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The Teacher of the Eighth Grade.

BY MRS. SUSAN M. GRIFFITH.

The teacher of the eighth grade and the principal walked down the long hall together, talking earnestly. At least, the principal was talking, and the teacher of grade No. 8 was listening respectfully and earnestly, but very much as if she had a mind of her own.

"Your grade is a troublesome one, Miss Farnsworth," said the principal. "We have had to change teachers twice during the year because they were not equal to the occasion, but I hope you will be more successful. The pupils, you understand, are at that age when their own budding thoughts are the most attractive things in the world; when they are impatient of control, and want to throw off all government. It takes a wise hand to guide the pupils of the eighth grade, but you come to us well recommended, and I trust will not disappoint us."

Miss Farnsworth bowed.

"I am not in the habit of making hasty promises," but I was educated to teach, not to govern, and it has always been my rule to teach self-government among other things. It is one of the first principles of education in my mind, and one must learn it in order to become a successful scholar in any branch of study."

"That is all very true," replied the principal testily, "but a beautiful theory is often hard to reduce to practice. To leave a lot of undisciplined children to control their own actions is a good deal like leaving a mob to become reasonable without the arm of the law. You can not do it, Miss Farnsworth. You must be kindly and patient, but you must be coercive; nothing else will do."

And with that they entered the room wherein were gathered forty-five or fifty young girls and boys; as bright a collection as are generally seen in our public school—fair-faced, open-eyed young Americans, full of life and spirits, the animal being uppermost. Upon the entrance of the principal they all scattered to their seats, giving him their undivided attention as in a neat speech, he introduced to them the new teacher, and bespoke of her their affection, and the proper respect faithful students should give their instructor. He spoke gravely and sternly of the trouble they had made their previous teachers, of their insubordination, and the ill name they were making for themselves, and the disgrace they were in danger of becoming to school, their parents and themselves.

He then retired, believing that he had made a fine impression, leaving her in possession.

As she stood there before them—tall, graceful, smiling, with her earnest resolute face full of intellectual power, her fifty subjects looked her over coolly, and measured her evident strength for the conflict; for, of course, they intended to have a conflict. The eighth grade had "broken the record" for smartness in winning the game of teacher versus pupils, and they would not be conquered without a struggle. They expected a "talking to," a regular lecture to begin with, and nerved themselves for the "volcanic eruption," as they were in the habit of calling this manner of getting acquainted with their new teachers; but to their no small surprise, Miss Farnsworth said never a word. They looked for a new code of laws equal in severity to those of the "Medes and the Persians," but none were forthcoming. The work of the day was speedily and skillfully arranged, everybody was given plenty to do, the lessons were made wonderfully interesting, and things moved on without a break. In fact, the eighth grade was in rather a critical state—in one of becoming dangerously good.

It must be contracted at once, and to this end Luther Wilcox, one of the leaders of the army of mischief-makers on the boys' side, drew a caricature of Miss Farnsworth. It was a smart likeness, and being slyly exhibited, occasioned a good deal of repressed merriment in the rear of the room.

"Something pleasant going on?" she asked brightly, her eyes twinkling with amusement as she walked leisurely down the length of the room and looked over Luther's shoulders at the drawing he did not try to conceal.

"That is excellently done," said the teacher, quite simply and unaffectedly. "A very good picture of me. You have not got my nose quite large enough, but it looks very like me. You have the natural gift of the cartoonist, Sir Luther. How old are you? Only 16? Well, there is a great deal of merit in that little sketch, and I advise you to make the most of your talent. There is a good deal of money to be made in things of that kind. I am delighted to find such ability among my pupils, and shall be glad to encourage and help you all I can. I will pin the sketch upon the blackboard if you will kindly allow me to do so, where all can see and appreciate it, and I shall be glad to stay with you an extra half hour to-night and pose for you I would enjoy being sketched in different positions. Photographers always tell me that I am a good subject for a picture." And taking the rough little drawing, she pinned it carefully on the board, and then and there gave the entire school an admirable lesson in drawing.

This was a new order of things entirely. Luther Wilcox felt himself nonplussed for the first time. And what was

worse; the school, very generally, were looking at him as if they thought he was beaten, and were enjoying it immensely. He could not be angry with the teacher, for she seemed so thoroughly in earnest, and so sweetly sympathetic and was so interested in what she chose to call his talent, that, in spite of himself, Luther began to entertain ideas of making some profitable use of the native gift which he had only worked mischief with as yet. But the staying after school—he understood that. He was not so dull but what he knew that meant punishment, and he could not help an amused kind of admiration for the skill with which it had been arranged. He only wished that some of the rest of his colleagues would discover a talent to be kept for.

Hardly had the wish escaped him when a loud humming noise from Marian Leslie on the girls' side, accompanied by a musical whistle from Ralph Powers, attracted universal attention. Everybody looked at Miss Farnsworth to see what she would do. They expected to see her frown and pour forth a storm of words; at least threaten the severest measures; but she arose and going quietly, and with the sweetest face in the world, to the blackboard, began writing the notes to several bars of music. She did this rapidly and skillfully, and turning to Marian Leslie with the most engaging smile, said: "May I ask if I have caught the melody? Hearing it hummed and whistled only, I may have made a mistake. I am rejoiced to find such rare musical ability in the eighth grade, as well as artistic talent. It is my delight and highest aim to draw out and develop the intellectual gifts of my pupils, and I count nothing a sacrifice that will further their interests in this way, so that I shall be glad to have you stay to-night also, Miss Marian, together with your accompanist, Mr. Ralph Powers, who whistles delightfully. It will be nice for you to practice this duet for one of the Friday afternoon entertainments I purpose giving in the near future."

There was a dangerous sparkle in Miss Farnsworth's fine eyes that was in no sense lost upon her pupils, but she was so gracious that it was quite impossible to find any cause for complaint; but as one of the boys whispered to Luther, "It certainly looked as if she had the inside track."

So it went on during the short winter day. A comical story in verse by Arthur Pritchard, which was being circulated, was captured, read aloud, criticised and praised, and he was invited to stay after school also, and practice composition. Miss Helen Myers, who was secretly embroidering a center-piece instead of getting her lesson in mathematics, was startled by seeing the new teacher bending smilingly over her to examine her work, and remark upon her proficiency; and burst into angry tears at being invited to join the other talented ones in the exercise of her accomplishment.

"My parents object to my being kept after the regular school ours," said Miss Helen.

"They will not do so when they understand my motive," said Miss Farnsworth, coolly. "Parents always sympathize with a teacher who admires their children's fine qualities and makes an effort to help them on. I wish we had plenty of time to devote to literature, music, drawing and embroidery during the regular session, but as we have not, I am sure all interested parties will be delighted to know that we are staying a little while after the rest of the pupils are gone, for a quiet hour of improvement along these lines."

So the five insubordinates were obliged to remain and go through their teacher's requirements. Luther had to sketch Miss Farnsworth in three different positions; Marian was obliged to sing, and Ralph to whistle the notes to the silly little piece of music on the board; Arthur was compelled to write four eight-line verses, and Helen's task was to do a strawberry and two leaves on her centerpiece.

Night closed down early, and Miss Farnsworth lit the candle on her desk and asked the janitor to bring some more. There was a little colloquy between the two at the door, and in a few minutes he re-entered, bearing a large tray filled with sandwiches and cake, and tiny cups of hot chocolate from the bakery over the way.

"I thought you ought to have a little lunch," said the teacher kindly, "and as this is my party, I hope you will accept such refreshments as I am able to offer you at such a short notice."

This was too much. The girls fairly broke down and cried, and the boys looked as if they would enjoy sinking through the schoolroom floor.

Miss Farnsworth stood before them smiling, with her pad in one hand and her pencil in the other.

"What shall I write?" she asked gently. "That you are sorry and ashamed that you have used the highest and best qualities of your mind to destroy the peace and prosperity of the school? Do you realize how you have been prostituting the beautiful God-given gifts with which you may make blessed sunshine in the world and hosts of people happy? Oh, my dear girls and boys, let me beg you to direct them into different channels—to make up your minds to be a good influence, and make the eighth grade the best grade in this school. Luther ought to take drawing

lessons, and make the most of his wonderful talent. Marian should cultivate her voice, which is a beautiful one; Arthur has a taste for literature, and the others the same. Shall I write that you will? Shall I write a compact for you to sign, and will you sign it?"

There was a solemn pause for a moment, and then Luther Wilcox rose to his feet. "You may write it, and I will be the first to sign it Miss Farnsworth," he said. "I am ashamed of myself, but I never thought that I was abusing and insulting my own mind and ruining my self-respect. I see it now, and I thank you for the lesson."

And then the compact was written and signed, and a copy given to each to keep, and it was agreed that their deliberations that night were to be kept a profound secret.

"What's the matter with the eighth grade?" asked one of the upper floor pupils of Luther Wilcox shortly after. "I don't hear any howling down there any more. Guess you've got a teacher at last, haven't you?"

"We have that," said Luther, "the best teacher I ever saw. She makes a lesson out of everything. We are afraid to cut up now, for fear she will find some pearl of wisdom in our pranks, and set us to work digging it up. Teacher—she isn't anything else. She has even taught us foolish boys and girls how to be gentlemen and ladies, and that is the biggest lesson that was ever given to the eighth grade." —Kind Words.

Biddy.

BY DAVID LYALL.

Biddy observed that the family were in desperate straits. The story of Biddy's transplantation to a London street was in itself a bit of tender romance. She had been unearthed, at a cabin door in Wicklow, by a honeymoon pair who out of their own overflowing happiness would have blessed the world.

Katherine Warner, wife of Gerald Warner, a cashier at St. Mary Axe, began her married life, as most young housekeepers do, brimful of ideals, prepared to regenerate the whole system of housekeeping and relegate it to its fit and proper place, which is the background of human affairs. Years had worn the ideals a little thin, realities had pressed, but Biddy had never failed. Regarding her Katherine had made no mistake. Behind the merry mask and the bewildering Irish eyes, her fine perception had discerned the heart of gold. And not only discerned, but touched and kept it in allegiance to herself.

It was a Monday morning, and the atmosphere in the Warner household was distinctly Mondayish. Biddy polished the children's Sunday shoes and set them in a shining row. When she heard the hall door shut with quite a distinct bang she ran to the open door, and up the three steps. From the fourth she could see the street, and obtain what she at the moment most desired, a view of her master's retreating figure. And when she observed how bent were his once fine shoulders, how listless his step, she wrung her hands under her apron, and twisted her mouth. Then she went back to her own domain, took up an empty tray, and proceeded upstairs. It was a narrow London stairs, but to Biddy O'Shea it spelled home with a capital letter. It stood in a quiet green square in the northern latitudes between Highbury and Islington, within comfortable reach of Broad Street trains. At the beginning of things, the young people had fully considered these advantages, while intending it only as a temporary home. For Gerald would rise, of course, and they knew of an old-fashioned country-like cottage on the edge of the Hampstead Heath which was the ideal home. But after ten years it was further off than ever. Biddy slipped into the dining-room and beheld her mistress standing still, staring vacantly into the street. The attitude and expression smote terror to Biddy's soul; she rattled the cups to attract attention.

"Biddy, shut the door! Something very awful has happened."

"I felt it in me bones, ma'ma," said Biddy, and her voice trembled.

"Your master had a letter from his firm this morning and they have given him a month's notice."

"To leave?" queried Biddy, curiously. Her mistress nodded.

"What had master done?"

"It's his eyes, Biddy; they say he can't do his work. I suppose it's right from their point of view, but for us it's cruel hard."

Her composure suddenly gave way, and covering her face with her hands, the slow tears forced themselves between her fingers, and had worn themselves thin through much labor of love.

It was more than Biddy could stand. The next instant she was on her knees.

"Och, shure, my swate lamb, don't go fur till cry out yer purty eyes. It'll come all right fur shure, only don't cry. I've never seen nothing in this wurrld, no, niver, nothing worth cryin' about."

"But we are so poor, Biddy—even we owe money. I has cost so much for doctors lately, and somehow the chil-