

[From the Saturday Evening Post.]

SCHOOL LIFE.

It is forty years ago; I was a little girl then; and now I am an old woman, still I often find myself thinking of the old school house, and the merry playmates who thought much more of play than of study.

One warm afternoon in Summer I will never forget. It had been not only a warm, but a hot day; indeed, the weather had been oppressive for a week past, and now it was Friday afternoon. We all felt tired and cross, both teacher and pupils. Nothing funny had occurred all day to amuse us, or we could have borne the heat and confinement better. Our short "play spell" was over for the afternoon. I believe it is called "recess" now-a-days, but it was "play spell" then.

In one hour more we might expect to be released, not to return to our prison for two whole days. Delightful thought. Had we been told that this was our last day of school we would have rejoiced at the tidings. Alas, one of our thoughtless group did indeed return no more.

Our teacher was one of those stiff, unsympathizing beings who so strangely mistake their vocation when they become teachers.

We could not love him, but we did fear him.

This was the only school in the village, and all the children went to school at all attended our school. Poor little bare-footed boys and girls who walked two miles every morning, brought their dinner-baskets with them, and oh, what nice green apples they sometimes had hid away for some of us who were not so fortunate as to have "heaps of apples at home."

We all sat in one room, big and little, young and old, and some were men and women grown.

The little A-B-C class sat in front, right under the cold, stern eye of the "master." Next to them the spelling class, and so on to the very highest, and those who owned copy books sat facing the wall, along which stood the high writing desks. One window only on that side gave light for us to write by, and on a dark day, there would generally be considerable "scrouzing" to get near it. Many a sly trick, many a funny picture, and many a smothered laugh came off at that desk—for you see, our backs were toward the "master."

A greasy bucket of water sat on a bench in the middle of the room, and continually did the old dipper tinkle against its side as it was thrown down with what water remained in it after drinking. By the time the water became low in the pail, it was pretty well mixed after washing so many pairs of lips, and then what a scuffle to see who might go out after more. Even the larger girls would sometimes go up and demurely ask the master if they might not go after fresh water, and what a long time they tarried at the spring.

But on this August afternoon the bucket was dry, and no one was allowed to refill it. Some poor little fellows on the front seat were rubbing their knuckles in their eyes, and sniffing loudly.

"Silence, all! First class prepare to read," said our teacher, and about a dozen of the highest class stood up with our English Readers open in our hands.

"Obeyance," and at the word, a low bow and deep courtesy followed. "Begin," and I led off with—

"The dew was falling fast," etc., etc.

This was a favorite lesson of mine, and I read it off glibly, with all the sing-song tone of a first-rate reader in a country school.

My one verse ended, and the word of command was again given, "Next," and another verse was read. We were under good military rule—nothing was done without an order. We had advanced as far as where "little Barbary" was telling the little lamb how her father had brought it home, etc., when buzz, buzz, sounded over our heads and a monstrous hoarse fly came thumping against our solemn teacher's nose.

A broad grin from the whole class, and a dark frown from our teacher, then a stately "Proceed," and another verse was read. But the reader's voice trembled, for again came the fly in the teacher's face. He raised his hand to strike it, but the fly was gone; "take your seats," said he in a voice of thunder, that made us tremble, and the little ones cry. It was soon discovered that the fly was let out or drawn in by some other will than its own, and every eye was soon turned on the "bad boy" of our class, a wild mischievous fellow, Harmon Bates. He was looking very demure, with his hands behind him, and the poor fly was by this time bumping against the window, drawing after it a thread several yards in length, yet it was Harmon who had managed to catch the fly during "recess," and tying a long thread to a pin, had thrust the pin through the body of the fly, and then hid it in his pocket until an opportunity should offer when it could be let out at the master. It was a cruel act, no doubt, but Harmon was so though less, and would do anything for fun.

We knew now that a long lecture awaited us; that not only Harmon, but all of us, must remain to listen to it, and were so tired already.

Several little girls were crying, some because the poor fly was in misery, and some because they wanted to go home. "Harmon, go release that fly. Now, take your stand on the dunce block, your proper place."

He was obeyed.

There was very little smiling now in the school room. The lessons went on as usual, our class had only to spell, and there we all sat watching Harmon, who stood making

faces at us, and at the teacher when his back was turned. We wondered what his punishment was to be, and whether it would take place that day. We were all very unhappy, and scarcely dared to raise our hands to wipe the perspiration from our faces. At length the lessons were all finished, and the lecture began. I do not intend to repeat it, but will leave you to imagine all the cruel things that could be said by an offended teacher.

The denunciations heaped upon the head of that "cruel boy" were dreadful. But I fear we thought the teacher full as cruel as the boy, for we did not love him, and we did love our fun-loving companion. At length, he ended with, "And now, sir, put yourself in the place of that fly! Think what it suffers! How would you like to have a sharp instrument thrust through your body? Think of that, sir, and sleep this night if you can!"

Slowly and in order we took down our hats and bonnets, piled up our books and slates, walked to the door, made our usual formal obeisance, and made our escape from that terrible eye.

Once clear of the door and all order was lost; we shouted, jumped and ran, quite forgetting the heat of the day that had so greatly depressed us, and the frowns that had caused us to tremble.

Harmon was wilder than ever—he had escaped so much better than he expected. "Sleep," said he, "well, I rather guess I shall if I did stick a fly. Ha! ha!" and he bounded over the fence to find a ball he hid at noon under a pile of boards. They were boards torn from some old building and full of nails. As Harmon sprang carelessly over the fence he gave a terrific scream, and we all gathered about him.

Poor fellow, his punishment had now come in earnest. He was unable to draw up his right foot, for a long, rusty nail had pierced it through and through. We could see the nail sticking through the top of the foot between the toes. At last one of the larger boys succeeded in drawing away the board, nail and all. We did not call the teacher, who was still in the school house. We thought he would feel rather pleased at the time, but I think we did him injustice there. We felt pleased to see that the foot did not bleed; only one or two drops of black blood oozed out of the wound.

Harmon laughed as soon as he got over his first fright, and limped away to his home, only a short distance, but it must have pained him sadly.

Did we all think of the fly? Not immediately, but when we came to relate it, the fly, the lecture, the accident—it all seemed to fit together like a made up story, and some were unkind enough to say "it was good enough for him."

Children are happy, careless creatures, and I think we played just as hard on Saturday, as if Harmon had been with us. We had heard he did not sleep well, and we could not expect him to play with that sore foot, but I recollect seeing him on Saturday sitting in the door, making a windmill. His foot was done up in a large cloth, and he laughingly told me that he had given all his bread and milk to his foot that evening, and that he meant to have something better for his supper.

We did not see him, or hear from him on Sunday, and on Monday he was not a school.

On taking my usual seat in the school on Monday, the first thing I noticed was the pin with the string tied to it lying on my desk. I took it up and with a smile handed it to Louisa Bates, Harmon's sister; I felt frightened when she threw it from her and burst into tears.

About the middle of the forenoon Louisa was called out of school; her brother was worse. Our school was very orderly and quiet that morning, and our teacher seemed kinder than usual. He punished no one, and spoke softly, when he did speak at all. We could not study, but we could be quiet.

At noon it was known all over the village that poor Harmon Bates was dying of lockjaw. We were told in the afternoon that there would be no more school that week. Our teacher spent the night with his now unconscious pupil, and at daybreak poor Harmon died in his arms.

It was a sad funeral; the scholars walked in procession with the teacher at their head, and we all loved him better for the tears that fell from his eyes as he took a last look at our lost playfellow.

I think we understood each other better after that, fewer tricks were played upon our teacher, and he was more forgiving.

This is a plain statement of facts. No doubt many will remember, as I do, that warm summer day, and its sad ending. We are scattered far and wide, and know each other no more, but we do not forget our school days and the playmates of our youth.

AUNT ALICE.

Susan Melinda Dodd.

You're going to town to-day, Mr. Martin! Well, just with a few minutes until I get some money from Mr. Dodd. I want to send for a few things. Mr. Dodd just step in this room, I want to have a few minutes private conversation, see here, Jeremiah Dodd, I want you to hitch up that buggy and take Mr. Martin to town. I'll get the worth of it—you'll see! I mean to make out a list of things that I want, and Mr. Martin is such a putty-headed spendthrift that he will get them for me. Besides, you have to go to town one day this week, and you had just as well go now as any time. Here, give me your purse, and when you get to town tell Mr. Martin you forgot it, and make him pay for your dinner and your horse's dinner.

Mr. Martin you're boarding at our house, and I feel a kind of friendship for you. It will cost you a dollar to go down on the stage and a dollar to come back—there will be two dollars—so I told Mr. Dodd to hitch up the buggy and take you down. Oh, no, it's no trouble. Mr. Martin I shall be insulted if you don't accept my offer. While Mr. Dodd is having the buggy got up I'll make out a list of things I want, and I do wish you wouldn't let Mr. Dodd forget them. I only want about a dollar's worth of things.

You will get them? Oh, Mr. Martin, how generous you are. I don't know that it would be right for me to accept it, and yet you might feel insulted if I didn't. I know I'm apt to be that way.

Let me see! A pair of shoes for little Thomas Jefferson; a calico dress for myself; five yards of flannel for the baby; a round comb for Juley Frances and Florence Ellen; a bottle of lemon syrup, some white sugar, and two boxes of sardines. There, I believe that's all I want! Yes, there's one other little thing I'd like to have—a black silk apron and a pair of kid gloves. Here it is, Mr. Martin, I hope you'll get a good wife that will appreciate you. A man that's so generous ought to have a good wife and I hope you will get one. Well, you are all ready to start, Mr. Dodd, I hope you won't forget to bring some candy for the children, and a handkerchief for Judy. It seems like town is so far off that when a body goes they ought to get everything they want. See here, Mr. Dodd, don't forget to get me a pair of fine shoes, No. 7½, I can't do without 'em, no way in the world. Now, do, pray, don't forget 'em? There, Tom, run a ter your father and tell 'em to stop a minute. Jeremiah, husband, don't forget to buy a set of chess-men. Mr. Martin plays, and I want to learn. I'd rather you would forget anything else than that, and the sardines—two boxes—you might get three. I'd rather you would!

Oh, I forgot, Mr. Martin said he would get them. Just forget what I have said about the sardines, Mr. Martin, I was thinking about Mr. Dodd getting 'em.

Come in the house, children. The sun is burning you black.

Florence Ellen, run out and tell your papa to get a Child's History. You need one at school. Juley Frances, sit right down and hem my new dress. Mrs. Ray wasn't able to finish it; she was taken sick and had to send it home. I want you to hem it. I want to lie down and try to get a little rest.

Florence Ellen, fan me until I get to sleep. This is an awful hot weather for this time of year. Grainger Williams ake that crying child out of here. If there is anything that's wearyin' to a lovin' mother it is a squalling child. Go out and tell Judy to get me a good dinner to-day—the best the place can afford. I'll her to cook me some bacon and cabbage, and make some corn bread for you children. I'm going to raise my children up hardy and healthy. Give 'em good wholesome food, and then they'll grow up some account.

Go out of here, children.

Florence Ellen, fan me a little harder, I'll so n drop off to sleep.

Dear me; it's two o'clock. How long I've slept. Go tell Judy to bring my dinner in quick. I'm nearly starved. Here's that baby again! Positively, I'm going to wean her. She's a world of trouble! Take her out to the kitchen and feed her.

Harriet, there's a leg of this chicken gone! Grainger took it!

Grainger Williams come here to me! Don't you know it's the same as stealin' to take a chicken leg out of a dish when I'm asleep. Sit down there, sir, until I'm done my dinner, and then if I don't punish you for it, it will be something strange to me. Did I think I'd like to have a child of mine a thief! It's distressin' to a mother of refined feelings! Hand me that jelly, Harriet; and get that turkey-wing and fan me while I eat. It's too warm to enjoy anything to-day. Put another lump of ice into this milk.

Grainger Williams, is it possible you're tryin' to slip off? To think what a bad boy you have been! Don't you know it's very wicked to steal? Harriet, did you carry Mr. Martin's soap back to his room that I used? Did you pour some water into his cologne bottle so he won't miss what I took?

There—take these dishes away. Lock up that jelly, and then go get me a switch. I must do my duty and whip Grainger Williams. I won't raise up a child to steal!

Yonder is Miss Ray. Set these things out of the way quick. She's walked good two miles, and I expect she's hungry. Put 'em out of the way. I aint able to be feedin' up other people. Good evenin', Mrs. Ray. Good evenin'; it's a warm day, ain't it?

Hand Mrs. Ray some water, Harriet. She looks faintly.

You haven't eaten anything to-day? I'm astonished! But you know the Lord will provide for the widow and the orphan. It seems hard to believe when starvation stares you in the face?

Yes, I know it does; but we are commanded to watch and pray; so you must do.

Harriet, look in the closet and get me that bundle of work I cut out. I want to get Mrs. Ray to do some sewing for me. Yes, yes, I know I haven't paid you for what you have done. Let me see—I owe you three dollars and a half, don't I?

Here, Judy, get some of that mouldy meal and some of that black flour that Mr. Dodd is going to send back, and get one of them rusty pieces of bacon, and go out in the orchard and get a few of them apples—the sourest ones, that's no account—and pour some water over

a few molasses, and tell Bill to take 'em to Mrs. Ray's right off.

There, Mrs. Ray! I've just been to the kitchen to tell Judy to get some provisions and send you. I reckon it will more than well pay what I owe you. But never mind! I'm a charitable woman, and believe in givin' to the poor. You know the Bible says it's lendin' to the Lord.

Catching Snipe in Bags—How to do it.

In one of his sketches of "Egypt"—which means Southern Illinois—Hazel Greene, Esq., give the following account of a snipe hunt:

The Egyptians have a custom of "taking the green" ones a sniping,—*id est*, sniping those who are from the East, and who are not posted with reference to all the things practised within the American Egypt. No matter how well a man may be educated, or how great may be his accomplishments, or how polished his manners—he is a green one in their estimation, unless he know all about the ways of the woods. The Egyptians have a custom of sniping them, did we say? Very well, sniping them is the word; and now we will commence in a roundabout way, to tell you how it is done.

"A fine evening this," said a native, bursting into our presence.

"Very."

"Nice night for snipes, I kinder think."

"Snipe! Are they plentiful in this region?"

"Plenty! Golly I'd tell a man they was! Why Sir, no longer ago nor last week, me and two other fellers, we went out and crotch four bag-falls."

"Caught them! Why how upon the earth did you manage it?" said we, looking forward to a new item for Wilke's Spirit.

"Yes crotch 'em; and we done it easy enough. Drove them into the bags, sir—drove same as you'd drive quails into a net. Four or five of us going out to catch a lot to-night. See how it's done, if you feel like going with us."

Of course we felt like going; how could we feel otherwise?

A little after dusk found us on our way to the snipe swamp, all anxious for the sport. Our company was made up as follows, Six Egyptians; John Anderson Augustus Javer, from New York City, now visiting an Egyptian relative; Hazel Greene, Esq., Author of "A Tour of the American Egypt," and two empty sacks.

"Here's the place—keep still," said the Egyptians, when we had reached the edge of a marsh, about two miles from the village. "Now you two fellers what don't know how to drive, you hold open the bags, while we as knows goes into the swamp and drives 'em out."

The "two fellers" referred to were John Anderson Augustus Javer, from New York City, and your narrator. Of course we were willing to assist in the sport as much as we could, and so they stationed us at favorable points, about one hundred yards apart, instructed us how to hold the sacks open with their expanded mouths near the ground, and desired us to remain immovable and silent, and to keep constantly puffing away with light cigars, in order that the fire would show and attract the snipe into the sacks. We confess that after having taken several philosophical views of the matter, we did not exactly like what was going on; but we held the bag, nevertheless.

Having arranged us to their entire liking, the six Egyptians struck out on their drive. Away into the swamp went they, hissing and shewing, and shaking bushes with a right good will for a few minutes, then all became silent. And silence reigned awfully supreme for at least half an hour—not a least rustled, not an over-hanging branch scraped against its fellows, and—

"The ticking of my watch, boys
Was all the sound I heard."

Pretty soon I heard a voice, "Hello, Greene!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Caught any snipe yet?"

This was from John Anderson Augustus Javer. To make sure we got up and shook the bag, after which we felt warranted in replying:

"Not Nary snipe; but I think the contemptible snipes have caught us."

And so they had—leastwise, such was our conclusion on coming together and holding a council of war. We were indeed sold, and with feelings none the best in the world, we slung our sacks up into the fork of a sapling, and rolled out for home. It is needless to add that we found the six Egyptians already there, and that they laughed heartily while we didn't, not being able, ourselves, to see where the laugh came in.

ECONOMICAL SUGGESTIONS.—A clergyman who enjoys the substantial benefits of a farm, was slightly taken down by his Irish ploughman who was sitting at his plow in a potato field, resting his horse. The reverend gentleman, being a great economist, said, with great seriousness:

"Patrick, wouldn't it be a good plan for you to have a sub-sythe here, and be hubbing a few bushes along the fence while the horse is resting?"

Pat, with quite as serious a countenance as the divine wore himself, replied:

"Sir, wouldn't it be well for you to have a tub of potatoes in the pulpit, and when they are singing to peel 'em to be ready for the pot?"

The reverend gentleman laughed heartily, and left.