A REWARD OF MERIT.

BY A. J. STEMPLE.

The pupils of a certain school in the little town of Dalton did not need to be told that their pretty young teacher, Harriet Blake, was in very bad humor. That fact was self-evident; for all day long she had snapped and scolded, and "shaken up" both boys and girls on the slightest provocation, until every one of her pupils voted her "the biggest crank that ever was."

The solemn old school clock was the object of much solicitous attention that day; and when at last the hands denoted the hour of four, Miss Blake speedily dismissed her charges, closed her desk with a resounding bang and then started homeward, first stopping at the schoolroom where her cousin, Nettie Leith, instructed a large number of our future men and women. She found Nettie engaged in clearing up her desk; and when she had finished both teachers went home together.

"What has gone wrong to-day, Harriet?" asked Nettie, noting her companion's clouded face. "You don't seem to be in very good spirits."

"Well, I'm not!" returned Harriet, decidedly; "I'm just as cross as a bear. This is the very worst and the most disagreeable place in the whole country, and the people in it match the town! I'm tired and disgusted with both; and I don't see how you can be contented in this dismal prison. The country is the doom of every ambitious person, and it is nonsense to imagine that one can accomplish anything in it; and of all things I'm sure teaching school in a country town is the worst! It's bad enough to live here; but to teach school!—" and Harriet heaved a deep sigh of disgust.

"Why, Hattie, what has come over you?" asked her cousin in amazement. "You have a pleasant position, and country school teaching isn't the worst occupation in the world by any means."

"Well if there is anything worse I should like to know it," snapped Harriet. "You haven't any ambition, Nettie, and so you don't mind; but I'm different, and I am tired of this everlasting drudge, drudge, and of teaching a lot of stupid children, and pleasing their ignorant parents. They don't appreciate anything one does, anyway.

"I don't quite believe that; for the people here are as intelligent as they are anywhere, and take unusual interest in education. Why, lots of them praise me and my school much more than I deserve."

"Of course they do! You are always so pleasant and agreeable to everyone you see. But as far as I am concerned, I can't for the life of me be agreeable to a lot of stupid villagers who are forever poking about in the schools when they ought to be minding their own business. They take everything for granted, and expect a teacher to take as much interest, and fuss as much over the pupils as though they paid her a thousand dollars a year; and I won't do it, that's all. The sooner I can get out of Dalton the happier I shall be!" concluded Harriet decidedly.

"I suppose you are going to the concert to-night?" asked Nettie, after a pause, thinking to turn the conversation.

"Why, of course. You are too, are you not?"

"I did intend to, but I can't now, for Jack Winby is coming over, and I am going to help him with his studies. He has been sick so long that he is behind, so I told him I would help him along. I had forgotten all about the concert when I promised; but I don't want to disappoint him, so I am not going."

"You silly girl!" burst forth Harriet. "Isn't it enough if you do what you are engaged for, without spending all your spare time over school matters into the bargain? I don't do a bit more work than I have to, and I am just as well off as you, though you are continually studying and working."

Harriet teased and expostulated, but Nettie refused to break her promise; so Harriet went to the concert, and had such a "good time" that she forgot all about her troubles.

Harriet Blake and Nettie Leith were cousins. Both had graduated from the academy in the neighboring city of Bradford, and shortly after had begun teaching school in Dalton, which was a country town of two or three thousand inhabitants. Both girls were very young, and of about the same age. One was as ambitious as the other, but the ambition manifested itself in different ways; in Harriet by continual castle-building and flights of imagination, and in Nettie in a more practical manner.

The months glided by, and Harriet was as discontented and grumbled as much as ever, and continually found fault with Nettie because her cousin would persist "in making a slave of herself for nothing." "What is the use of studying and reading so much?" Harriet was asked. "I'm sure you know more than enough to teach your school, and no one appreciates it, anyway."

One lovely day in early summer, just as Harriet had dismissed one class and was about to call another, a rap came to the door, and she admitted an elderly gentleman whom she had never before seen. That day Harriet had what she called "a blue streak," and to show her independence, and her contempt for visitors in general, and strangers in particular, she coolly seated herself at her desk and began to write a letter. She paid no attention to several widely-waving hands, the owners of which were vainly trying to attract "teacher's" attention, nor to her visitor, who eyed her curiously. After surveying this interesting school for a little while, he asked, respectfully:

"Will you have no class recite this morning?"

"Not at present," she tartly replied; "this is the study hour;" and then she calmly continued her writing.

The visitor soon left, with a civil "good morning," and when he had gone, and Harriet had finished her letter, she called out the class which she was about to hear recite when the visitor entered.

Nettie was in the midst of hearing an arithmetic recitation, when, in response to a knock, she admitted a gentleman who was a total stranger. She greeted him courteously, and then went on with the recitation; but never before had a class recited so wretchedly, especially before company. The subject that day was a new one, and the pupils seemed utterly unable to grapple with some of the mysteries of fractions. Seeing this, their youthful teacher said: "The class does not seem to understand the lesson very well, so I will try to explain the subject so that all may understand and remember;" and thereupon she explained the lesson so clearly, and went to the root of matters so thoroughly, that even those scholars who "hated arithmetic" grew interested and understood. So absorbed was Nettie in her work that she forgot all about her visitor, who was intently listening to every word, and whose face was positively radiant with delight as his eyes swept over the scene. He remained and heard several other recitations with no abatement of interest, and after complimenting Nettie and her school he took his leave.

"Did a strange, elderly gentleman visit your school to-day?" asked Nettie of Harriet as they were going home.

"Yes; a countryman that I have never seen before was in," returned Harriet, "but I paid no attention to him, and he did not stay long. No one seemed to know who he was; probably a stranger in town, who didn't know what else to do to while away the time."

A few weeks after this Nettie suddenly rushed into Harriet's room, and thrusting a letter into her cousin's hand excitedly said: "Read that!" And this is what met Harriet's wondering eyes as she complied:

"BRIGHTON, July 19, 1894.

"MISS NETTIE LEITH, Dear Madam: A vacancy has occurred in the West school of this city, and, if agreeable to you, I would like to have you accept the position, beginning with the coming term. The salary is one thousand dollars a year, with the usual vacations. Advise me at once whether you accept, for there are numerous applicants; but I make you this proposition after seeing your work in your present school. Yours truly,

"JOHN NOURSE, Supt."

"Why, Nettie Leith!" exclaimed Harriet when she had recovered from her amazement. "What a lucky mortal you are! I congratulate you heartily. How I wish I were in your shoes! That Mr. Nourse is one of the greatest educators of the day, and there is no telling how high you can get now that you have such a splendid opportunity in the city. When did you get this golden letter?"

"Just a little while ago; and I never was so surprised in my life. I couldn't believe it was meant for me."

"Just your luck! When did Mr. Nourse visit your school? You never told me a thing about it," returned Harriet, reproachfully.

"That is just what troubles me," thoughtfully replied Nettie. "I have been thinking and thinking; but he was never in the school that I know of. But—why, Hattie, I wonder if it could have been that elderly man whom no one knew? He visited your school, too, you remember; and that must have been Mr. Nourse. He visited my school several times after that, but he never hinted who he was."

"That was surely he, and I thought he was nothing but an ordinary countryman," groaned Harriet. "He was in my school only once, but that day I was ill humored and I was positively rude to him, and he soon left. What a fool I was! I might have impressed him as favorably as you have done; but this is only another case of 'it might have been,'" and Harriet almost shed tears at the thought.

"I remember now of reading somewhere that Mr. Nourse had a habit of visiting schools where he was unknown, and of studying teachers and their methods. In that way he often obtained his best instructors; but I cannot understand why he should offer me such a position," said Nettie.

"Because you deserve it," returned Harriet, kissing her cousin effusively; "and here I have been scolding you, and saying ugly things right along, and telling you that you had no ambition. Yet, in spite of my boasting and much vaunted ambition, you have risen above me. Serves me right; but can you forgive me for teasing you so?"

"There is nothing to forgive, Hattie. I often grew tired and discouraged, too; but I would not give in, and made up my mind to do the best I could."

"Well, I know one thing," replied Harriet, decisively, "I am going to reform and try your plan, and see if I will fare as well as you."

And so it came about that as Miss Nettie Leith, who was highly successful in her new school, was reading her favorite newspaper, she came across this paragraph:

"Miss Harriet Blake, one of the most popular teachers in Dalton, has just been appointed an instructor in Bradford academy. Miss Blake is still very young, but her efficient and successful work and methods have secured for her the above desirable position."

A few days later Nettie received a characteristic letter from Harriet, informing her of the rise in her fortunes, and the letter closed with these words:

"I have found out that the only way to be appointed 'ruler over many things' is by demonstrating one's faithfulness over the little ones, and that 'work' is the magic 'open sesame' to the door of success."—Demorest's Magazine.

The Drawback.

Mrs. Dorcas—I see only one objection to our sex wearing men's clothes.

Dorcas—And that?

Mrs. Dorcas—They cost so much less.—Life.

—It is at the approach of extreme danger, when a hollow puppet can accomplish nothing, that power falls into the mighty hands of nature, of the spirit giant born, who listens only to himself and knows nothing of compacts.—Schiller.

HEART DISEASE, like many other ailments when they have taken hold of the system, never gets better of its own accord, but ***Constantly grows worse.*** There are thousands who know they have a defective heart, but will not admit the fact. They don't want their friends to worry, and ***Don't know what to take for it,*** as they have been told time and again that heart disease was incurable. Such was the case of Mr. Silas Farley of Dyesville, Ohio who writes June 19, 1894, as follows:

"I had heart disease for 23 years, my heart hurting me almost continually. The first 15 years I doctored all the time, trying several physicians and remedies, until my last doctor told me it was only a question of time as I could not be cured. I gradually grew worse, very weak, and completely discouraged, until I lived, propped half up in bed, because I ***couldn't lie down*** nor sit up. Thinking my time had come I told my family what I wanted done when I was gone. But on the first day of March on the recommendation of Mrs. Fannie Jones, of Anderson, Ind., I commenced taking ***Dr. Miles' New Cure for the Heart*** and wonderful to tell, in ten days I was working at light work and on March 19 commenced framing a barn, which is heavy work, and I hav'nt lost a day since. I am 56 years old, 6 ft. 4½ inches and weigh 250lbs. ***I believe I am fully cured,*** and I am now only anxious that everyone shall know of your wonderful remedies."

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"Ah!" cries madame, "Quel malheur! What a stupid bookkeeper is mine! Of course it is a mistake, my dear Mrs. Ponsonby. I am desolated it should occur! I will rectify it at once. Both ribbons should have been charged at $1."—Truth.

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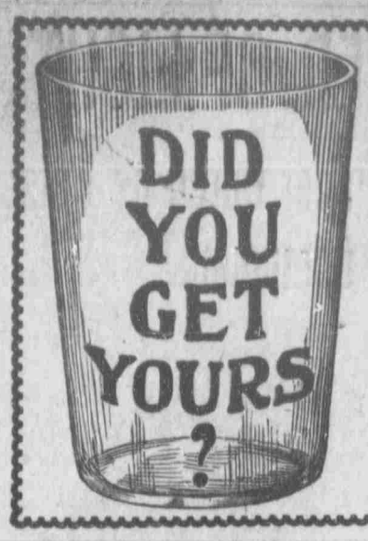

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Editor Florida Agriculturist:

I notice that your Florida farmers and fruit men think their lot has been a hard one the past season, and that the net result of their toil and labor was dollars for the railroads and only glory and empty purses for the producers. From the enclosed clipping from a St. Louis, Mo., daily, dated August 18, you will see that the Florida people are not the only ones "not in it," for here, too, with an excellent home market and fair freight rates thereto, the producers talk of letting fruit stuff rot on the trees because of unprofitable prices. Here, however, it seems more of a case where nature has been too lavish and plentiful with her gifts—far in excess of the needs of consumers, even at the low prices for all kinds of fruits and produce.

H. G. WURDEMAN.

Old Orchard, Mo.

The following are the clippings referred to:

"A disgusted fruit grower in Phelps county, Mo., who has tried various markets with his early fruits, writes his merchant here that he has not got enough out of his shipments so far to pay for the nails in the packages used, and that he is sick and tired of working in the hot sun with such results, and to send him a buyer for his forty acre apple orchard and he will sell the fruit on a basis of the value of the trees for cord wood."

"A few hours' ride over any of the railroads in either Illinois or Missouri, through any of the fruit-growing counties, discloses the fact that the orchards are still heavily loaded with fine fruit—apples, peaches, pears, and plums; and notwithstanding the big display of fruits in every market, the quantities shipped are scarcely missed. Therefore the mountains of fruit in every city at present and averaging very little above the freight charges, represent only a fraction of the yield in sight. It is clear, therefore, that a large portion of the various crops will be permitted to spoil in the orchards, since shipping it all is out of the question. Dried and evaporated fruit is already so low, as the result of the small shipments of new stock, that the outlook is rather discouraging for both the evaporated and dried stock."

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