce him to any one else. It is not well for strangers to attempt familiarities, yet I have known such attempts, even in the school room, and by those high in authority, even among the machines.

But Mr. Bright had succeeded in putting this personage into his school as head master, and he had wrought wonders, even in so hard a case as that of “Dodd” Weaver. His presence in any school will always work as it did in this case. It takes a man or a woman of character to use this power, though!

CHAPTER XIV.

I most heartily wish that I could go on with this tale without recording any further lapses on the part of its alleged hero, but I can’t. The facts in the case will not warrant such a continuation.



Nor do I admit that it was “Dodd’s” Methodist blood that occasioned these fallings from grace. I have known men, women and boys, and whole herds of other people besides, even those who were firm believers in the tenet “Once in grace, always in grace,” who yet had their “infirmities” about them, and whose feet still clung to the miry clay, though they did think their heads were in heavenly places!



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On the whole, after observing human nature pretty closely for some time, even till gray hairs are with me to stay, I am inclined to believe, with Mr. Emerson, that "Virtue itself is apt to be occasional, spotty, and not always the same clear through the piece." This may be another case where facts do not tally with logical conclusions based upon dogmatic theological reasoning. Yet if the fact is thus, my dear reader, you need not be alarmed, so far as you are concerned. Ask yourself if it isn't true, in your case, at least, that you have slipped down from the lofty places of your desire and aspiration many a time, even when you have done your best to keep in your high estate. Human nature! That is the key to this condition. How to handle this unstable quantity so as to keep it up continually, this is a problem for the ages.

So "Dodd" slipped again, just as such boys are continually apt to do, and Mr. Bright bore with him patiently, and "worked him," as a wise teacher can and will.

The machine cannot and will not bear with boys and "work them." It "suspends" them and "expels" them.

The "Other-Fellow" held "Dodd" to his work for days and weeks, but, finally, even this power lost its grip, for a time.

It happened—as such things usually do, when the teacher is doubly busy—that "Dodd" began whittling a stick at his desk and covering the floor all about with the litter, in a most shameful and slovenly manner. Mr. Bright discovered the fact just as he was in the midst of a class exercise in which twenty pupils were taking part, all being at the board at the same time and working together under pressure of his rapid dictation. He had no time to stop then and there to put a pupil into order. He was flushed and excited with his class work, holding his boys and girls up to the vigorous drill he was giving them, and he scarcely paused to say to "Dodd":

"Put up that knife and go to work!"

He did not wait to see it he was obeyed. He had not time.

The next act of "Dodd's" that he was conscious of was his opening the door to leave the room. He saw at once that this move was made simply to kill time, and to get rid of study, and as "Dodd" was in the very act of closing the door behind him, Mr. Bright called out to him:

"Come back and take your seat!"

But "Dodd's" only answer was to slam the door as hard as he could and dash down stairs, three steps at a jump.



Mr. Bright rushed out after him at the top of his speed. In his haste to make time, and catch the fugitive, if possible, he revived a custom of his youth and slid down the banister, making the time of an arrow in his descent.

Then he ran out of the hall, in still further pursuit.

But he was too late. He ran around the house, but at the corner he lost the trail, and though he circled the building three times, and listened, and dodged back and forth, to surprise "Dodd" if possible, he could get no clue to his whereabouts. He went into the cellar and looked all about, peering into the furnace-room and coal-bin, but nowhere could he find the crafty object of his search. Finally he gave up and returned to the school room. He came in out of breath and perspiring, and met the inquiring eyes of his pupils as he went back to his desk.



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"I could not find him," he said to the school, wiping his dripping face with his handkerchief. Then he turned to the class on duty and resumed the exercise he had broken off so abruptly.

I do not know what would have happened if Mr. Bright and "Dodd" had met in the heat of this encounter. It is useless to speculate on what would have occurred. Some of the boys, waiting in the room they had just left, offered to bet two to one on the master if it came to business. And, indeed, there were no takers at that, for Mr. Bright had a prowess which would have stood him well in stead if he had had occasion to use it. But he did not. I am glad that he did not.

Because, it is at such times as this that men get beside themselves, and are apt to do desperate things. I have known men who had to go behind bars and stay there for many years because they did meet the man they were after, under much such circumstances as I have just detailed. I remarked a few paragraphs above something about virtue being "occasional," and we have all need to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

But Fate, or Foreordination, or Good Fortune, or Destiny, or Providence, or Luck, whichever one of these presided on this occasion,—suit yourselves as to this, O infidel or orthodox! capitalize them all, since some of you will have it so—elected that these two people should not meet till they had both cooled off a little. I hope these same powers may be as kind to you if you ever have a like need of their good offices. Many a man has been made or broken by the smile or frown of one of these deities which are so entirely beyond our control, and which still make so important a part of our lives. I state facts again, without further moralizing. Indeed, I could not moralize on this theme if I tried. I don't know any one who can, though the world is full of people who constantly try to. They all fail. The mystery is as great now as it was in the days when Eve happened to walk up to the tree where the serpent and the apples happened to be together. One should take off his hat when he speaks seriously of these things. They are stupendous!

Nor should you blame Mr. Bright too much for doing as he did. Hear the story out before you pass judgment. He was only a man. You are under the same condemnation, my self-contained critic!

I will admit without argument, however, that the machine would never have slid down a banister in pursuit of a fleeing pupil. Never! It never concerns itself enough about the doings of any individual pupil to follow him an inch for any cause whatever. The machine would have sat still and let the boy run. Then it would have suspended him the next morning and expelled him a few days later. The machine always has regular ways of doing things. It has all the rules for its movements set down in a book.



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But Mr. Bright was very anxious about “Dodd” Weaver. When he came to reflect, he was glad that he had not met him while in pursuit of him. Yet the question remained, what should be done when they did meet? He thought about this, deep down in his soul, all the rest of the morning. When noon came he was as much as ever at a loss how to proceed. One of the worst features of the case, as he thought about it, was this: “Dodd” had been going to school to him now a year and a half, and he had begun to think that he had a permanent hold upon the boy. But here it was again, back in the same old notch, and as bad as ever. It does take so long to make anything permanent in the way of character! You have found it so yourself, haven’t you, beloved? In your own case, I mean.

But on his way home to dinner Mr. Bright saw Mrs. Weaver out in the yard, and remembering how much a mother may sometimes do for her son, he went over and took her into counsel on the case. The machine would not have done this either.

It is a rule of the mill not to consult with parents. If parents wish consultation, let them talk to a stack of examination papers, or a record-book. This will soon cure them of their desire to consult.

Mrs. Weaver heard Mr. Bright’s statement with tear-filled eyes. She had seen “Dodd” improve in every line of his life, for some months, and had begun to form bright plans for the future of her redeemed first-born. But, alas! here seemed to be the end of all her hopes. However, she tried to apologize for her son, and, in any event, she begged Mr. Bright not to give “Dodd” up yet. But the master shook his head gravely.

“And another thing,” pursued Mrs. Weaver, “I think it will be best not to let ‘Dodd’s’ father know anything about this. He is such a passionate man that I am sure he would fly into a rage and attempt to beat the boy if he should find it out. And he and ‘Dodd’ are so much alike! If they should get into a quarrel, I fear that one might kill the other before they could be parted.”

Yet these persons were father and son, and one of them was a successful minister and a devout man—most of the time,

“You see,” Mrs. Weaver continued, “that my husband has such a high opinion of you as a man, and he knows that you have done so much for ‘Dodd,’ that if he should find out how abominably the boy has treated you, he would be ten times more angry than ever. So let us keep the matter to ourselves, if possible. I will see ‘Dodd’ as soon as he comes home, and will try what I can do. And if prayer, or—”

“There, there,” broke in Mr. Bright, quietly, as the brimming eyes of the woman before him began to overflow, “do what you can with the boy, and I will not give him up till I have to;” and so saying, he went on to dinner.

But in a country town news travels fast. As soon as school was out at noon, three-score tongues were busy retailing the mild scandal to attentive listeners, whenever met.



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Parson Weaver sat in the postoffice, reading a “daily” that had just arrived, when a boy came in, and not noticing the Elder, began to tell the tale to the knot of men who stood about. They heard the story through, with many “I-told-you-so” nods, and then, one by one, slipped out of the office. Last of all Parson Weaver went also.

He went straight to Mr. Bright’s house and pulled the door bell impetuously.

The teacher admitted him, and began immediately to try to soothe the infuriated feelings of the parson, who was really very angry.

“I hope the matter may come out all right,” said the teacher, “for I trust that ‘Dodd’ will see things as they are, when he comes to himself.”

“Tell me just what happened,” said the parson, with a kind of desperation.

Mr. Bright carefully went over the particulars. When he had finished, he added:

“I shall be very grateful to you for anything you can do to help us all out of this dilemma and get ‘Dodd’ on his feet again. For what we must do, in any event, is to save the boy.”

“I shall do all in my power,” returned Mr. Weaver, “but I thought he was doing so well with you, and now he is all at sea again,” and with a groan he left the house.

Mr. Bright sat down to dinner and ate a few hurried mouthfuls.

He had just risen from his slight repast, when a twin Weaver burst into the room and shouted out:

“Pap wants you to come over to the house as quick as you kin,” and having thus said, he turned and ran.

Mr. Bright remembered the words of “Dodd’s” mother, and he feared that father and son had closed in deadly conflict. He hurried down the street, and made all haste toward the parsonage.

CHAPTER XV.

When Parson Weaver left Mr. Bright’s house he went directly home. “Dodd” was there before him, and when the elder arrived he found the boy and his mother together, both apparently indignant and excited.

“To think that he should have struck you over the head with a stick,” exclaimed Mrs. Weaver, “and then should have the face to come here and trump up a story about your



running away! I always did more than half suspect that man of lying, and I have found him out now!"

"Why, what is this?" inquired the parson, with a puzzled look.

"Mr. Bright has been striking 'Dodd' over the head with a stick," explained Mrs. Weaver; "just see where he hit him!" She pushed the hair back off her son's forehead as she spoke, and revealed a long red streak, made, apparently, by a blow from some solid substance.

Elder Weaver was dumbfounded. "Tell me all about this affair," he demanded of "Dodd," as he led the way to another room, leaving Mrs. Weaver to go on with her housework.

"All there is of it," answered "Dodd," "Old Bright gave me some of his lip because I couldn't do an example, and when I tried to explain he got mad and hit me over the head with a club, and so I got up and left."



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“Is that the actual truth of the matter?” asked the elder, anxiously.

“You don’t think I’d lie about a thing like that, do you?” said “Dodd.” “You can see where he hit me,” he proceeded, himself revealing the welt on his forehead.

This mark was too much for the good parson. He might have doubted “Dodd’s” word, but there was no disputing the mark.

Now a welt raised by a teacher on the body of a child will drive that child’s parents to madness quicker than anything that I know of. The elder grew very angry, and resolved to see the end of this as soon as possible. Calling a younger member of the household to him he whispered in his ear:

“Run up to Prof. Bright’s as fast as you can, and tell him to come down here as quick as possible.” He would bring “Dodd” and his teacher face to face, and then see.

It was this messenger that had brought the teacher to the parsonage on the double-quick.

“Dodd” saw his little brother shoot out of the door, and he was in a worse dilemma than ever. Whether to run, or to stay and face it out; to lie some more, or to confess the lie he had already told; these were the things he grew more and more anxious about every minute. But presently he caught sight of his teacher hurrying down the street, and almost before he knew it he said:

“It’s all a lie I’ve been giving you, old man! Bright never hit me a lick!”

“But the mark!” almost shrieked the parson.

“I done it myself,” explained “Dodd,” laconically, “to give you and the old woman a stand off with!”

It was just as “Dodd” said this that Mr. Bright opened the door and entered the room. “Dodd” was seated near one corner, and his father, having just heard from the boy’s own lips a full confession of his wholesale lying, began raving like a maniac. He swung his arms wildly, weeping and shouting as he strode about the room:

“My son! my son! Would to God that you had filled an early grave, or that I had died for thee! O, my son! my son!” and uttering such lamentations he continued to rave.

“Why, what is this?” exclaimed Mr. Bright, rather at a loss to know just what to say or do.

“O professor,” almost yelled the parson, “my boy has lied to me! lied to me!! lied to me!!!” and again he paced the room and tore his hair.



Coming around again to where Mr. Bright stood, he went on: "He told me that you struck him with a club, and showed me a mark on his head where he said you had hit him, and then, when I sent for you, and he saw you coming, he confessed that it was all a lie! a lie!! a lie!!! O, my God, my boy! my lost, my ruined boy! A liar!" he shrieked again. "In hell they shall lift up their eyes in torma—"

"Stop!" commanded Mr. Bright, confronting the almost lunatic parson; "stop raving and sit down, and let us talk about this business like sensible people," and he led Mr. Weaver to a chair as he spoke.



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“Now ‘Dodd,’” said Mr. Bright, speaking to the boy for the first time since he had called him back in the school room, “tell me about this.”

“Dodd” hesitated a minute, eyeing his teacher defiantly, and finally grumbled:

“I have not got anything to tell.”

At this the parson came very near going off into another paroxysm, but a look from Mr. Bright checked him, and he sank back into his chair, almost in collapse.

Then Mr. Bright spoke, directing all his attention to “Dodd.”

“My boy,” he said, “it is useless for either of us to go over what has been said and done in the last hour or two. I need not tell, nor need I ask you to tell, how thoroughly outrageous your conduct has been. But I want to say this to you right here: I want you to steady yourself right down as soon as you can and get to thinking reasonably about this matter. There is only one thing that I am afraid of in this affair, and that is that it will result in great loss to you, if you are not careful. You have insulted your fellow students, you have defied the reasonable authority of the school, and you have lied to your parents. I don’t care anything about what you have done to me, or said about me—let that go; but I do care about the other things, and I am anxious to have you make them right as soon as possible, before it is too late.”

You know, good people, that when a bone is broken, the thing that needs to be done is to set it as soon as possible; if it is left out of place very long, it is ten times as hard to put it right again as it would have been at first, and, even if set at last, it is apt to grow together imperfectly, or perhaps make a crooked limb ever after. The sooner a fault is redressed, the better for all parties to it.

“So now I have this to say to you,” Mr. Bright went on:

“I don’t want you to drop out of school on account of this occurrence. This is what you are in danger of doing, and it is the very thing you ought not to do. You have been doing well in your work for a good while now, and you can’t afford to let this affair break you off.”

“Well, I guess it won’t hurt anybody but myself, and that is my own business,” said “Dodd” sulkily.

Off, away off as yet. Drawn, but unwilling to come. Seeing, knowing what he should do, but, ruled by some rebellious devil, persistently turning away and doing the other thing. It is the way of perverse human nature. Call it “total depravity,” “original sin,” “infirmity,” “the natural man,” I don’t care what, only this—recognize the condition and deal with it, when you come squarely up against it, so that it will not ruin its victim.



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“The very thing I am fearing,” returned Mr. Bright. “In one sense it is nobody’s business but your own what becomes of you; in another sense, it is the business of a great many. Young man, I tell you again to get out of your present defiant mood as soon as you can. I know that your life for the past few months has had more of genuine enjoyment for you than you have experienced for years previous to this time. I don’t say this boastfully, I say it thankfully. And what I am anxious for is to have you keep going in the same way. Just think it over, and see what there is before you. On the one hand, a return to your place in school, and with that a continuation of all that you have so much cared for; on the other hand—but I leave that for you to think out. There are two ways right here, and you must choose which one you will take.”

“Well, what have I got to do if I go back?” asked “Dodd,” yielding ever so little.

“You must apologize to the school for your conduct and pledge to your fellow students your word of honor that hereafter you will behave like a gentleman.”

“Dodd” gave his head an angry toss and was about to speak when the parson sprang to his feet, and, rushing across the room, shouted:

“He shall do it, or I will disown him, and he shall never enter my house again, but shall be—”

“Sit down, sir!” exclaimed Mr. Bright, almost forcing the distracted parson into his chair. Mr. Weaver sat down and was silent.

Mr. Bright proceeded:

“So now, my boy, here it is for you to choose, and you must use your own judgment about it.” But “Dodd” looked down and said nothing.

It was a critical moment. A soul was at stake, and fiends and angels were striving together for it. Mr. Bright was the captain of the heavenly host, and devoutly he stood, waiting the issue.

There are no rules laid down in the machine guide books that lead up to this high estate, nor does the machine manager care so much for marshaling angelic forces as he does about controlling the election of a member of the board from the —th ward.

As Mr. Bright spoke his last words a silence fell upon the group. The father sat with his hands over his face, “Dodd” gazed at the carpet, and the school teacher bowed his head reverently. For nearly a minute this impressive calm brooded over all. Then Mr. Bright felt in his soul that the tide was turned in his favor. He advanced towards “Dodd” and extended his hand.

“Come!” he said.



The boy did not raise his eyes, but he did lift his hand, just a little—only a little—and Mr. Bright grasped it with all the fervor of his thankful soul. He drew “Dodd” towards him, and he arose, hesitatingly. They walked out of the room hand in hand, nor did they break their clasp till they reached the school-room. When people are too weak or too timid to go alone they must be led; yes, sometimes they must be carried! But, led or carried, the point always to keep in mind is this, that the nearly dead are to be made alive again, the lost are to be found.



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And this is the test that must be set over against all systems and institutions that have to deal with unformed characters. The everlasting question must be put again and again, does this, that or the other save, find, restore, or benefit the individuals that come under its influence? Whatever does this, is good; whatever fails to do this is not good. It is fair to ask what the machine does in this regard!

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a trying time for both "Dodd" and Mr. Bright as they walked together, hand in hand, towards the school-house. The trouble was that neither of them could say anything. Mr. Bright felt that words might only mar the matter, and "Dodd" was too busy thinking of what was just before him, to say a word. The master realized the situation, and counted their steps, almost, as they walked along.

Presently he felt "Dodd's" hand working nervously in his own, as if to break their clasp. His heart sank, but, inspired by that same power which had so often come to him in an emergency, he said:

"What is it 'Dodd'?"

"I can't apologize," returned the boy; "I don't know what to say," and his lips trembled as he spoke, while tears welled from his eyes.

How many things there are that interpose between us and our duty! You have found it so in your own experience, haven't you, my friend?

"Say that you did wrong this morning; that you are sorry for what you did; that you apologize for your action, and that you pledge your word of honor to your fellows that you will be a gentleman in school in future," said Mr. Bright.

The nervousness was no longer in the hand, and both "Dodd" and Mr. Bright felt that they were about to win in the strife. They quickened their steps, and were shortly in the school room.

But there was a trial yet, and one that I fear would have been insurmountable for a good many of us, brave men and women though we think we are.

As teacher and pupil entered the room they discovered the three members of the board of education seated upon the platform. One of the number had heard the story told by the boy in the postoffice, and had hastened to make up his mind that "Dodd" should be expelled from school. He hurried to see the other members, and for the first time since Mr. Bright had been in charge of the Emburg school, this educational triumvirate appeared, in a body, in his school room. Their presence was exceedingly annoying, just

at this moment—the very time when they should have kept their hands off. But this is apt to be the way with boards of education in towns of the Emburg stripe.

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I ought to take room, just here, too, to say that the president of the board was really glad that an issue had come, and that they could now rid the school of Parson Weaver's boy. The fact is, this man was deacon in a church of a denomination other than that to which the parson belonged, and the rivalry between the two sects had been brisk, not to say thoroughly bitter and almost mean, for a long time. Anything that would disgrace the family of the pastor of the opposing church would weaken the influence of the church itself, and the same would redound to the glory of the church in which the deacon officiated. I grant that this is a side issue, but side issues are often of more moment, in cases like this, than are main issues.

As "Dodd" and Mr. Bright came in, the deacon rose to meet them. The school was already in order, and "Dodd" went on to his seat. Mr. Bright turned to his own desk to meet the advancing president of the board.

"Can we have a word with you, before school takes up?" said the deacon, drawing down the corners of his mouth and looking particularly pious and exceedingly virtuous, as he thought.

"Wait a few minutes," replied Mr. Bright, crowding past the man in the effort to reach his desk.

"But we prefer to speak to you now," urged the president. "The matter is very pressing."

"I will attend to it presently," answered Mr. Bright, and then, ignoring the dignitary who addressed him, he turned to the school and said:

"Before we begin the regular work of the afternoon, 'Dodd' Weaver has a word to say."

A deep silence fell upon the school at these words. The pupils all seemed to feel that they stood in the presence of a great strife. One naturally holds his breath under such circumstances.

Then "Dodd" stood up in his place, and the latent manhood, that had long lain dormant within him, asserted itself. In a clear though somewhat subdued voice, he said:

"I want to apologize for what I did this morning, and I pledge you my word of honor that hereafter, so long as I am a member of this school, I will behave myself."

His voice trembled somewhat towards the close, but he went bravely through to the end, and then sat down.

Then Mr. Bright bowed his head, and said:

"Our Father in heaven, whose weak and erring children we all are, bless the boy whose confession we have just heard, and help him to keep his word of honor like a man. And



help us all, in all our strifes with evil and with wrong, that we may come out of them better, and stronger, and purer, even as our Master was made perfect through suffering, Amen." That was all!

Perhaps there were dry eyes in the room just then. If so, they did not appear,

After a pause of an instant, Mr. Bright said:

"You may go on with your work," and the pupils turned to their books again.

In five minutes more the hum of the busy school room was as if nothing uncommon had happened, and classes were reciting as usual.



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The deacon and his fellow-members sat upon the platform till recess, listening to recitations, and then left; the president remarking to the teacher as they went out, that they "thought the school was doing very well!"

"Dodd" and Mr. Bright walked home together after school was out.

"Where do you suppose I hid?" asked "Dodd," as they walked along.

"I have no idea," returned Mr. Bright.

"I ran down cellar, and, crawled part way up the airshaft back of the furnace," said "Dodd." And that was the last that was ever said about the affair by either teacher or pupil.

CHAPTER XVII.

For a few months after the event just narrated "Dodd" went to school to Mr. Bright, and during the whole time he deported himself as a good and faithful student should. But with the next meeting of the Conference, Parson Weaver was shifted again, and with him went the hero of this story. (I think "Dodd" may justly be called a hero after so bravely doing what he did in the presence of the school and the board of education, as just told.) Mr. Bright also left Emburg the following year, and so he and "Dodd" drifted apart, as people are all the time doing in this wide, wide world.

The parson had now been so long in the service that he was promoted to a city pastorate, at this turn of the ecclesiastical wheel of fortune, and so it fell out that "Dodd" went to the city to live. A more unfortunate thing could hardly have happened to him.

Yet his lot was such as is common to most boys who go from country to city life. They drift into the town where everything is new, strange and rare to them, just at that age when they are the most curious, the most on fire with new-born and wholly untamed passions, and the least able to resist temptation. The glitter and tinsel of city life have thus a charm for them which falls powerless upon young men who have been familiar with such sights from their youth up, and the ignis fatuus of gilded pleasures lures them into the quagmires of sin before they are aware, where hosts of them sink down to death in the quicksands of a fast life. "Dodd" was not an uncommon boy. When he went to the city, he did as hosts have done before him, and as hosts will continue to do. I suppose God knows why!

Yet the young man did not go all at once into by and forbidden paths. Few folks do. Neither do they come out of such ways by one great leap. There are those who preach a different doctrine.



Either “Dodd” or his father made a fatal mistake, too, on going to town. Neither of them arranged to have the boy get to work, as soon as he entered his new life. The elder thought his son was getting large enough to look out for himself, and “Dodd” waited awhile to look around. So, between the two, the cup of salvation that the boy should have quaffed, fell, and was broken.

“Dodd” drifted about the town for many days, seeing what he could see. His memory of Mr. Bright was still fresh and nourishing, and it often held him from wrong, where his natural inclination would have carried him clear over the line that separates evil from good. An iron, well heated, will hold its heat long after it is taken out of the fire. It grows cold, though, after a while.

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So the boy began to circle about in the outer edge of the whirlpool that sucks in its victims so relentlessly and remorselessly, always, in the city.

I wish I did not have to tell the tale of still another descent into Avernus, of this boy of the checkered career. But I have started out to paint the picture exactly as it is, and I dip my brush in black again with a sigh. You have to do the same thing in telling, even to yourself, the story of yourself, don't you, my reader whose blood has iron in it, and whose pulses beat fast? I am not writing of a sluggish-veined person, nor for people of that complexion, good people though they are.

"Dodd" had never been to the theatre. He was curious to go, and now that he came within reach of this class of amusements he was all anxiety to gratify his desire in this direction. He said nothing to his father or his mother about this, however. Indeed, it would have availed little if he had; that is, as these amusements were always looked upon by the parson and his good wife. They would have contented themselves by anathematizing the play-house and forbidding "Dodd" attendance at such places; probably ending up their dissertation by declaring to the boy that it was his "natural heart, which is enmity against God," that led him to desire such sinful diversions.

So, one night "Dodd" went alone to the theatre.

Truth to tell, and to his credit be it said, he chose a reputable place for his maiden visit. The play was "London Assurance." It was well done, and the boy, who really possessed much innate dramatic genius, enjoyed the performance greatly. He felt ill at ease, however, while in the place, and went very quietly to bed when he reached home. Indeed, as he lay awake for an hour or two after retiring, unable to sleep because of the vivid visions of the play that his highly wrought imagination and memory represented to his mental eyes, he resolved that he would never again go to see a play, but would stop with a single taste of the pleasure. Having made this resolve, he went to sleep content. How easy it is to make good resolutions, and to be content and satisfied in them when out of the reach of temptation.

But the next day, as he went about the city, he saw "Othello" billed for that evening. He was restless in an instant. He talked the matter over with himself something as follows, considering whether or not he should go and see the "Moor of Venice:"

"'Dodd,' you are a fellow who cannot rest contented until you have seen what there is to see in the line of plays upon the stage. There are two kinds of dramas—tragedy and comedy. You saw comedy last night. Go and see tragedy tonight and that will cover the whole field. You will then have seen it all and will be satisfied."

So that night, Tuesday evening, he went to see the tragedy. Don't ask about his resolve of the night before; just ask how you yourself have done scores of times, under similar

circumstances, when you have sworn off, but when the trial came, have concluded not to count that time!



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“Dodd” enjoyed “Othello” as much as he did “London Assurance.” But that night he pledged himself again not to pursue the pleasure further, as he had now seen it all. The next day, however, he found “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” billed. Now even “ministers went to see this play,” the bills said. “Dodd” saw “Topsy,” “Eva,” “Marks,” and “Uncle Tom” that night!

Thursday he found “Ten Nights in a Bar-Room” billed. He knew the story, and was anxious to see the characters in it upon the stage. He saw them.

Friday, his friend John Oller, from Emburg, was in town, and “Dodd” confessed to him that he had been four times to the theatre. John said:

“Well, ‘Dodd,’ I never went, and I want to go. Come and go with me to-night.” The boys followed “Marble Heart” through to the end that evening.

Saturday they went down town together, and “Zoe, the Octoroon Girl,” was on for matinee. They took it in. Saturday night was set for “Hamlet,” and that melancholy Dane died in their presence before the city clock rang in the Sabbath morning.

Here is the story for you, good people. Seven times to the theatre in one week, for a boy who had been to such a place but seven times in all his life. It is the way of human nature. I suppose that when Adam and Eve really got to eating the forbidden apples, they ate, and ate, and ate. At least, this quality has been transmitted to their descendants.

Now, the bad thing about this affair, was not that “Dodd” had been to the play-house seven times, but that he had been there clandestinely. When a person begins to sneak about anything, he is on the down grade to perdition, and the brakes are all off.

The result of this excess of “Dodd’s” was a still further dissipation. It is usually that way. The theatre soon had a fascination for him that he could not withstand. He went whenever he could get money enough to buy a ticket. After awhile he began to frequent places of amusement of a low grade. The “variety” performance attracted him, and he became an habitual attendant at such places. Here he formed acquaintances and made friendships that were not to his advantage, to say the best thing that can be said of them; and with these companions he drifted down the descent he had started on so unthinkingly. Here, also, he learned to drink, a vice which he had heretofore escaped.

So he kept on, down, and down. He needed money for the gratification of his desires, and to procure it he began to venture a little now and then on some gaming device. He was cautious and shrewd, and his early “investments” were fortunate. He won small sums at various times, and was elated with his success. He loitered much about the “bucket shop,” and now and then took a “deal” as some friend gave him a “pointer.” He was fortunate here, also, and even though so young, his vivid imagination began to

picture the fortune he should some day make in this way. He suddenly dropped his country ways, dressed flashily, and took on, with marvelous aptitude, the customs and manners of metropolitan life.



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And still he kept his own counsel. The great gulf fixed between himself and his parents grew wider and wider. It was through this gap that the devils entered in and took possession of his soul.

The Book has it that wicked men wax worse and worse. It was so with “Dodd.” His love of liquor grew upon him with wonderful rapidity. He began drinking to excess, his eyes became bloodshot, his hand became unsteady, and his step halted.

But the better part of the young man rebelled at this retrogression. He passed many an agonizing night alone, pledging himself to stop; hoping, longing for his true life of a few months before, and cursing his present condition. The “Other Fellow” was faithful to him, too, calling loudly to him to turn about, to go the other way, to “be converted.”

But as is usual in such cases, after a night of such agony he would take one drink in the morning, just to steady his nerves down, and one being taken, the rest followed in course through the day, as they had done the day before, and the day before that. He was drunk a good share of the time.

It happened one night as he was going home, or rather as he was trying to go home, being in a very mellow condition, that is, he “stackered whiles”—that he was accosted by a polite and pleasant voiced, young gentleman, who took his arm kindly and walked with him several blocks. As they walked he told “Dodd” that he was on his way to attend a revival meeting, and asked him to go along. Just then “Dodd” “took a bicker,” and in the lurch, he knocked a book out from under the arm of his companion. It was a Bagster Bible!

But the two went on together to the meeting. They went well to the front of the congregation, the guide steadying the wavering steps of the man he was leading. “Dodd” sat down, and after a brief rest began to come to himself, and to realize where he was. He hung his head for shame, and wept as the service progressed. He was weak, unnerved, a wreck. He looked at his shattered self, and groaned in spirit over the ruin that he saw. He longed to break away from the terrible bondage that held him in its thrall. He cried out in spirit, in an agony, for help in this time of his great need.

The sermon came on. The minister seemed to “Dodd” to be talking straight at him. (Indeed, the gentleman had observed his entrance to the church, and frequently had him in mind as he made this point or that, in his remarks.) Under the enthusiastic eloquence of this man “Dodd’s” anguish increased till he was almost in a frenzy. It was when he had reached this point that the speaker uttered the following words:



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“Young man, whoever you are, no matter how cursed with sin or polluted with iniquity you may be, put your trust in Jesus and all your sins will be blotted out. Are you a drunkard, with an appetite for drink that is gnawing your life away? Throw yourself into the arms of Jesus, and he will take away your appetite for strong drink and give you strength to overcome all the temptations of your former life. Let the light of Jesus once shine into your soul, and neither cloud nor storm shall ever enter there again. All will be brightness and purity. Old things will have passed away, and all things will become new. I offer you this salvation to-night, O, weary, sin-sick soul. Take it, I beseech of you. Let the Sun of Righteousness break in upon you at this hour, and never will you be in darkness again.”

The man glowed under his theme, and his audience warmed with his impulsive appeal. “Dodd’s” soul grew hopeful. All these things promised were the very things he was longing for. He had pledged himself time and again to stop wrong doing, and had broken his word in every case. He hated himself for this, and he stretched out his hands for salvation from his miserable estate. Here, help was offered.

Why should he not take it?

And then the great congregation arose with a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, and all sang together, with an effect that must be seen to be realized, “Just as I am, without one plea,” *etc.*

You know what followed, do you not, ladies and gentlemen? “Dodd” Weaver “indulged a hope” before he left the church.

CHAPTER XVIII.

If it were not for clouds and storms what a sunshiny world this would be, to be sure! But there are clouds and storms everywhere that I know anything about. There are legends of lands of perpetual sunshine, I know. I have visited such climates. I have found clouds and storms there also. The natives have told me that such were exceptional. Doubtless they were, but the clouds shut out the sunshine there, just the same as they do elsewhere, and I took a terrible cold once, one that came near being the death of me, from going off without an umbrella, in a country where I was positively assured it never rained—at least, not at that season of the year.

So the result of all this is that I have learned to distrust the tales of eternal fair weather in any spot on all this green earth, no matter how strongly they may be backed up by the affidavits of good, well-meaning, and otherwise truthful men and women.

It is so easy to state an opinion that is not based upon a sufficient number of facts to warrant its assertion.

What has happened to me in the matter of sunshine and storm, in this weather-beaten world, happened to “Dodd” Weaver in his religious experience.



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He started out boldly in his new life. He hoped and trusted that he had entered into a physical, mental, and spiritual condition in which all that he had been he might not be; all that he should be he might become; all that he ought to hate he would hate; all that he ought to love he would cherish. He longed to believe and he tried to believe, that he had entered into that land of perpetual sunshine which had been promised him by the minister and his friend. He hoped, and really expected, to dwell there henceforth, beyond the reach of clouds, and storms, and tornadoes.

But everybody knows that there were no good grounds for his expecting such continuous, perpetual, and unbroken fair weather in his formerly storm-swept sky. The question strikes one, then, why should he have been promised this, and why led to hope for and expect it? See what came of this too generous inducement held out to an anxious soul.

For some days, while “Dodd’s” newly developed fervor ran high, he lived in the blessed light. For this light is blessed, and it shines with a divine warmth into the souls that are open to receive it. The fact remains, however, that clouds and storms—but I need not trace the figure further; you all know about it. So, almost before the young man was aware, he was under a cloud. It happened on this wise:

For many weeks he had been drinking freely and both smoking and chewing tobacco to excess. The first thing he did, after his hopeful conversion, was to quit all these stimulants at once. His intense religious zeal held him up for a few days, but at the end of that time his strongly formed appetites assorted themselves. He could scarcely sleep, so hungry was he for a chew, or a smoke, or a drink! These were the weaknesses that had driven him to seek for help through the consolations of religion. He had been promised this help, and in no equivocal terms either. He had been told, even from the pulpit, that if he would put his trust in the Lord all these temptations would depart from him. He had done this as well as he knew how to. He had at least made an honest effort in that direction. His lips were parched for liquor, and his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth with a longing for a quid of fine-cut.

And so the clouds overspread “Dodd’s” sky—clouds of doubt and distrust, out of whose lurid depths leap lightnings that blast like death!

He doubted, first of all, the honesty of the men who had promised him more than he found himself the possessor of. We always begin by doubting some fellow-mortal. As the process progresses, it leads us, ultimately, to doubt God.

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But these men had meant to be honest—there is no doubt about that. They had told the young sinner of that which they believed would help him. They knew, of course, that he would have trouble with his old habits, after a while. Perhaps they hoped that he would get over them somehow. Perhaps they did not think very much about it. In either case, they said nothing. The patient was suffering. They gave him medicine that would afford him the quickest relief, without regard to the permanency of the apparent cure. What an amount of such doctoring has been done through the ages. Stand up in your graves, you armies of dead men that have thus been dealt with, and nod a “yes” with your grinning skulls!

The clouds grew thicker. “Dodd” went to his newly formed friends and told them frankly of his condition. The minister advised him to be much alone and in prayer. The young man told him that there was no need of his suffering from such appetites, because, he himself—the young man aforesaid—could keep from such evil practices easily enough, and if he could, “Dodd” could.

Certainly!

“Dodd” acted on the advice of the minister, and went home and shut himself up alone in his room to pray. He tried, but the words seemed to go no higher than his head. Did you ever think that when the Master received his severest temptation it was when he was alone? Let a man who is tempted beware of trying to win a victory shut up in a room by himself. The devil has him in a hand to hand fight, in such case, and thereby increases several fold the probability of winning the battle.

“Dodd” tried to pray. He strove alone, as in an agony. He besought the power that he had been told to invoke, to take from him the horrible thirst that was gnawing within him. He wept, he pleaded, he begged.

The gnawing kept on.

There was once one who prayed “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” It did not pass.

Then, indeed, the clouds did grow dark. “Dodd’s” doubts left the earth, and reached even to heaven. He not only doubted the men who had led him to the promised relief; he doubted even the power of religious experience to save a tempted man, and the reality of religion itself.

From this point it is but a step to the supreme doubt of all!

If only the boy had expected a storm, he might have weathered it. If, in this hour of his trial, some faithful soul could have lived with him, day and night, and never left him for



an hour, till the storm was over, he might have come through. Neither of these things happened, however.

He struggled on for several days. He gave up finally. He came home one night drunk, almost to the verge of insanity. There had been a cyclone in the land of promised eternal sunshine. "Dodd" Weaver's bark lay upon its beam ends, and the jagged rocks of infidelity pierced its battered frame.



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You have seen such wrecks by the score, have you not, good friends?

CHAPTER XIX.

And now the victim of these adventures was in a worse case than ever. Up to this time neither religion nor its lack had played any particular part in his being. He had been a bad boy, truly, but in his former low estate he had thought little of anything that pertained to another world, or to the future in this. Now he disbelieved all things—man, immortality, heaven, God.

It is a condition which few fail to experience, in a greater or less degree.

I wonder if it is necessary that I pause here, just an instant, and interlard a remark regarding the scene through which I have just traced “Dodd” Weaver. I do so, in any event.

In what has been said, I would not have it understood that I rail at, or deride, or impeach the honesty of the men who tried to help “Dodd” out of the sad condition into which he had fallen. Neither would I underrate the value of religion, in such experiences, nor impugn its power to save sinking souls from death. But I cannot help reiterating the fact that multitudes of young men have drifted on to the rocks of infidelity as “Dodd” did, because they have been promised too much by religious enthusiasts.

There is such an experience as genuine religion, and it is the most blessed estate that a soul can aspire to. There is a place for prayer in the divine economy of God’s providence. But neither religion nor prayer can help a soul that is sick unto death with the malady of doubt. “Dodd” was thus circumstanced. It was the zealous overstatements, the ultra promises, the unwarranted inducements held out to him, which, unrealized, threw him into this condition.

And then doubt is such a breeder of its own kind! As a single bacterium will, in a few hours, under favorable conditions, develop millions like unto itself, and poison a man’s blood to the last drop, even so doubt grows in the soul, when once its germs are planted there, and its noxious growth blights all one’s being, bringing death hurriedly, if its course is not stayed.

“Dodd” Weaver was in a state of mind highly favorable to the development of unbelief. The false promises of his well-meaning friends sowed the seed of distrust within him, and the crop was not long in ripening.

The fact is, truth is so loyal to itself that it will not suffer distortion, even for the apparent purpose of doing God service. It can no more be swerved than God can!

If that point is clear, I go on with this narrative.



But “Dodd” had seen enough to understand that if he expected to live long he must stop short of absolute debauchery, and he rallied somewhat from the first awful overthrow that came when the clouds burst over his head. He drank more moderately, and was seldom drunk. He returned to his old haunts, however, and kept on in the main as he had before. The only difference was that he loitered in a way now where before he had rushed along at top speed.



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He began, too, to look about for something to do. He was anxious for a job in a store or an office, where he could wear good clothes and not have to work hard at manual labor.

This is a common desire of country boys who go to town to live.

The trouble was, however, that he knew next to nothing of business of any kind. Was this the fault of his education, thus far? His school education, I mean. I ask the question.

He finally concluded to take a course in a school that advertised to fit a person to engage in any business whatever in three months, without regard to age, sex, or previous condition. He went to this school.

I have no quarrel with institutions that make a business of fitting young men and women to engage in commercial pursuits. I know of many excellent institutions of this kind. But I nevertheless submit the record of "Dodd" Weaver in his connection with this college, so called.

The man at the head of the institution was a brisk, nervous sort of person, a shrewd fellow, and given to much flourishing with a pen, which was to him much mightier than any sword. He could whirl off a scroll-winged eagle on a blank sheet of foolscap, in a twinkling—a royal bird, with a banner in his beak, on which was inscribed "Go to ——— college," and which the king of birds was bearing towards the sun for advertising purposes. He could also add a column of figures with wonderful rapidity, and occasional accuracy! He was a believer in lightning methods and processes everywhere. His own education had been wrought out on that plan. He was seeking a fortune by the same route. He drew crowds of boys into his school. It was through them he made his money.

"Dodd" had much skill with a pen, as will be remembered by his sketching Mr. Bright's face on the board one afternoon. He took to the practice in writing with some alacrity, but for the rest of the work he soon did as the others did—studied little, and in lieu of a recitation listened to a long and disjointed talk by "the professor." He was held to no account for his work, and whether it was right or wrong made little difference. He found that his teacher would profess to know things of which he knew he was ignorant, and, in a word, that there was an air of shoddy, not to say dishonesty, about the whole institution.

This did not trouble him greatly, however. It was only in keeping with what he conceived he had finally discovered the whole world to be—a gigantic sham—and he mentally remarked to himself "I told you so," and drew an unusually large spread-eagle upon a fresh sheet of foolscap.



He stayed three months in the school and then graduated. His diploma was handed to him by a venerable gentleman who delighted in the appellation "president of the board," while an orchestra, composed of young ladies of the school, all of whom were learning to play the violin, by the "short method," discoursed most execrable music from an improvised platform that had been built in the church, for the occasion. Six other pupils came through with "Dodd," and their going out was used as an advertisement to lure still another half dozen to fill the places left vacant.



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The young man came forth from this experience more the slave of doubt and distrust than ever.

But the worst feature of all was that this infidelity in “Dodd’s” soul was poisoning his whole life. Honor was to him now only an empty name, but policy was a quality to be held in high esteem. Truth was to be used if convenient, but if a lie would serve a better purpose for the moment, it would be brought into service without hesitation or scruple. Fortune was his goddess, if he did deference to any unseen power; tricks and chicanery were to him helps to rapid and boundless wealth. “Let the sharpest win, and may the devil take the hindermost,” these were the tenets in his creed, if he had a creed.

Armed with such ideas of life, “Dodd” Weaver set out to battle with the world. He had also his diploma!

CHAPTER XX.

In the course of a few weeks “Dodd” secured a clerkship that was much to his mind. It was, however, one greatly in advance of his ability to manage, with his present attainments. If he had believed that fidelity, honesty, and attention to business were the prime factors of success, he might have mastered the situation, perhaps. He did not so believe. On the contrary, he held that the more he could shirk and get out of, and still draw his salary, the sharper he was. He acted in accordance with his belief. People usually do!

But business is business. “Dodd” found his employer an exact man—one who required service by the card. This the young man could not, or rather would not render. He blundered in his work on more than one occasion, and resorted to tricks to bolster up his carelessness or inefficiency. The result was that after a few weeks’ service he was discharged. He was chagrined, mortified, angry. But he “cheeked it through,” as the young men of his class would say. It is bad business, this “cheeking.”

He loafed about once more, as formerly. He took a “deal” on the curbstone occasionally, or now and then ventured a few pieces of silver upon the black or red. He was back in the old notch.

For more than two years “Dodd” led this reckless, wasteful existence. He was of age now, and his father had felt it his duty to tell him that he must shift for himself. Mrs. Weaver mildly protested, but the Weaver family was large, and though the Elder commanded a fair salary, it cost money to live, and every mouth to be fed counted one.

So “Dodd” took a room down town, and then if the devil went to sleep, sure of his victim, you do not wonder, do you?



Yet the great majority of young men in large cities room down town.

Details of degradation are always revolting. I will not trouble you with what happened during these years of exile of this young man. His story is like that of thousands in like case. His evil habits grew upon him, and held him tighter and tighter in their thrall. Still, he dressed well, went much into fashionable society, and saw much of life. He was one of the boys, and he held his place among them by hook or by crook. He was never brought to face a court on criminal charges. He may never have been guilty of such acts. If not, is it not remarkable?

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It was when “Dodd” was well down the steep he was descending that he chanced, one day, to meet his old teacher, Mr. Bright. More than three years had passed since they had seen each other, and each had changed with time. Mr. Bright had grown not a little gray, and his devotion to his profession had caused the marks of his craft to become deeply seamed in his face.

His former pupil we have followed, day after day, and we know well enough what he looked like.

The two passed a hearty greeting, “Dodd’s” disbelief in mankind leaving him for the moment, consumed by the positive integrity of the man whose hand he held. Each took a searching look at the other, with mental reservations in each case, as thus:

“Dodd”: “Gray—hard worker—not up to snuff—square as a brick.”

Mr. Bright: “Flashy clothes—shambling gait—a look in the eye that is not direct.”

These are the things they thought. They spoke of other matters.

Mutual inquiry led to the disclosure of the whereabouts of each, and what each was doing though in this last item “Dodd” drew largely upon his imagination, informing his teacher very indefinitely as to the calling in which he was engaged. Mr. Bright had moved to the city, having been called to take charge of an important educational institution located within its corporate limits. He had a home of his own, and said he should be glad to see “Dodd” there.

“Dodd” said he would call on Mr. Bright. He did so.

And now began one of the most perplexing series of circumstances that I have yet had occasion to record. “Dodd” came to see his teacher, who was really anxious to have a sober talk with him, and the two spent an hour together. When they separated, “Dodd” had five dollars of Mr. Bright’s money in his pocket! He had “struck” his former preceptor for a loan. I do not say that he had deliberately stolen this money. Perhaps he meant to pay it back sometime; but he had long been used to borrowing, and the impulse was almost irresistible to borrow whenever he came where he could. Sometimes he returned these loans; oftener he did not. His sense of right and wrong in such matters was not very keen at this time.

And so he began to sponge off Mr. Bright. He came to visit him frequently, and often left with a dollar or two extra after the interview.

At first Mr. Bright did not fully realize the depth of degradation which “Dodd” had reached. He made these small loans as he would have given money to a son of his own, had he had one. He talked with the young man, and once or twice hinted that he



feared all was not as it should be. But “Dodd” evaded an issue, and so the days went by.

But one evening these two people met, and the truth stood revealed. “Dodd” was drunk.

Mr. Bright knew a good deal about human nature, but he had had no experience with the peculiar vice of drunkenness. His heart went out towards “Dodd,” and, taking the boy’s arm in his own, he led him to his house. He would care for the prodigal with his own hand, and restore him if possible.

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So he gave him the best chamber, and bathed his head, and watched with him till far into the night. The next morning they talked it all over. "Dodd" was penitent, even to the extent of tears and bitter weeping. He pledged Mr. Bright that this should be the last time; that he would reform now. He confessed that for years he had been a miserable sinner in the matter of drink, but declared that now he would break off. In a word, he did the usual thing on such occasions.

Mr. Bright heard his pledges with a swelling heart and a thankful soul. He fondly hoped that he might save the young man yet. You may have had like hopes under similar circumstances, my gentle reader.

The scene ended with "Dodd's" leaving Mr. Bright's house in the afternoon of the following day, accompanied by any amount of good advice and even prayers for his future good behavior. He took with him also a ten dollar note which he had borrowed from his benefactor, just to get a start with.

CHAPTER XXI.

The wise Mr. George has remarked that "by no possibility can one really use up his living in advance." "That is," he explains, "it is as impossible to anticipate the products of one's labor, and live them up before they are earned as it is to eat to-day the egg that is to be laid to-morrow."

I do not dispute the egg part of this proposition, but I must protest that if it is impossible for a man to anticipate the products of his own labor, and to live them up in advance, it is quite possible for him to anticipate the products of what some one else has already earned, and to live them up most effectually. The only impossibility in the premise is for this some one else ever to get his own again.

This statement should pass for an axiom, since it needs no proof. You have had dollars of your own that have been appropriated thus, have you not?

And of all habits that tend to demoralize a man, this one of dead-beat borrowing is the worst. It will sap the last germ of manhood out of a soul sooner than anything else I know of. It is one of the meanest vices in society, and one of the most prevalent among a certain class of young men.

I will not say that every person who asks to borrow money from a friend without offering security is a dead-beat. Such a statement might be somewhat wide of the mark. I only assert that I have always found it so!

It was not without misgivings that Mr. Bright advanced "Dodd" the ten dollars spoken of in the last chapter. But alas, poor man, he was yet blind to the fact that whoever thus



assists a person in the condition in which “Dodd” now was does that person more harm than good.

There is any amount of light nonsense current on this point. See how the method worked in this case.

“Dodd” really meant to do better when he left Mr. Bright’s. People in this condition always do mean to do better. He had made pledges to his friend and he hoped to keep them. It takes more than hoping to succeed in such cases, however.



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I would by no means intimate that when a drunkard signs the pledge he is always lying and does not mean to keep it. On the contrary, I think the great bulk of those who thus write their names with a trembling hand, do, at the time of writing, really mean to keep all that they promise. But as a rule they change their minds when the trial comes, and "Don't count this time!"

This statement is a sad one, but it is terribly true. There is a reason for it.

And the chief reason is that these "unfortunates," as they are called, get into the habit of being carried when they should walk on their own feet. Your drunkard is always expecting sympathy, and help, and upholding. He leans down on you; he lies down on you. He pleads misfortune, disease, or something, and makes himself out a poor, weak victim of circumstances. He asks for help, and of a kind that most suits himself. He should not get such.

Help he should have, but of a kind that will make him help himself. Because, when such a person is merely helped by another he becomes helpless himself, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

It was so with "Dodd" Weaver. The kind offices of Mr. Bright had really wrought him harm. He had thus been able to get money for some weeks, and as he lived only for the moment now, this "accommodation" kept him in his low mode of life.

It is the study of a lifetime how to deal justly with people in his condition. If you doubt my word, try it. You will be convinced.

"Dodd" did intend to do better after leaving Mr. Bright's. But he went right down town and took a drink to brace up on. This also is common.

It was two days after this that the young man came once more to appeal to his benefactor. He was in trouble again, and according to the law I have just noted he came for relief to the source from which help had before come. There is no record of how long a man can thus abuse the kindness of a friend. Sometimes death alone ends the scene.

But Mr. Bright was not a man to be trifled with when once he had taken in the situation. He heard "Dodd's" story with disgust. The young man had been drunk again, and in a brawl had struck an antagonist with brass knuckles. For this offense he said the police were in search of him, and would probably find him. He asked Mr. Bright to let him have money to pay his fine, and so keep him out of jail. He could not bear that disgrace, he declared.

But Mr. Bright was unmoved. He sat looking at "Dodd" for a moment in silence, and then said:



“Not one cent, young man!”

“But I shall have to go to jail,” faltered “Dodd,” in a broken voice.

“You may go there, and stay there, for all of me,” exclaimed Mr. Bright, in a burst of righteous indignation, as all the past years rose up before him and the memory of them floated before his vision. “I have given you the last cent that I ever shall. You deserve to go to jail, and it is probably the best thing that can happen that you should.”



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“But my mother!” pleaded “Dodd.”

“It is a fine time for you to plead your mother now, isn’t it?” replied Mr. Bright. “How much you have considered her and her feelings in the last few years,” he continued. “When you have been drunk on the streets; when you have abused the hospitality of a gentleman; when you have lied to me and obtained money from me under false pretenses, then was the time for you to plead for sparing your mother. You did nothing toward that then. I will not help you now.”

Mr. Bright spoke firmly, and in a straight-forward tone. “Dodd” shrank under his words as though they were lashes on a bare back. But once more he pleaded:

“I don’t know who will help me if you don’t, and some one must help me, for I can’t suffer this disgrace.”

“Well, no one shall help you if I can prevent it,” replied Mr. Bright. “What you need, young man, is to help yourself. If you haven’t virtue enough left to do this, you might as well go to jail, or into your grave—it doesn’t make much difference which. You are of no manner of use in this world as you are now. You are worse than useless, you are a dead load to your friends, your acquaintances, and society.”

Mr. Bright laid on tremendously, now that he had begun, and “Dodd” writhed under his strokes. The last flagellation left them both out of breath, and there was silence in the room for some minutes. It was Mr. Bright who spoke first:

“‘Dodd,’ my boy,” he said, “I need not tell you how it pains me thus to talk to you, you for whom I have striven so hard, and from whom I had hoped for so much. You are naturally bright, but you are fickle by nature, and, so far, you have lacked the manhood to correct this fault. You are the only one who can ever do this. So one else can do it for you. If ever you stand up like a man, it must be on your own feet. I tried to teach you this long ago. I think I failed. At least it seems so now. You did stand for a while though, my boy, and I would to God you could do so again.”

“Dodd” sat in his chair shedding bitter tears; he began feebly:

“Help me this once,” he begged, “and before God, I promise you I will never give you cause to be ashamed of me again.”

“Keep your pledges to yourself,” returned Mr. Bright. “I want none of them. They are of no value whatever. You have come to a time now when you must do something more than pledge, though there was a time when your word was good, and I would have taken it, unquestioned, on any occasion. But that time is past. It may come again, but the chances are against it.”



“You are making me out a monster,” interlarded “Dodd,” with an attempt at injured innocence in his voice.

“And that is just what you are,” said Mr. Bright. “You have grown out of all semblance to the true type of a man. You are wicked, deceitful, weak, vacillating, and untruthful. So long as you retain these qualities there is no hope for you. Perhaps a punishment of a term in jail may serve to bring you to a sense of your condition. If it will, it is the best thing that can happen to you. Anyhow, I am willing to see it tried.”



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“So you will not give me money to pay my fine?” groaned “Dodd.”

“Not one cent,” again answered Mr. Bright, as he showed the young man to the door.

CHAPTER XXII.

As they walked through the hall, however, “Dodd” dragging himself along reluctantly, a kindlier mood took possession of the school teacher. He paused, and, turning to the young man, said:

“See here. I have a plan that has just come to me, and I will give you the benefit of it. I am convinced that you will never be any better than you are now if you continue to live in this city. Your companions are here, and so are your old haunts and associations. I will do this for you. I will go to your room with you and help you get together whatever clothing you have. Then I will go with you to the depot, and will buy you a ticket to the farthest point from here that ten dollars will take you to. I don’t want to know where that place is. I don’t want ever to see you or hear from you again, unless you are a different man. I want to give you one more chance to stand on your own feet. That is all I have to say. You may take it or leave it, as you will.”

“Dodd” hesitated a minute, and then said:

“I’ll take it.”

“Very well,” replied Mr. Bright, putting on his coat and hat; “I am ready, and will go with you now.”

“I might say good-bye to your family,” said “Dodd”; “they have been so kind to me.”

“I prefer that you should not,” replied Mr. Bright. “I have no desire to have you know them further. You have forfeited all claim to their respect, or regard, or courtesy even, and if you never redeem yourself, I do not care to have them see you again!”

It was a terrible thrust. It was like a sword in the bones to the recipient of the cutting words. “Dodd” reeled under them as though smitten with a veritable blade of steel.

But they were doing good work for this abnormal young man. These cuts, made by the sword of truth, when wielded by the hands of Mr. Bright, laid open to “Dodd” Weaver the secret recesses of his own soul, and he saw there such foulness as he had never before suspected. Not one word had his former teacher said to him which was not true. His final refusal to permit him to say adieu to his family, “Dodd” felt was just and strictly in accordance with his deserts. This hurled him down to where he belonged, and made him realize what a wretch, what an outcast, he was.



Don't you suppose, good people, that it would be a great deal better, all around, if we each one got what we really deserve just when we deserve it? But we don't; and so we flatter ourselves that because the desert does not come to-day it will not come to-morrow, not next day, and we hope it will never come. And so we keep on in our wrong ways. The book has it: "Because sentence against a wicked work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil." This was written a long time ago, but it is as true to-day as it ever was. I think that even the most confirmed skeptic would admit the truth of the passage.



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So Mr. Bright went with “Dodd” to his lodgings, helped him pack, and got him to the depot. They escaped the police. This was not a hard thing to do. It seldom is, if one has really been doing wrong.

“Here is ten dollars,” said Mr. Bright to the ticket agent. “I want you to give me a ticket to a point the farthest away from the city possible for that money.”

“What line?” inquired the somewhat surprised official.

“I don’t know, and I don’t want to know,” returned Mr. Bright. “I want a ticket such as I have described, and I want you to tell me which train to take to reach the destination, though I don’t want to know what the destination is.”

The agent looked puzzled for a minute, but as the bill was a good one, and other passengers were waiting, he picked out a ticket, stamped it, and thrust it out under the glass, with the remark:

“Take the train that leaves from the other side of the middle platform.”

Mr. Bright folded the ticket without looking at it, and taking “Dodd’s” arm, started for the train, which was already waiting. As they went along, “Dodd” said:

“Let me see where I am going to, please!”

“Not now,” returned his guide, and they boarded the train.

The conductor came in presently, and to him Mr. Bright spoke in a subdued tone.

“Here is a ticket for this young man,” he said. “I want you to take it, and see to it that he reaches the destination that this piece of paper calls for. Don’t ask me what that is. Don’t let me know. But take the ticket, and do as I ask.”

The official looked wise for a minute, then took the ticket and passed on.

“Dodd” and Mr. Bright sat in the same seat in the car till the train was ready to go. Not much was said; for the time of words was not then. But just as the bell rang for leaving, the elder man took the hand of the younger, and clasped it almost passionately. The eyes of the two met. “Dodd” remembered the day when they walked to school together, hand in hand.

“My boy,” whispered Mr. Bright, “if ever the time comes when you can stand on your own feet, let me hear from you and know of your success; but if you continue in the old way, let the world be as a grave to you, so far as I am concerned; and never let me hear from you again. But,” he added, as he turned away, “I faintly trust the larger hope.” And



without another word he left the car. He went directly home. It was many a year before he referred again to that day.

There was a hissing of pent-up air as the engineer tried the brakes before moving out his train, then a slow motion of starting, then away and away.

“Dodd” Weaver sank back in his seat, and pulled his cap over his eyes. He did not cast one lingering look behind. Indeed, what had he to care for, in all that great city?

“I faintly trust the larger hope,” repeated “Dodd” to himself, as the train rushed along. He remembered the day when they had read the lines in the reading class of Mr. Bright’s school.



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CHAPTER XXIII.

On a Christmas morning, ten years after the scenes recounted in the last chapter, Mr. Bright was surprised to receive a letter addressed in "Dodd's" well known characters. He broke the seal without comment, wondering what story of destiny he held in his hand. A thrill of joy suffused him as, on unfolding the sheets of the bulky manuscript, a bill of exchange fell upon the table. It was the most favorable sign he could have desired. It augured all that followed.

[Remark (as reads the foot-note in Scott's bible): The first sign of regeneration in a man who has been a dead-beat is the payment of his honest debts.]

Mr. Bright opened the letter and read as follows:

New York City, December 22, 188—

Mr. Charles Bright.

Dear Sir:—Enclosed I hand you exchange, payable to your order, to the amount of \$237.45, the sum due you for money advanced to me years ago, with legal interest on the same. Respectfully, D. W. Weaver.

This was the first page of the epistle, brief, business-like, and to the point. But having thus entered a voucher for his manhood, and, as it were, won the right to speak further, on the second page there was a continuation as follows:

Beloved Teacher:

What precedes will tell you where I am. You told me the last time I saw you, that if ever I redeemed myself, you would be glad to hear from me. I believe you, and hence I write.

I can never commit to paper all that I have to say to you; words spoken face to face can only tell what is in my heart; but neither the written nor the spoken word can convey to you a tithe of the gratitude I feel for all that you have done for me.

As I look back I can hardly understand how you ever bore with me as you did, with me who abused you to such unbounded lengths. Nevertheless, the more I fail to understand this, the more thankful I am to you.

I am sure you will care to know something of my career in the past ten years, and I briefly relate the principal items of interest.



And first, let me say, I have entirely quit the use of liquor. From the day when you left me in the car, limp as a whipped dog, to this very hour, I have not tasted intoxicating drink. I mention this first, because a breaking away from that habit was the first step toward a better life. Had I not stopped there, short off, I know that all hope of further reformation would have been vain. A drunkard has nothing, absolutely nothing, on which to build a new life, so long as he continues to be a slave to drink.

But with the abandonment of this vice, I began to change my other habits, and by degrees I have gained a mastery over them. It has been a long, hard fight, and I am well aware that there are battles yet to be waged; but I have reached the point where I have ceased to be afraid of myself—of my baser nature. As Cardinal Wolsey says to Cromwell: “I know myself now.” You remember we used to read the lines out of the old reader when I went to school to you at Emburg.



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I cannot tell you how much I thank God for the help that has come to me. But I am forced to say that you are entitled to almost equal thanks. And, indeed, as I review the past, I know that without you, even the God of heaven could not have received the gratitude I now give Him. For you were the means by which I was lead to a point where I could receive His aid. It is you, therefore, my benefactor and my noble friend, whom I have first to thank. I say this in simple justice to you, who bore with me so long and patiently, and who remained faithful to me when it seemed to me you were terribly unjust and cruel.

But to my history:

When you left me on the train, I cared next to nothing as to what became of me. I don't believe I should have lifted a finger to save my life had the train been wrecked. I would not deliberately take my own life, but if it could have been taken from me I should have given it up without a regret. I cared not for man, and as for God, I neither feared such a being nor believed in his existence.

But your words stung me like burning lances. They were true, every one of them, and the "Other Fellow"—indeed, I have not forgotten him, nor has he forgotten me, and for this I have to thank you, also,—took them up and kept saying them over to me, as I rolled along to my destination, which as yet I did not know. I tried to be rid of them, but it was useless. The truth had been told me for once in my life, and I saw myself as I really was. It was not an inviting sight, but it is one I should have been forced to see, long before.

I reached the end of my journey, a place which, as you would not know its name then, it is perhaps well that you should never know. I had no money, and I was hungry. Ordinarily, I should have struck some one for a loan, but your words rang in my ears, and I would not do it. I applied for a job of work that I knew I could do. I got it, and did it as well as I knew how to. I hide my face even now, for very shame, as I confess that it was the first time, for years, that I had done as well as I knew how to do. I got my pay, and ate an honestly earned, though frugal supper, that evening. I think you will understand me when I tell you that I went to bed happier that night than I had before for a long time. The "Other Fellow" said, "It is all right, Old Boy! Stand by!" I did "stand by," and I have been standing by ever since.

And first, as I learn you are still teaching, I want to ask you never to give up your boys, nor your way of managing them. You can never know how much you did for me in the Emburg school. Those old days come back to me almost every hour, and their essence is a part of my being. I know that you must have thought, ten thousand times, that all your work was lost, and counted for nothing. You had every reason in the world for thinking so, and doubtless did think so. But I want to beg of you now,



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in the name of the new life that has eventually come to me through the medium of those old school days, not to be discouraged. I tell you, my dear teacher, that not one of such words and deeds will fail, at last, of reaching the purpose for which it was primarily intended. So please be patient with the boys, and keep on as you were, years ago, and do not be discouraged because it is long till the harvest. It will ripen in due time. The reapers shall come also, bearing their sheaves, and it is at your feet that they will lay them down.

But I wish especially to thank you for your wisdom and faithfulness in our last interview. On that occasion you struck the key note to the whole situation when you virtually kicked me out of your house, and told me that if I ever got up I must climb for myself. That was a new doctrine for me then, but I understand it thoroughly now. It is sound doctrine too, though it takes long to see it so.

You were wise, too, to watch me till I got out of town on that September afternoon. If you had given me ten dollars at your home and told me to buy a ticket, I doubt if I should have done it, even if I had promised to, and meant to do so when I promised. The chances are I should have spent the money for drink, and then have gone to jail. That is the way of a man such as I was then. An habitual drunkard is not to be trusted, not even by himself.

I shudder as I write these things, and I only reveal them to you, hoping that they may, perchance, be the means of your helping some one else. I never refer to these scenes to others; in fact, no one here knows of these painful pages in my history.

You will care to know what I am doing. I have a studio here on Broadway, and am painting portraits. The old gift, that you were the first to discover in me, when you said a kind word for my burlesque sketch of you on the board, at Emburg (how often I do get back to that old school-room), at last proved my salvation. Gradually I found that I had talent in this direction, and I am making the most of it. Carefully and honestly I took up the work, and with perseverance I have attained my present success. I have studied with the best artists here, and my work is well received. At the latest exhibition at the Academy I was the winner of the first prize, and this fact has already brought me more business than I can well attend to. I am delighted with my work, but shall never rest satisfied till a picture of yourself hangs in my room where it can watch me as I pursue my daily task. Because, it is you who inspired me even to try to be a man and to do something in the world. The credit is yours.

My father and mother are still in Illinois. I have communicated with them several times recently. The children are grown, and several of them have left home. I hope to see the family all together on the day you receive this letter. I may also see you before I return to New York.



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I cannot close this letter without telling you further of the change that has come to me in my religious and spiritual life. You know how blasphemously unbelieving I was ten years ago. I thought then that I had full cause for being so, but I was wrong there, as in all else. I wandered far and long, but as I began to do what I believe was God's will, I began to know the doctrine, as the book says we shall. I am happy now in a religious life which I once believed it impossible for any one to experience. These are the main features in my life.

So now I wish you adieu, and pray the good Father in heaven to bless you all the days of your life. Your calling is the most noble in all the world, and I do you but justice when I say that you are wholly worthy of your profession. Remember me to your family, which I trust I may now have your permission to mingle with again (ah! that day); and believe me, ever sincerely yours, "Dodd."

Mr. Bright read the letter through to the end, then fell on his knees and in silence rejoiced and gave thanks.

You may talk about rewards, good people, but will you measure out in dollars about the worth of feelings that filled the heart of Mr. Charles Bright on this occasion? It is only in the coin of the everlasting kingdom that such a result can be told.

The next day the bank passed \$237.45 to the credit of the schoolmaster. The check was good!

There was a joyous dinner at Elder Weaver's house that same Christmas day, the family being united again, the prodigal returned, and bringing with him a wife newly wedded.

Leave them at dinner. Only God and the members of the household should look upon such a scene.

"Dodd" and his wife also spent a day with Mr. Bright, on their way to their home in the metropolis.

It was a joyous occasion, all hearts overflowing with such pleasure as there is among the angels, over one sinner that repenteth.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In a snug home in a suburb of New York City dwells "Dodd" Weaver with his faithful and devoted wife. They have one child, a boy, named Charles Bright. Their home is happy and full of the sunlight of love. "Dodd" is devoted to his profession, and serves it faithfully. He has a marked talent in his calling, and is succeeding well. He may never



become famous, but what is fame? He is earning an honest and excellent living, and that is much for one with his start in life.

He looks over the path he has come with thankfulness as well as with horror. He hopes, too, that when his own son shall come to go by the highway of life, he may be able to take him by the hand and lead him along the dangerous places that he found along the road, or, at least, to point out the pitfalls for the child, and so save him from the evil that so sorely, beset himself.

But every day, the thing that now looms up through the life of this now busy man is the personal character and influence of his old teacher, Mr. Bright. This never leaves him nor forsakes him. It is like an anchor to his soul. It saved him from total wreck in his voyage of life. It held him from ruin when the waves and billows swept over him. Why should he not revere such a source of help; such an everlasting tower of strength?

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But his memory of the machine brings no such consolation or help. Why should it? Answer, if you can, you who have faith in the mill itself, or whose business it is to make it grind.

As “Dodd” touches his brush to a bit of ruddy color on the pallet at his side and tinges the cheeks of a beautiful face that smiles from the easel before him, I draw the curtain that shuts him out of your sight and mine, beloved, and that closes him into the sacred radiance of his own happy home. Let us leave him there within the veil, within the veil.

ADDENDA

[For School Teachers Only.]

As I vexed no one with a preface at the beginning of this story, I allow myself the privilege of a few reflections at its close.

If the Evolution of “Dodd” has seemed slow, or if it has appeared, sometimes, as if the life, whose growth I have traced, began on a very low plane and progressed almost imperceptibly, let it be remembered that this is the ordinary course of nature. It is the way of the world. From the primordial germ to the soul of a man is a long, long distance; and often and often, in the upward march of life, the path seems to turn upon itself and go backward. It is even so in the life of every one who eventually reaches the goal. The way to final victory is marked by a succession of advances, battles, and retreats. This also is ordained.

The physical body of man, from the time of its inception till the close of its career, passes through all the varied stages of animal life—the germ, the cell, and the changes that these are subject to in animal existence—that is, being the highest form of material life, man bears, in his own body, marks of all previous conditions. Even so, in his spiritual body, each individual exemplifies “The total world since life began,” and every soul must span the space from the first man, Adam, to the quickened spirit of a son of God. People whose business it is to develop human souls should remember that.

Again: How to help weak and tempted humanity so as to build it up, to make it strong and able to resist temptation, is a problem that has never yet been fully solved. Whether it is better to hold up an awful example before the gaze of the suffering ones, and to relate to them the certainty of a like conclusion to their own career if a like course of life is persisted in; whether it is better to point out the success that some tempted and tortured men have reached, by devious ways that led through flame and darkness, and from which the victims have escaped only as by fire, like brands plucked from the burning,—which of these ways is the better, heaven only knows and has never revealed.

It is well enough, though, to remember that the Master was tempted in all points, like as we are, and that it is said of the saints in glory that they came to their reward through great tribulation.



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There can be no greater tribulation than for one to be born with a nature that is intrinsically false, fickle, passionate, impulsive—in a word, such a nature as “Dodd” naturally possessed—a nature far away from the line of truth and right; a nature such as multitudes of boys are born with in this wide, wide world of ours. To guide safely into the port of rest souls thus weighted down with depravity is a task for gods and men to compass—if they can. The chances of wreck are many fold to one; but now and then the harbor is made, thank God!

It has seemed best to me to tell the tale of one such voyage of life. There is no denying that the journey was a perilous one, such a one as would probably wreck ninety-nine out of one hundred crafts attempting it; yet, for all of that, there is joy over the one that comes through.

I am aware that “Dodd” Weaver has had more chances than any one person ought ever reasonably to expect. But Providence is sometimes bountiful in opportunities, even to prodigality. “Dodd” doubtless had more chances than he ought to have had, in the strict line of justice; but we must all plead guilty to the same charge, in a greater or less degree. It is likely, however, that no more opportunities have come to any of us than were necessary to bring us safely to our journey’s close. “There is a divinity that shapes our ends.”

I am glad “Dodd” Weaver had as many chances as he had. I am glad he didn’t need any more of the same sort, for they might not have been forthcoming. There is such a thing as being too late.

My hope for you, beloved, is that you, too, may have chances, and that you may take them while you can. I would that you might reach the goal of success in life by a shorter route than “Dodd” had to take; but if not, then may you come by the way he trod. The road is not unused, you will not be alone in your travels.

One last word regarding the public school, for whose sake all this has been set down:

In the evolution of character, in these last days, this institution has come to be a most important factor. To it has been assigned a task equal to, if not exceeding that of any other agency that has to deal with human nature. It is more important than can be set forth that it do its work well. It is not so doing now, however, to nearly the extent of which it is capable. Too much it has become a mere machine, a mill for grinding out graduates. As such it is unworthy its high estate. As such it now exists, in multitudes of cases. As such it should no longer be tolerated. From such a condition it must be redeemed.

The system has largely lost sight of the grandest thing in all the world, namely, the individual soul. It addresses itself to humanity collectively, as a herd. In this it makes a fatal mistake, one that must be corrected, and that speedily.

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And for you, teachers, you who have the destinies of these schools in your hands, keep your eyes and ears open, and your souls alive to the possibilities of your profession. Let no machine nor method crush out your own individuality, and suffer no power to induce, or to force you to make a business of turning a crank that runs a mill whose office it is to grind humanity to one common form, each individual like every other, interchangeable like the parts of a government musket!

Understand, first, last, and all the time, that characters cannot be manufactured like pins, by the million, and all alike; neither can salvation be handled in job lots. It is also true that wholesaling education can never be made a success.

Because, personal character is all there is in this world that amounts to anything in the final resolution of things. It is not money, nor governments, nor machines, that are of value in the last analysis. It is character! It is individuality! It is men!

To secure these things this old world turns over once in twenty-four hours, and swings around the sun in yearly revolution. For these, tides ebb and flow, the land brings forth, and the clouds float in the sky. To these all forces are but servants. For these Christ died.

And like begets like, in the public schools as elsewhere. It is character in the teacher that begets character in the pupil. The machine makes after its own kind also, and both it and its products can be measured with a line.

The soul cannot be measured with a line.

So the ultimatum is personality, individuality, and character, in every teacher and pupil in the public schools, and freedom of each to develop in his own way, and not after a pattern made and prepared by a pattern maker.

If the public school live long, its friends must take these items into account and act on them. It is its only salvation.

THE END.