

munity. But, even if such a method of discipline had been permitted, how would it have been enforced?

The question was prompted by the pandemonium that followed upon Mr. Pendleton's resolute rejection of Jim Smith's proposition. Everybody in Four Corners knew that the new schoolmaster would soon go the way of his predecessors. The school board, who secretly disapproved of education, watched matters with smug smiles. Smith lounged insolently in his seat; Smith talked with his neighbors and contemptuously refused to recite his lessons.

"I told yer what it would be if you didn't do as I said," he explained to Mr. Pendleton, when the schoolmaster remonstrated with him privately. "Get out of the school? Say, yer crazy. What'd I get out for when I'm having the time of my life here?"

There was one thing that kept the schoolmaster to his work. That was Susie Connor. She had told him it was a shame the boys did not behave better. She had counseled an appeal to the board. A strong attachment had begun to dawn between the young man and the pretty country lass.

"If I were you, Horace," she said one day—they had begun unconsciously to call each other by their first names—"I would try to make a real school here. There are men in the community who would stand by you if you refused to let Jim come to school. And you could do so much."

"I would like nothing better," he answered. "I would like to cast my lot here and make a read educational center of Four Corners. But if I took the law into my own hands and trashed Smith"—at which Susie's eyes widened a little—"I should have to give up my position. And—I'm staying here for you, Susie."

Before the day had elapsed everybody knew that Pendleton and Susie Connor were sweethearts.

On the next day Smith cast all pretense at discipline. His remarks—

made in class—were brief and pointed.

"You're sweet on her," he said, indicating the girl, whose face was mantled with red. "She's my gal, Mr. Schoolmaster—understand? And I won't have any miserable, measly interloper coming here fooling round Susie."

Mr. Pendleton had been aware that Smith had a calf-like attachment for the girl, but it had never occurred to him to take him seriously.

He looked up hopelessly, and he saw a strange look in Susie's eyes. He could not help interpreting it aright. It said: "Are you man enough to prevent my being insulted and to stand up for me?"

"Mean that, Smith?" asked Mr. Pendleton, leaving his desk and crossing the floor.

Smith leaped at him with a bellow. "Ah, sure!" he mimicked. "You've had your day, Mr. Schoolmaster, and now you can git, because this school won't open any more so long as you're in this town, you sniveling hound."

"Smith," said Horace Pendleton, "you are a bad boy and you have the makings of a bad man in you. Do you see that switch in the corner? Go and bring it to me."

The lout stared at him incredulously; then, with swinging arms, he rushed at him. Next moment, he found himself lying on the floor, the blood issuing profusely from his nose. It did not take more than one blow to quiet the bully. He burst into a yell.

"I'll tell the board on you," he shrieked. "I'll—"

"Smith," said the schoolmaster, "did you hear what I said about that switch? Go and bring it to me."

He yanked him from the floor and grasped him with one hand by the collar. And Smith crept to the corner—then, with a wild yell threatening vengeance, he had burst out of the door and was running in the direction of his home.

"This will mean good-bye, Susie,"