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SCHOOL MARM OF RED ELM

[From the Washington Post.]

There was something of a sensation when she came to take charge of the district school. The first Sunday after her installation eyes and whispered comments followed her up the aisle as she went with Squire Bailey to a seat after service she was the one subject of conversation.

"You say she's eighteen? Well, she ain't spent her time growing; a pound of soap after a week's washing is as big as that."

The children said she was so little her feet did not touch the floor when she sat in her chair on the rostrum; but I didn't expect to see such a kid," said Mrs. Moore. "She doesn't even dress like a teacher—look at those elbow sleeves and yards of ribbon."

"She'll never govern that school this side of Kingdom come," sighed Mrs. Wade. "Bob Smith and his crew will scare the life out of her the first time they get to cutting up. She'll have to resign."

"Yes, for it takes as much muscle as book learning to teach in Red Elm," replied Mrs. Moore. "If you want to see Squire Bailey was thinking of to engage a child like that. My Sally could do as well, for she's ciphered up to 'miscellaneous examples' in the book of arithmetic, and everybody heard her beautifully she spoke 'Curfew' at the last concert. But she's a little more lenient when memories of that recitation were evoked."

The disapprobation, started that Sunday, spread during the week, and followed, and everybody was prophesying a Waterloo for the new teacher the first time Bob Smith "got out of bed with the wrong foot for once." And indeed, when Mamie Lewis sat on the school room platform, with her little feet two inches from the floor, and worked like a Trojan and earned every cent of the scanty salary the country districts allow their overworked teachers. She had come to Red Elm with many misgivings, having heard of the big boys who make life in the school room as exciting as a "ghost dance" of the painted Indians. Especially had she been warned about Bob Smith, a lad of near twenty, handsome, idle, restless, and possessed of a legion of mischievous devils. His invalid mother humored and adored him, and his busy father neglected him, and between the two his better nature lay dormant. Miss Lewis studied him covertly all that first morning, and planned her line of attack, for if she was to stay here, then she must have Bob on her side. And the woman's intuition she felt and the Achilles heel. That afternoon some blackboard work had to be done, and after disposing of a few minutes in a vain effort to reach high enough, she turned around and said, with a fetching beseeching smile:

"Bob, won't you come and help me?—you are so nice and tall."

Surprised and rather complimented, the boy did as she asked. "Thank you, dear," she said with another soft smile, as he stooped to put the chalk in the box. Then with a sudden gesture she pushed the hair from his brow with her fingers, and added: "With such a forehead as that you ought to have the making of a president in you." And confused, but tingling in his boots, Bob went back to his seat.

That afternoon everybody lingered, but Bob outstayed them all, and Miss Lewis found him pretending to mend the gate latch when she came out.

"Do you go my way Bob? That is nice. Come on this side and take my umbrella; my arm is aching from carrying it. Tilt it just a little more—there, that's a dear."

Again Bob tingled; and then he asked himself if it were really he walking along the road carrying a girl's parasol.

"You're the lighest thing I ever saw," he said presently, looking out of the corner of his eye. Then he blurted out, boy fashion: "But say, you're awfully pretty!"

"I'm glad you think so," she answered, with a flattering accent on the last pronoun.

A long look ahead, as if he had not heard her, then he asked: "Why?"

"Oh, because I like you and I want you to like me. An you say I am so little that I sometimes need a big strong friend like you to look after me."

The words and the glance that went with them finished the subjugation of the young rascal. The next day he said to the other school boys:

"That girl's too little to be bullied. The teacher that starts it will have to answer to me. See?" And Dick James, the other "unruffled quantity" of the community, having nodded his agreement, Miss Lewis was as safe as a troop of Rough Riders had been picketed about her desk. But the gossips did not know this, and so they kept waiting for Bob Smith to put the boot on the other side of the door.

And while they waited the autumn wore peacefully away.

One afternoon Squire Bailey stopped at the school house. The day's work was done and Miss Lewis stood on the steps trying her hat under her chin with its gay ribbons. On one side of her Dick James swung her lunch basket and on the other Bob Smith waited with her parasol as though he had a right to be "fanned out" by the last teacher and squire like treatment to this one—before he saw her. Squire's eyes twinkled at sight of these two unruly spirits in their new roles.

"Got two mighty rough citizens for your escort, Miss Lewis," he said, with a knowing nod and wink. The little teacher bridled.

"I'm sure I don't know why you should say such a thing, Squire Bailey. I find Bob and Dick perfectly lovely."

Dick flushed with pleasure and Bob drew himself up proudly until he stood fully a head above the teacher. He was that shaded Miss Lewis' brunette face.

"No other teacher ever found them lovely," laughed the Squire.

"Well, I think no other teacher ever thoroughly understood them. To me they are two of the sweetest boys I ever knew," and she went away down the shady road with her two escorts who, between their smiles at her, glared at each other over the crown of the beribboned hat. After she was safely on her boarding place they went down behind Squire Bailey's hay ricks and had a good hard fight.

Of course the little teacher heard of the fight, but not of its cause, and she lectured the boys soundly. Dick took his scolding in amiable silence, but Bob was more difficult to manage. And she was alone in the school house, where she had purposely detained him.

"I was obliged to fight Dick—some time I think I'd die if I didn't hit something—and he is so conceited," Bob said, his big hands clenching and unclenching. "But fighting is utterly unworthy of you. I'm talking to you very plain; just like a sister who has your good at heart."

"I don't want a sister," he said doggedly; then grew red to the roots of his hair as he blurted out, "but when I have learned a little more sense and decency I want a wife."

Miss Lewis got up, but he stood between her and the door. "Don't go, so I mean all you want—take that switch and beat me, but stay and talk to me!" And because he was so insistent—perhaps she stayed; and they were very sober as they walked home in the winter sunset.

In course of time the gossips heard of the fight, and they said Bob was getting ready for mischief, and prophesied that because he was so insistent—perhaps she stayed; and they were very sober as they walked home in the winter sunset.

term out. But again they were mistaken, and the winter passed and the spring came, and all was quiet in scholastic circles.

But in the school house a pretty play was enacted, a play of love and jealousy and pedagogues. The little teacher had taken to blushing now and then when the big boys stood up to recite, but to balance this she was stricter than ever, and it came to be matter of common talk that she was harder on Bob Smith than on any one else. The boy, under this treatment, was restless and morbid, but worked hard at his books. The afternoon of the last examination he came back to the school house where she had just finished looking over the papers.

"You have beaten Dick for the medal," she said, without looking up.

"Talk like you were sorry—you like Dick best, anyway," he said sullenly.

"No, I don't answer," "Well, you'll have to pin the medal on my coat."

"Oh, Bob, I couldn't; don't you see I couldn't—before all those people!"

"Why not?"

"Because—because—He stooped over his desk; her face was like a penny and her brown eyes went down before his."

"Do you like Dick better than you do me?"

"No," she whispered.

Then Bob, country lad that he was, did a very country thing, although he was trembling as much as she. He took her hand in both of his and kissed it. "I'll make a bargain with you; give Dick the medal, and he'll come back with his law license and—his wife."

"Well, I declare, if it isn't that little Lewis girl!" Mrs. Moore exclaimed, as the bride took her place in the Smith pew the following Sunday. And everybody looked startled and then knowing, as people will who like to appear wise.

"Well, Mrs. Smith, perhaps you can now tell us why it was Bob made so little of the girl who taught our district school?" Squire Bailey said, when service was over and handshaking was in order.

"Oh," laughed the little bride, "that is easily explained—he was too busy making love to me."

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Mrs. Starvem—That Mr. Sloppy has skipped out without paying his board.

Mr. Starboard—Well, that should be a relief to you. You've often declared he was an elephant on your hands.

Mrs. Starvem—I should say he was an elephant, for he's taken his trunk with him.—Philadelphia Press.

"Gee whiz! That blamed watch is stopped again. What an awful liar that Jeweler is."

"I left the thing for him to fix. He charged me ten dollars said it would work like a charm now."

"Well, he doubtless meant a watch charm."—Philadelphia Press.

"I see yer movin' out, boss," remarked a very disreputable looking Weary Willie, who had stopped to watch the operation. "If dey payin' you don't need 'at I might take?"

"Yes," snapped the crusty suburbanite, tossing a bundle into the van, "a bath!"—Standard and Times.

"Woman," said the lecturer at the informal meeting, "the east is only a domesticated animal."

"Well," said the foolish man that wanted to make a complaint, "she lacks a lot of being a domesticated animal here!"

The ladies present in large numbers glared at him amazedly.—Indianapolis Press.

He thrust the sealed letter through the window and put down two cents.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the stamp clerk, gruffly.

"An automobile, please," he replied sweetly.—Philadelphia North American.

"But, suppose," one of the spectators said, "the parachute should fail to open after you have detached it from the balloon—what then?"

"That wouldn't stop me," answered the daring aeronaut. "I'd come right on down."—Chicago Tribune.

May Putter—Everybody's talking about the way you let Jack Hoggard kiss you on the links yesterday.

Belle Hazard—Well, I couldn't help it. It was just teasing off when he asked me if he could have just one kiss. I yelled, "Fore!" and he took them.—Philadelphia Press.

"That man," remarked the great detective, "is undoubtedly a vegetarian of the most pronounced type."

"How do you make that out?" queried his friend.

"Oh, that's dead easy," replied the G. D. "He has carrotty hair, reddish cheeks, a turn-up nose and a sage look."—Chicago Daily News.

"Jones, you never get done talking."

"Well, somebody is always interrupting me."—Indianapolis Journal.

"That New York widow who visited the Adirondack woods attired in reddish-brown garments might have known she would be shot at for a deer."

"Of course she might. No doubt she has been taken for a deer many times."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The watermelon's waning, and its joys will soon be gone; But, ah, dear nature's lavish hand! The pumpkin's coming on.—Chicago Record.

"How can I prevent damage by wheat weevil?" asked the old farmer.

"The Populist 'answer-to-queries' man looked at him scornfully.

"Vote for Bryan, of course," he said.—Chicago Evening Post.

"I am a man of few words," said the busy citizen.

"An glad to hear it," answered the caller, with a superabundance of assurance. "I've got a whole lot to say to you, and the fewer times you interrupt me the better I'll be pleased."—Washington Star.

Mrs. Schoppen—Oh, my! look at that rug over there, isn't it perfectly hideous?

Mrs. Price—Horrible! Such wretched colors!

Dealer (a moment later)—I noticed you looking at that rug, ladies. It's a great bargain; only \$135, and it's a genuine antique.

Chorus—Oh, how perfectly lovely!—Philadelphia Press.

She—I wonder why it is that so many old maids have fat bank accounts?

Farmer Hayroob—Safest doctor anyone in this part of the country is always off fishin' when he's wanted.—Judge.

"Do you know," said his confidential clerk, breaking it to him as delicately as he could, "that some people accuse you of being a double life?"

"By George, I do!" exclaimed Mr. Spotcash, the eminent merchant. "I work twice as hard as any man in my employ."—Chicago Tribune.

"Fellow citizens of the jungle," said the monkey, "various as our interests may be, can't we find some platform on which we may all stand?"

"That's right," put in the elephant. "Let us denounce managements!"—Puck.

Jinks—The colonel's wife had such a temper that she drove the poor man to drink.

Binks—Seeing that they live in Kentucky I don't think that is so awful. Jinks—Well, but it was to drink water.—Detroit Free Press.

She—The Browns called on us last week, you know.

He—Yes.

"Don't you think it is about time we should retaliate?"—Indianapolis Press.

"Julia's engagement is broken."

"Dear me! How did it happen?"

"Well, it was one of those awfully hot nights; Jack dropped his last cigar, and she stepped on it."—Indianapolis Journal.

Fig—I caught my boy smoking a cigar yesterday.

Wickwire—Make him throw it away!

"I threw it away myself. It was evidently a two-fer."—Indianapolis Press.

"I guess our soldiers in China will soon master the Chinese national air."

"How so?"

"Why, they are all trying to catch the Tsun!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"I always run from a braggart."

"Why?"

"If I talk to one a few minutes I get to telling lies myself."—Indianapolis Journal.

Willie—Oh, wow! boo-hoo! I want clearest now, I don't want any old meat!

Father (sternly)—Keep your mouth shut and eat your dinner!—Philadelphia Press.

Mrs. Henpeck—I have no control over my husband at all any more.

Mrs. Under—What's wrong?

Mrs. Henpeck—He secured a certified copy of the census enumerator's record, showing that I had given his name as the head of the family.—Baltimore American.

NOT YET RICH ENOUGH.

[From the Detroit Free Press.]

The watermelon was large, luscious and appetizingly cooled, which, perhaps, was the cause that placed the portly party, who can draw his check for six figures, in a reminiscent mood.

"I doubt," said the woman, "if anyone ever realizes the dreams of his youth. I never have and never expect to, although my ambition was a very modest one compared with the majority of the dreams of childhood. I suppose the reason that such dreams are seldom realized is because they are unreasonable. Being ambitious of an imaginative boy's day dream. It is pleasant work, this building of air castles, but when you come to face with the world, and I suppose as a boy I have constructed my share of them."

But of my many boyish air castles there was one grander, fairer and more alluring than all the rest, and I really think it had an influence upon my early life in the business world.

When I came to me during the watermelon season and it clung to me long after the season was a thing of the past, it was nothing more nor less than a determination to be rich enough some day to afford to eat nothing but the heart of a watermelon. However, I have never realized that dream. Perhaps the early lessons of economy that I had to learn when I started in life have become so fixed that it is impossible for me to break away from them. At any rate, I never expect to be rich enough to throw away all but the heart of a watermelon."

And the portly party who can draw his check for six figures helped himself to another slice.

KNEW ALL ABOUT GENIUS.

[From the Atlanta Constitution.]

"I have just finished a sonnet," said the poet.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the wife. "That'll buy a beefsteak and a sack of flour!"

"And here is an ode for the state fair."

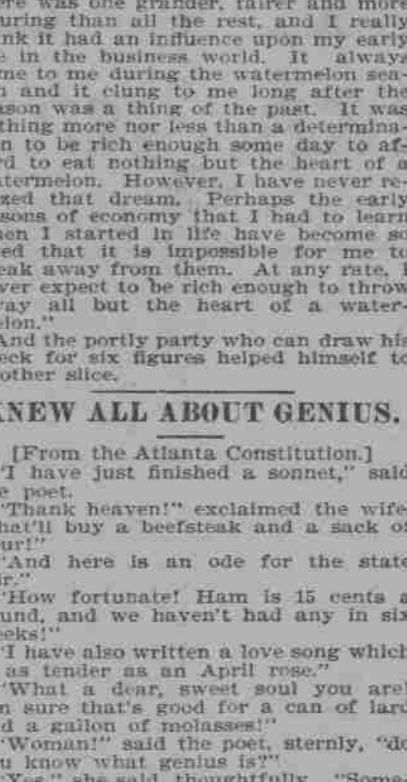
"How fortunate! Ham is 15 cents a pound, and we haven't had any in six weeks!"

"I have also written a love song which is as tender as an April rose."

"What a dear, sweet soul you are! I'm sure that's good for a can of lard and a gallon of molasses!"

"Woman," said the poet, sternly, "do you know what genius is?"

"Yes," she said, thoughtfully. "Sometimes it's a thing that the butcher can't give, shutting the door on the baker, hidin' from the house rent man, and singing, when Sunday comes, 'I would not live always; I ask not to stay!'"



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