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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SCHOOL-ROOM HUMOUR \*\*\*

# SCHOOL-ROOM HUMOUR.

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DR. MACNAMARA *desires to thank the Directors of the "SCHOOLMASTER" for the right to use most of the stories which follow. He desires also to thank his old friends, the teachers up and down the country, whose anecdotes he is presuming to put into print.*

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School-Room  
Humour

BY  
DR. MACNAMARA, M.P.

THIRD EDITION

*"Faith is what makes you believe what you know to be untrue"*  
TRUTHFUL JAMES, aged 10

BRISTOL  
J. W. ARROWSMITH LTD., QUAY STREET  
LONDON  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & COMPANY LIMITED  
1913

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*Second Edition (enlarged) 1907*

*Third Edition (with picture cover) 1913*

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The original Edition of *School-Room Humour* published two years ago gave so much pleasure to so many people that it has occurred to me that a new and enlarged edition may prove not entirely unacceptable. I have therefore added the best from my collection since the first publication; and now, as then, tender my thanks to the proprietors of the *Schoolmaster* and to my friends the elementary school teachers.

T. J. MACNAMARA.

*January, 1907.*

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

*School-Room Humour* having proved a constant source of enjoyment to an ever-widening public, the Publishers have pleasure in issuing a third edition, revised, and with a picture cover, and trust that in its new dress the little book will continue to provide amusement for a large circle of readers.

*September, 1913.*

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## School-Room Humour.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A LITTLE GENERAL DISQUISITION.

TEACHER: "*What does B.C. stand for?*"

SCHOLAR: "*Before Christ!*"

TEACHER: "*Good! Now what does B.A. stand for?*"

SCHOLAR: "*Before Adam!*"

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It is not to be denied that the life of the schoolmaster is always exacting, usually tedious, and occasionally irritating. It is not to be denied that long-enduring patience, untiring perseverance, and philosophical resignation are only the first three of the many qualities essential to success. But still the drudgery of teaching has its compensations. And they are the more acceptable because of their rare charm. There, in the schoolmaster's keeping, is the youthful mind. What may he not do with it? What forgetfulness of the dreary round of toil the very contemplation of the situation compels! And when his task is achieved, and the finished product of his labour has passed out into the world, with what quiet and ineffable satisfaction the schoolmaster reflects upon the part he played in the making of men. In the days of my schoolmastering I fell into this mood always—gently carried thence by some beneficent ministering angel—when wearied and worried at the close of the long day's toil; and in that mood was more balm than in many sedatives and more serenity than in much repose. This is the schoolmaster's first great compensation.

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But there is that other. There is the agreeable amazement that the working of the fresh child-mind is always provoking. And in this the schoolmaster is regularly furnished with food for pleasant reflection and for engaging conjecture day by day throughout the whole of his pedagogic career. "Child-study" and "Psychology" have in recent times taken severely scientific shape, and have fallen under the ægis of Government Departments and into Government Syllabuses. Good! But the least observant and the least interested of all the schoolmasters of the land, long before the Board of Education ever added "Child-study" to its quaint if not exactly terrifying terminology, have never failed to arrive empirically at certain broad conclusions with regard to the child-mind which have been reached by practical and altogether delightful daily experiences. Heaven forbid that I should unduly weary the reader with disquisitions on these conclusions. But, at any rate, I may acceptably rehearse some of the experiences.

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Now I admit at once that very many of the artlessly amusing things which are alleged to have been uttered by that prime unconscious humorist, the schoolboy, are quite apocryphal. They have been ingeniously excogitated by their unabashed and artful elders for the purpose of creating a laugh. They used to say that quill pens survived in the office of the Board of Education in order that the Inspectors and other officials, in the operation of persistently trimming them, might never be without something to do. That is absurd. There is always the profitable preoccupation of manufacturing funny puerile answers to inspectorial hypothetical questions. Why not? The proceeding is innocent enough. But it *does* tend to make one incredulous. For example, I was once told that a London Board School child defined "*a lie*" as "*an abomination in the sight of the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble.*" It is possible, remotely possible. But it is extremely unlikely. Then when I am told that a youngster described "*the liver*" as "*an infernal organ,*" I see visions of a not fully-occupied civil servant suffering acutely from an attack of chronic indigestion

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which has put him badly off his drive. So, too, when I am told that a Bristol youngster once wrote, "*The bowels are five in number, namely a, e, i, o and u,*" like the Scotsman, "I hae ma doots!" Then there is the classic answer to the question: "What proof have we from the Bible that it is not lawful to have more than one wife"—"*Because it says no man can serve two masters!*" No child ever said *that*. And belonging to the same category is the following. The teacher asked: "If one man walking at the rate of three miles an hour gets half an hour's start of another man walking at the rate of four miles an hour, when will the second man overtake the first?" The allegation is that the small boy replied: "*Please, sir, at the first public-house!*" But I know that small boy. He is a wag, it is true; but he doesn't wear knickerbockers.

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So far as possible, therefore, I will endeavour to reject the apocryphal in favour of the authentic, giving the former the benefit of the doubt, of course, if on its merits the humour of the anecdote seems to condone the illegitimacy of its origin.

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## CHAPTER II.

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### CHILDREN'S WITTICISMS CRITICALLY CONSIDERED.

*"A focus is a thing that looks like a mushroom, but if you eat it you will feel different to a mushroom."*—SMALL GIRL.

Of course children's witticisms are always unconscious. They have taken the idiomatic quite literally: not quite caught our meaning; missed the right word in favour of another that is curiously like it in sound.

Reasonably enough the idiom is extremely troublesome to the child-mind. "The doctor says my mother has one foot in the grave," wrote a little girl the other day in a Composition Exercise. "That is not true. *She has both feet in bed!*" Again, if people *will* talk about "going it bald-headed," or about being "stony-hearted" or "iron-fisted" or "brazen-faced," and so on, they must naturally expect young children to accept the phraseology in its literal sense. Hence amusing misconceptions.

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Again, as I say, it is often a question of not having quite got the right word. Having mumbled The Lord's Prayer every day for a year or so, we ultimately get the young Cockney who is found to be rendering "Lead us not into temptation" as "*Lead us not into Thames Station*"—a London police court shunned of all good costers and others. So too, taught that the Epiphany is a Manifestation, we condone readily the mistake of the little girl who, to her teacher's complete and abiding mystification, insisted that the Epiphany was "*the-man-at-the-station!*"

Owing its origin to the same sort of misconception is the genuinely funny answer of the boy who wrote, "The marriage customs of the ancient Greeks were that a man had only one wife, and this was called *Monotony!*"

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Then, again, the child-mind is absolutely fresh and alert. It is to the adult mind as is the plastic clay to the baked brick. It is not already overlaid with impressions; it is not restricted in its elasticity by the petrifying effects of already-received preconceptions; it is refreshingly new and instantly impressionable. It is because of this that a youngster wrote: "*A vacuum is nothing shut up in a box.*" It is because of this, too, that the little girl said: "The zebra is like a horse, only striped *and used to illustrate the letter Z.*" Owing its origin to the same freshness of view, we get the following: Two children being awakened one morning and being told that they had a new little brother, were keen, as children are, to know whence and how he had come. "It must have been the milkman," said the girl. "Why the milkman?" asked her little brother. "*Because it says on his cart, 'Families supplied,'*" replied the sister. Not less quaintly ingenuous and fresh is the reply of a little chap in a Nature-study lesson. "Think," said the teacher, "of a little creature that wriggles about in the earth and sometimes comes to the top through a tiny hole." A small boy in a pinafore put up his hand joyously. "Well?" queried the teacher. "A worm," said the small boy. "Yes," said the teacher, "now think of another little creature that wriggles about in the earth and comes to the top through a small hole." Up went the joyous hand again. "Well?" asked the teacher. "*Another worm!*" shouted Tommy in triumph.

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The workings of the child-mind, the quaint, homely wisdom and shrewdness that it not

infrequently displays, and the pathos that—so far as the working-class children are concerned—it so often discovers, are engrossingly interesting. Take the case of the reply to the Inspector who, putting a "Mental Arithmetic" question, asked: "If I had three glasses of beer on this table and your father came in and drank one, how many would be left?" "None, sir," at once replied a very small urchin. "But you don't understand my question," retorted the inspector, proceeding to repeat it. This he did several times, always receiving the same unwavering assurance, "None, sir!" At last he said: "Ah, my boy, it is clear you don't know mental arithmetic." "*But I know my father,*" answered the boy.

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Again, there is the instance of the little chap driven into desperation and escaping by a wild stretch of the imagination. "Who made the world?" snapped out a rather testy inspector years ago to a class of very small boys. No answer. Several times he repeated the question, getting louder and more angry each time. At last a poor little fellow, kneading his eyes vigorously with his knuckles, blubbered out: "*Please, sir, it was me. But I won't do it any more!*" Which recalls to me the old Scotch chestnut: "Why did the priest and the Levite pass by on the other side, child?" "*Because the pair man had been robbed already!*" was the reply.

Much of the school-room humour purveyed for the delectation of us elders by the unconscious wits of the schoolroom is provoked by quaint pieces of "Composition." Of these I give later a number. One of the most amusing is that by a young lady in the Sixth Standard, who very frankly and faithfully expresses her views on "Schoolmasters." She writes so candidly, that I produce her essay here as a wholesome corrective to professional vanity and as an acute witness to the necessity to "see ourselves as others see us":—

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"Schoolmasters are a class of people who have a tendency to a bad temper, and who are generally armed with a cane. We have a very good sample at our school, for we have a schoolmaster who is, as a rule, 'better in health than temper,' especially when we have Geography. To hear most schoolmasters talk you would think that they never did wrong in their lives; and, of course, they will tell you that when they went to school they never used to talk, and they never got the stick; but whether they used to talk in school or not I do not know. All I can say is, that they can talk like magpies when they are outside. Well, I suppose we must have schoolmasters, or we should all be very ignorant indeed—."

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Much fun is got out of the weird and fearfully contrived "Notes" which teachers receive from the poorer working-class parents. I have not dwelt much on these, as I never see one of these "Notes" without feeling more inclined to cry than to laugh. If the State had known and had done its duty earlier there would be less melancholy fun in these self-same parental "Notes." I will only dare to reproduce two here:—

"Pleas Sur, Jonnie was kep home to day. I have had twins. *It shant ocur again.* Yours truly Mrs. Smith."

The other is given in the stories which follow; but it is worth repeating:—

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"Plese excuse mary being late as she *as been out on a herring!*"

It is the fact, and it is not altogether to be wondered at, that the Scripture lesson is a prime source of juvenile undoing. The proper names used are so hard and unfamiliar, and the scope of the subject is so often so far beyond the children's capacity, that the wonder is that the misconceptions and errors are so few. Then, again, the children mostly learn their Scripture texts and so on *viva voce* from the teacher. Many repetitions cause them to distort the words; and then when they come to write them down the result is, not to put too fine a point upon it, as Mr. Snagsby would say, startling. The classical instance is that given in the report of the "Newcastle" Commission on the Condition of Elementary Education in 1855. The questions were: "What is thy duty towards God?" and "What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?" Here are the two answers given by the Commissioners:—

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"My duty toads God is to bleed in Him, to fering and to loaf withold your arts, withold my mine, withold my sold, and with my sernth, to whirchp and give thanks, to put my old trash in Him, to call upon Him, to onner His old name and His world, and to save Him truly all the days of my life's end." "My dooty toads my nabers, to love him as thyself, and to do to all men as I wed thou shall and to me; to love onner, and suke my farther and mother; to onner and to bay the Queen and all that are pet in a forty under her; to smit myself to all my gooness, teaches, sportial pastures, and marsters, &c., &c."

One of the funniest of mistakes made by the daily verbal reiteration of phrases neither understood nor seen in black and white is the story of the boy who came back from a visit to an aquarium and was very disappointed that they had not shown him "*the timinies.*" After some cross-examination the mystery was cleared up. It will be fully appreciated if I recite the fact that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, *and all that in them is.*"

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What I may, for lack of a better definition, describe as an oblique method of applying what those very learned and very dull people the Psychologists call "the Principle of Association of

Ideas" is another fruitful source of laughable errors. For instance, teach a child that "*tigress*" is the feminine of "*tiger*"; now proceed to tell it that "*a fort*" is a place in which soldiers live; the odds are that if you ask it at once what "*a fortress*" is it will say that it is a place for soldiers' wives to live in! So it will tell you that "*Shero*" is the feminine of "*Hero*," and "*Madam*" of "*Adam*"! You may also get "*Buttress*" as "*the wife of a Butler*." Certainly I have seen "*Pedigree is a Schoolmaster*," and "*Filigree is a list of your descendants!*"

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Tell a youngster that "*an optician*" is a person who looks after your eyes and then ask what "*a pessimist*" is, the odds are some little gamin will reply, "*A person who looks after your feet*," or "*your hands*," or "*your ears*," or "*your legs*," as the fancy strikes him. Describe "*an Apostle*" and then say, "*Now what's an Epistle?*" and you may get, "*The wife of an Apostle*." You may also get "*Primate*" as the wife of "*a Prime Minister*."

It is very curious to note how children are attracted by Mr. Chamberlain. He and King Edward are the two public men whose names appear most often in their "Pieces of Composition." Such men as the Prime Minister, the Duke of Devonshire, and even Lord Rosebery—always popular figures with adults—have no attractions for the youngsters. Indeed, Mr. Chamberlain provokes one of the funniest things in the whole of the anecdotes which I have ventured to relate. "*He is a man*," writes a young hopeful, "*who broke out among other people!*" Isn't that just delicious? I am half inclined to think that the distinguished Parliamentarian who just now leads the House of Commons would utter a fervent "Hear! hear!" were that simple and yet striking answer rehearsed to him.

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What quiet humour, too, there is in that rare definition of "*Etc.*": "*It is a sign used to make believe you know more than you do!*" Take, again, the reason given for David's preference. Why would he rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord? "*Because he could walk about outside while the sermon was being preached!*" Could anything be more convincing? Or take, again, that rare new axiom that outeuchres Euclid: "*When you are in the middle you are half over!*" Did ever the self-evident truth stand more completely foursquare and without need of proof?

Still again, take the reason given for putting a hyphen between *bird* and *cage*: "*For the bird to perch on!*" Not less conclusive is the little one's reply in the lesson on "The elephant and his trunk." "Now my dear," says the amiable and hopeful infants' mistress, "you shall tell me what *your* nose is for." "*Us* *has* *it* *to* *wipe*, *miss!*" Which recalls the rough, commonsense reproof which a Roman Catholic priest once gave a distinguished inspector who was examining a class of ragged little Standard II. gamins in a poor town school in the western country: "*What, boys,*" he asked, "*is the function of a verb?*" Blank silence reigned until the priest stepped up to the inspector and said *sotto voce*: "*You are an old ass—! It's as much as we can do here to get these youngsters to stand upright and keep their noses clean!*"

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But let me without further running—and more or less impertinent—comment try to classify my budget of anecdotes and let them speak for themselves. I will only add to this critical comment the fact that the stories which follow have been collected assiduously and stored up jealously during the thirty years I have been connected with schoolmastering either as Board School teacher, a London School Board member, or as editor of the organ of the National Union of Teachers, *The Schoolmaster*, in the columns of which journal most of them have from time to time appeared.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### A BUDGET OF QUAIN'T DEFINITIONS.

TEACHER: "*Name the head of the English Church.*"

ALFRED THE SMALL: "*The Archipelago of Canterbury!*"

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I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to classify my collection of stories. And in pursuance of this purpose I cannot, perhaps, do better than start out with some quaint definitions.

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WITH A RING OF TRIUMPH.—A class of infants was being taught a recitation in which the word "battledore" occurred. The teacher asked if any child knew the meaning. Only one child raised his hand, and, with a ring of triumph in his voice, gave the answer: "*A door what a soldier comes out of.*"

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"WHAT THEY CALL A WATERSHED."—Asked to write a definition of "A Watershed" one potential Christopher Columbus wrote: "A watershed is a thing that when the soil in part of a river stands straight up on one side and slants tremendously the other side, the water is obliged to go up the soil on one side and come slanting down the other side—that is what they call a watershed."

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A NEW VIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION.—"A Limited Monarchy," wrote a small boy, "is a government by a monarchy, who in case of bankruptcy would not be responsible for the entire national debt. In private life you have the same thing with a Limited Liability Company."

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CONCERNING THE HERETIC.—"A Heretic," wrote a practical young person, "is one who never would believe what he was told, but only after seeing it and hearing it himself with his own eyes."

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NOT SO FAR OUT.—"The Court of Chancery," wrote another, "is called this because they take care of property there on the chance of an owner turning up."

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SHORT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION.—"The Five Mile Act was passed," according to one youthful historian, "by Queen Victoria to prevent loafing and drunkenness in public-houses. People must prove that they had travelled five miles before they would be supplied with beer and spirits. This made people ashamed to get so drunk as before." The youthful essayist is clearly muddling "the *bona fide* traveller" clause with the provisions of a much more ancient statute.

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ROUGH ON THE BARBER.—Teacher (after class had read of St. Paul's adventures among the "barbarians of Melita"): "What is a Barbarian?" Pupil: "*A man who cuts hair, sir!*"

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A NEW AXIOM.—In the Euclid lesson the teacher asked, after explaining the meaning of An Axiom, if a boy could give one of his own. A lad replied: "*When you are in the middle you are half-way over.*" And who shall say him nay?

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A MEDIATOR.—"Well, John," asked the master, "what is a Mediator?" John's face beamed knowingly: "*A fellow who says hit me instead!*" he promptly retorted.

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B.A.!—During a reading lesson, taken from Standard III. Historical Reader, the pupil teacher asked what the letters "B.C." represented. On receiving the answer "Before Christ," she ventured to improve the opportunity by asking for the meaning of other abbreviations, amongst which was B.A. A little girl at once said: "*Before Adam!*"

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ETC.!—"What do we imply when we use this abbreviation?" asked the teacher. "*It is a sign,*" said a young one very sententiously, "*which is used to make believe you know more than you really do!*"

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"PAINTED ON THE WATER-CARTS."—"What is a Martyr?" asked the inspector. "*A water-cart.*" "A water-cart?" "*Yes, sir.*" The inspector was puzzled; but after long cogitation he recalled the fact that he was in the parish of St. George the Martyr. This parish does its own contracting, and the boy has seen "*St. George the Martyr*" painted on the water-carts.

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WHAT IS A ZEBRA?—A class of Standard II. in a small town in Westmoreland was once questioned about the zebra. There seemed to be a great lack of knowledge about it, and the young teacher strove with heroic patience to draw some answer from his pupils. Great was the delight of both teacher and class on receiving the following apt definition from one of their number: "*Please, sir, it's like a donkey with a Kendal Hornet's jersey on.*"

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"GEOGRAPHY."—"Well, little boys, and what *is* Geography?" beamed the inspector, after getting correctly some names of rivers, mountains, &c. No answer for two minutes by the clock. Then one timid hand is raised in answer to the question: "*Please, sir, jography is a ball on which we live!*" This recalls the story of the boy who was asked for a proof that the world is round. His answer was: "*It says in the Bible, World without end!*"

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TRUE BOTH WAYS.—Some years ago, writes a teacher, I used to take Standard I. on Wednesday afternoons for a talk on the subject of Geography. I had on one occasion a magnet and a compass, and was amusing the little ones with the magnet. They seemed to have some idea of the meaning and use of the compass, and it occurred to me whether they knew what a mariner was, so I asked them. No answer. After some time one precocious very small boy ventured: "*Please, sir, it's a young man what goes after a young ooman.*" [Query: "*a-marrying her.*"]

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TOUCHING THE EQUATOR.—"What," demanded the inspector, "is the Equator?" "The Equator," said one ingenious hopeful, "is a *menagerie lion* running round the centre of the earth."

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ABOUT THE STRETCHER.—A London infant school. The Raising of the Widow's Son. Illustrations, Religious Tract Society Scripture Roll. Story told by teacher. Pointing to the bier: "What is he lying on?" *Ans.*: "A stretcher."—*Ques.*: "What *is* a stretcher?" *Ans.*: "*Wot lydies rides on when they gets drunk!*"

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TEN BRIEF ONES.—"The Chartists were men who compelled King John to sign Magna Charta."—"The Luddites were shells fired by the Boers."—"Sir Joseph Chamberlain invented fiscal policy, and generally wears an orchard in his coat."—"By the Salic Law no woman can become King."—"Wat Tyler was the leader of the Pheasants' Revolt."—"The Channel Islands consist of Jersey, Gansey, Alderman, and Shark."—"Quid pro quo means paying a sovereign for goods of the given value!"—"Poetry is when every line begins with a capital letter."—"Parliament is a place where they go up to London *to talk about Birmingham!*"—"The principal parts of the eye are the pupil, the moat, and the beam."

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SOME INGENIOUS ONES.—*Ques.*: "What are Bacteria?" *Ans.*: "A kind of chair for invalids."—*Ques.*: "What is meant by the term *celestial pole*?" *Ans.*: "*A heavenly perch.*"—*Ques.*: "Which is the first and great Commandment?" *Ans.*: "*Hang all the law and the prophets!*"—*Ques.*: "What is Lava?" *Ans.*: "The stuff a barber puts on your face."—*Teacher* (pointing to an *oblique* line): "What kind of line is that?" *Scholar*: "*A hori-slant-al line.*"—*Teacher*: "What does the abdomen contain?" *Scholar*: "The stomach, liver, and *interestines.*"—*Teacher*: "What did the doctor say about your throat?" *Scholar*: "He said I must not eat any *solemn* food."—*Teacher*: "Who was Guy Fawkes?" *First Pupil*: "Guy Fox was a man who tried to destroy Parliament." (Girl's answer.) *Second Pupil*: "Guy Forks is a man made by another man." (Boy's answer.)—*Teacher*: "Say what you know about Columbus." *Scholar*: "Columbus saw two blue-eyed Saxon boys in the market-place to be sold as slaves. He turned away with his heart full of thoughts."—*Ques.*: "Who is Mr. Chamberlain?" *Ans.*: "A man who broke out among other people."—*Ques.*: "What is a Bay?" *Ans.*: "A Bay's a piece of land, which the sea has washed away and made a hollow."—*Ques.*: "Who were the Lollards?" *Ans.*: "The Lollards were men who used to sing in the streets."—*Ques.*: "Who was Cardinal Wolsey?" *Ans.*: "Cardinal Wolsey was a haughty prelate. He permitted his hat to be carried before him on a cushion."—*Ques.*: "Who was Cranmer?" *Ans.*: "Cranmer was Archbishop of Oxford University, and was burnt at a steak."—*Ques.*: "In what character was Mrs. Scott-Siddons painted by Gainsborough?" *Ans.*: "The tragic mouse."—*Ques.*: "What do you understand by the Salic Law?" *Ans.*: "The Salic Law forbade any man descended from a woman inheriting the throne."—*Ques.*: "What are the chief mountains of Scotland?" *Ans.*: "Ben Nevis, Ben Lomond, and Ben Jonson."—*Ques.*: "How many senses have we? Name them." *Ans.*: "We have two senses, wrong and right."—*Ques.*: "How is silence expressed in music?" *Ans.*: "Silence in music is expressed by putting your feet on the paddles."—*Ques.*: "What is a blizzard?" *Ans.*: "The inside of a fowl."

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## CHAPTER IV.

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"I NOW TAKE MY PEN IN HAND."

A policeman passes.

SMITH MINOR, aged 9: "*I shall be a bobby when I grow up!*"

SMITH MAJOR, aged 11: "*No! my dear child. You'll never have the feet for it!*"

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The curious workings of the child-mind are nowhere more conspicuously illustrated than in the little essays and "pieces of composition" which they are set to write. Of course many of the children in the poorer elementary schools possess only a very limited and very primitive vocabulary. Hence, when they adventure upon rather long and unfamiliar words—conscientiously trying to reproduce what they have just heard the teacher say in the general verbal description of the story to be committed by them to paper—they often achieve fantastic results. But far more interesting is the fresh and original view of a given situation which emerges. Far more interesting, too, are the homely wit and the shrewd wisdom which these wholly delightful little efforts display. Let these attest.

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"IT WOULD BE WORTH IT."—"What would you do with £5?" having been set to a class of girls, the following was one of the forthcoming replies: "Dear Teacher,—If I had five pounds of my very own to do just what I like with, I should go on a railway journey and pull the alarm signal and just see what really would happen. Of course the five pounds would go to pay the fine; but I think it would be worth it.—I remain your loving —."

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MAN'S CLEVERNESS.—In a composition on Man a boy wrote, among other things: "Man is the only animal that can strike a light, and also he is the only animal that blows his nose."

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WHY THEY PUNCH THE TICKET.—In a piece of composition on "A Railway Journey" a girl writes: "You have to get a ticket, which is a piece of paper, and you give it to a man, who cuts a hole in it *to let you pass through.*"

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GUNPOWDER PLOT.—"Gunpowder plot," wrote a nine-year-old youngster, "died in the year 1603. They gave Guyfawls 100 of pounds for to blow up the parliament. Gunpowder plot married Sir Philp Sidney. Gunpowder plot had a battle with Guyfawls. Guyfawls wone the battle."

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SHOULD MAKE A GOOD JOURNALIST.—The other day I told my class (Standard VII.) to write me an account of an imaginary expedition to the North Pole. Here is an extract from one paper: "At last, we reached the North Pole. *We sailed into the harbour and went to see the town!*"

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CONCERNING THE PIG.—Standard V. Boy: "A pig when living has four legs, but when you kill it the butcher says it only has two, because he calls the front legs shoulders and the back legs are called hams. Ham tastes nice, and they boil it to eat at a wedding. The missus sprinkles little bits of toast on it to make it look pretty."

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CONCERNING HARES (Standard III. Composition).—"Young hares are called leveretts. Hares sleep much. They always sleep with their eyes open. Hares have no eyelashes. Their four legs are shorter than their hind legs. Their ear-ring is remarkably good. Hares pass their lives in soletude and silents. They are often hunted on horseback and by hownds."

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ON "AN INSECT."—"An insect's body is made up of ringed segments. When we tread on beetles we hear them crack, that is the segments. Insects have not red blood it is a sort of white liquid squas a fly and you will see what colour blood it has. The fly likes to lay its eggs in meat where the maggots will have food for she must die soon and will not be able to feed her brood."

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THE CAMEL (by a beginner).—"Its nest is a very mean one, made of twigs, leaves, &c. It has a large body, and it is able to carry it full of water. It has two humps of fat on its back, on which it is able to feed when it is hungry. Its feet are webbed, in which it is able to cross the desert. Its air is used to make brushes which are used for painting. It also lays eggs. It eats worms."

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THE SALVATION ARMY (Standard IV.).—"The Salvation Army is mostly on the street. The women in it cover up all their hair with funny sorts of bonnets that stick out in front to keep the rain off their faces. Sometimes they have names on their hats like sailors. They make a deal of noise the worsed two is called captain and leftennant. They tell people about Jesus and make collections."

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GIBRALTAR.—"Gibraltar is a strait on the west coast of France. It is famous for a beautiful rock. It is about one mile wide and five miles long. The English people took Gibraltar, and they placed a great many big guns there. There are a great many people at Gibraltar called apes. And the other people are very proud of them because they are the only apes in Gibraltar. It is said they came from America."

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ALCOHOL AND THE BLOOD.—"Of what is our blood composed, and what effect has alcohol upon it?" This was the question. The following is the written answer: "It is made up of five million red insects and one thousand white ones to every drop of blood. If alcohol is taken it causes these insects to dry up and die and come to the front of the body. Sometimes it is from this cause that people who drink alcohol are red in the face."

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THE ANCIENT BRITONS.—It was the first year of compulsory composition, and Standard III. were asked to reproduce a lesson on the Ancient Britons in their own words. One young hopeful wrote: "The acient britons had no close on, they painted a wode on there body and it kept them a bit warm, there chief men was called druids and my farther is one, they call them acient britons becose it is a long time since."

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PERSEVERANCE. [Essayist aged 10.]—"Were theirs a will theirs a way. This is a very old proverb that has to do with what I'm writing. If we nearly always succeed we always is getting on, but if we don't succeed, we should try till we dose and then we should do it again which is a very wise way to persever. People who sits down never gets on and People who gets on dont sit down. We should all get on because it is the best thing to do at all times. We will have trails (trials?) but we must try again until them trails is gone."

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TOUCHING BREAD.—The exercise was, "Write an essay on Bread." The following was the result: "Bread is made with flour and barm and is very useful. It is used for the people to eat and feeds them right. The bread gets cheapper every year sometimes. The bread as raised this year. But the people says it is getting the right weather. The bread is needed up by men and women. It is best when the men make the bread. Some of the women says that brown bread is good for their health. Bread is sometimes used for bread potises. Bread is a useful food escpecially the crust. But crust is the best for to make peoples hair curel. Bread is used for making sop for children. The bread is made with flour, barm, and water."

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A JAPANESE LAD'S DIARY.—This is an extract from a diary kept by a Japanese boy who, when he wrote it, was a pupil of an English school in China. The boy was sixteen years of age, and had been studying English for two and a half years:—"19th January.—I was up before the school's clock struck six. On going to the washing chamber I found that the day was not very severe. I went to my cover (cupboard) and obtained the soap and sponge; the water was not so cold as previous days, but as usual when I finished washing my fingers lost sense. I dressed myself and rang the bell at 7 o'clock punctually. At about 10 minutes past 7 Mr. A. wanted me. He wished me to descend the stairs and command the boy (chief house servant) to attend to him and also to see whether the fire was made in the studio. I obeyed implicity, but just as I was descending the stairs I caught sight of the boy, so immediately told him to go to Mr. A.; the fire was already made in downstairs. I rang the second bell and went into the dormitory to see all the boys. They were then all out of beds and dressing, there was nobody late. The bell was rang at 8 o'clock and we had finished our repast at half past. The school bell was rang at quarter to nine and Mr. B. took us in. The head master then came down. I learned copying, mathematics, algebra, composition. Our ball was fix by the Tiffin time, so we blew it up and had a fine game. The school began again at two. Shorthand, book-keeping, grammar, were the subjects of that afternoon. At four all the scholars came out. The football was then in the playground, attended by several boys. I joined in with Mr. A. who sided with me. A French-school lad appeared at the gate and was discussing with Brown. I did not know what were they disputing until Brown called me and told that he came as a messenger from the above school to say that they like to challenge us to play football. I thought it would be very pleasant to have a game with them so I said we will be able to accept the challenge. We thought it well to take Mr. A. and Mr. B., and told them about it. The messenger went away to make enquiry about it. I went with him and ask if they agree willingly, they told me they should have Mr. C. if we take the above two. I came home and diffused among the fellows that I have heard. Brown said that it would be much better to withhold Mr. A. and B., but I gave no answer to it. The evening came. A friend called upon me, and said that he was going to bestow upon me his photo. I accompanied him, and was delighted at the receipt of his image. I came home with it, and delighted to hear the dinner-bell. At half past seven our dinner was over, and I rang the night school-bell. All came into the studio (school) and did their work. At nine o'clock I went up and jumped into bed to become oblivious."

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AN ESSAY ON AN ELECTION.—During a recent District Council election a great deal of enthusiasm was shown in this place. Two days after a teacher gave her class (Standard VII.) an essay to write on "An Election." The essay which follows is a complete and word-for-word copy of the effort of one of the girls in the class: "An election means two things. First, the voice of the people spoken by choosing the most eligible person or persons to represent their creed, requirements, or grievances. Secondly, an election means lies, treachery, hypocrisy, drunkenness, anxiety, disappointment, and glorification. God save us from having another for twelve months."

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A HAT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.—"Fancy yourself an old hat," said the teacher. "Now write about yourself." Result: "I am an old hat telling you all about me. I am trimmed with velvet, and when any one take me out the people stand in the doorway laughing at me, and I am not pleased with them. I dont turn sulky like some boy's and girls do when any one call them. My hat is trimmed with green velvet, satan, flowers, cherries, and a large hostrige feather. When I go out the cherries in my hat tieses the birds. I was bought in a large hat shop in leeds. I was bought in a shop down briggate. It cost more than six shillings. I think I have told you all I know, and so I will say no more at present."

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AT THE MENAGERIE.—"Describe," said the teacher, "in a letter to a friend, your visit yesterday to the menagerie." Here is one of the letters: "Dear Fred,—About a week ago I went to a manajery in our town. The price to pay was tuppence and it was well worth the money. Their were a great number of animals. The animals what made the biggest row was the Kings of the beasts and a wild cat they had got. Their were a cage full of monkeys which was doing funny tricks, some was catching fleas and eating them. Their was a Elephant and a Kamel that give rides for a penny. Stodgy Mathers tumbled of and made his nose bleed, he did howl. There was various kinds of birds, such as the vulture, the Golden eagle and kangaroo, besides macaws and other ferocious animals. There was an horse. It had a main 13 feet long worth £10000. The man what entered the Lions den was the tamer. He was dressed in tites. When he went in he closed the door quick for fear they should spring out and devour the people. He soon made the lions do whatever they like. Lions are ferocious animals. The colour of the lion is yellow, also brown, though some are also red. Tigers are no use only to eat up men and called the maneater, likewise women and little babys, besides others. If a man was to meet a tiger in a lonely forest he would never forget it. The elephant is remarkable for its prodigious strenth. Its trunk is useful to drink up and eating. Their was also a policeman at the door to keep disordered people and children out of mischief. Policemen are useful things when on duty. The colour of them is blue with a big helmet on. In a cage up a corner sat a grilla eating, and which its teeth is very sharp, and its claws. I saw some lepords and a zebra and a funny lobsided thing called a giraf. I saved my penny and bought some nuts which I gave the monkeys. One big faced fellow was so greedy he swallowed one of my nuts whole and it nearly choked him. He rubbed his stummick and choked and grasped for breath until the tears rolled down his cheeks. I thought I should die laughing. Greediness never prospers. I also witnessed a fight between an hyeena and a wolf. Wolfs is ferocious animals. It was amusing to watch two monkeys fighting over a ginger bread. The biggest caught the other by the tail and dropped him on the floor with a crash on his head. I left then and went home and had a good tea.— your respectably, —."

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ON GOVERNMENT.—The exercise was an essay "On Government"—after, of course, a little disquisition by the teacher. The result:—"Our country has a King who can't do anything but what he ought to. There were Georges I., II., III., and IV., but there was eight Henrys. There is also houses called the Houses of Parliament. One of these is full of lords, called the House of Lords, but the other is only built for them gentlemen as perhaps you have seen some of them and it is called the House of Common. No gentlemen can get in there unless they know as he can make laws. But the King has to look them over and see as they are made right. These Commons are called Conservatives and Liberals, and they try and hinder one another as much as they can. They sometimes have sides, and then you see it on the plackards, and you can hear men and your fathers a talking quarrelling about it. Our country is governed a lot better than France, and Germany comes about next. Then there's a lot of others, and then comes Persia. Our country allways comes first, whoever you like to ask."

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BABIES.—"Write me a piece of composition on Babies," said the teacher. Here is a boy's effort on, to him, an obviously uncongenial topic:—"Babys are little red things without bones nor teeth. They have various sises, but just after they are borned, they are called bypedes; their bones are grisle. They are 2 sects, male and female; and are also very fat. When very young they do not have much hair; so you cannot tell wether they will turn into boys or girls until their hair grows. They are always asleep only when crying. They feed them on milk, or chue a injrubber tit, also their thum. When they are very little, they ware pettycoats same as girls; but boys soon wear jacket and trowsers. Girls are softer than boys, so they have to keep on wearing pettycoats, frocks, and &c., all their lives. Some babys have to be borned, and the doctor brings some, when the people have got plenty of money. Women and girls go silly over babys, and kiss them all over, and say silly things. That's why girls have dolls when they haven't any little brothers. Everybody as to be a baby first. Once, before I can remember, I was a little baby. Mother says, when I had my furst trowser suit on, she put me on the table in frunt of the looking glass, and when I seen myself in the mirrow, I screamed out, 'Take them off!' 'Take them off!' 'It isnt me! It isnt me!' and they had to take them off. That's all I know about babys."

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RIVAL VIEWS.—One day, recently, a teacher gave for composition to the boys and girls in the upper standards an essay on "Boys" (for the girls) and "Girls" (for the boys). The following extracts represent fairly accurately the general tone of the opinions expressed by both sides respectively:—

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*Concerning "Boys."*—"Boys are mischievous and jolly ... some are gentle."—"They dress differently from each other.... Many boys are very lazy."—"Most boys are very clever.... They are very clumsy and clodhoppers."—"Some of the boys play very roughly and clumsily. They run about and step on each other's feet.... They do not very often agree."—"The boys talk more than the girls."—"Very few are gentle."—"Boys are male people."—"They are not much use to help their mothers in house-work."—"Their mothers put them nice and tidy, but some of them go and get ragged again."

*Concerning "Girls."*—"Most girls are very shy and angry."—"They sew and darn the boys' stockings."—"Their work is tidy and clean."—"They talk very silently."—"They have thin, weak voices."—"Girls dress up about mid-day, and go out, while the poor boys are hard at work."—"Girls have a kind of false pride about them. A girl will have feathers and flowers in her hat just to show off."—"Most of them are tall and delicate, and they have long legs and little tiny voices."—"Some girls have their hair frizzed up and some wavered."

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THE WHALE (by a ten-year-old).—"The Whale is not called a fish, because it is so big, so it is called a creature. They eat cockles and worms and jellies, and people catches the whales with a fishing rod or a net, they have to let the rope out so the whale dies for loss of breath. The whales swim in shols [shoals] and they have a tarpoon at the end of their tails, when he moves his tail, with one blow he will smash the side of the ship. It has a very big head, and two fins or flappers, on one side of its body. Whales got to come up out of the water on to the land for to breath with their mouths, if he sees any people about he will swallow them up for he has very big jar bones, and strong teeth called whaleboners. Fishmongers catches whales an sail them. Some people eat whales with salt and piper and bread, and some with potatoes. If you keep a whales head under water he will die for want of breath. When they have finished with the whale they send it adrift to get some more spern oil."

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A PAT ANSWER.—The following story was read to a class of girls to be reproduced as a composition exercise:—"A gentleman was out driving in a dog-cart with his coachman, who was an Irishman, when the horse took fright and bolted. The coachman did his best, but it was evident that the beast had got beyond his control. 'Pat,' said the gentleman, 'I'd give five pounds to be out of this trap.' 'Yer honour needn't be so extravagant; ye'll be out of it for nothing presently!' He had scarcely finished speaking when the wheel was caught by a heap of stones at the roadside, and both men were shot over the hedge into an adjoining field." "Now, girls," said the teacher, "*three*

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*marks extra for the most suitable title for this story.*" Up went a forest of hands, and many and varied, if somewhat commonplace, were the titles suggested. But a comical twist on the face of a grey-eyed little Irish maiden in the front row took the teacher's attention. "Well, Norah, what title do you suggest?" "*A cheap outing!*" said Norah demurely.

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ON SMOKING.—The following is an essay by a Standard V. boy. It was written after a lecture by Dr. — on the Evils of Smoking: "Boys wish to be manly in their ways and habits, this is right but in some ways it is wrong because in some things which men does is not for boys to do. Some things which men does might not hurt them but it would hurt boys. One thing is harmful to both men and boys or women that is bad language it is a dreadful thing to hear women children and men using bad language in all of the earth. But there is another bad habit of which boys follow the example of men and this is a very harmful habit to boys and to most men as well as boys. This habit is smoking with tobacco which in the British Isle is carry on very much both with men and children and sometimes women. Every time you go out if it is only just outside the door you see men or boys smoking. Now when you are smoking people say they have a stinging taste on their tongue if they only knew what this taste is I am sure they would never smoke again for if you was to tell them the number of gases which contained in tobacco they would immediately take out their tobacco and pipe or cigarettes and throw them away. For in the tobacco is a number of poisonous gases which when the smoke is indulge into the mouth the different poisons run to certain parts of the body, some gases go to lungs and others to liver and to the heart and nerves and brain and sometimes it affects the mind and hearing. The names of some of these gases are hydrogen, prussic acid gas and carbonic acid gas and nicotine which is the most effectable on the body and another of them called sulpherette carbonic gas. Smokers are always liable to indigestion which is brought on by these gases which is performed in smoking, besides these gases is another which is known as monoxine. If you ask a athlete if smoking was good for him he would tell plump no it is not for it shortens the wind and makes the muscles feeble. Another thing it deases your body and brings on heart disease. It is bad for a man to smoke but it is worst to a growing lad for it injures the growth and makes your limbs shakey. Boys who smoke when they are young never occasionally live a long life, nor never grow to height because it shivers (*i.e.* shrivels) up your liver and bye and bye you have none at all and then you die and it brings on cancer which is another dead disease."

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WHAT CONSTITUTES A GENTLEMAN. [Standard VII.]—"People sometimes think that when men are dressed in nice clothes they are gentlemen but that is not the case, a gentleman is a man who knows his manners. Down in the West End and City there are great swells, but people think that because they have nice clothes they are swells, but some are more like pigs. We might see a tramp walking along a street who as hardly no boots nor clothes but very likely he has his manners. A real gentleman ought to know his manners, and also not to swear. A gentleman might be walking along a street and meet a young lady, he would go up to her and raise his hat, and say, good evening dear come along a me she would and when he left her he would say good night darling, and ask her to meet him at so-an-so."

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THAT HALF-HOLIDAY.—A thirteen-year-old's description of a Thursday half-holiday:—"Pooh, talk about hot weather, I'm nearly suffocated. This the exclamation of Fred Brown, one day after dinner. 'Why,' said Tom, 'its Thursday. I only just thought of it. Where shall we go?' There was silence for a few minutes, then Alf Jones said: 'Let us hire a boat and row to Marlow, we can take tea.' A hamper was duly packed and carried down to the river. A boat was procured, it was in rather a bad condition, but it was the best to be had. They tossed up as to who should steer, and it fell to Tom, who knew as much about steering as a hipopotamus. They divested themselves of their coats and settled down to work. All went well utell they had gone about half a mile they went bang into some rushes, much to the anoyance of the frogs. When they looked round for damage they caught sight of Tom's hat float calmly down the stream. Of course the owner had to rescue it. They extricated themselves after a while, and resumed the journey without any very terrible accident, of course catching crabs is nothing. When they had been rowing for about a hour in the hot sun, they thought Marlow a bit too far for them, so they landed on an island with some nice trees on it, with the intention of having tea. They set to work to get out the hamper from the boat. The spirit bottle, pulled out of a heap of sandwiches, into which it had fallen, was found to be half full of water, and the spirit gone and everything else was thoroughly soaked. At Fred Brown's suggestion the sandwiches were put in the sun to dry. When they were 'cooked' they sat down to a tealess tea

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with good appetites. Tom Smith took a sandwich and had a good mouthful of it, but it did not stay in his mouth long he said it tasted like a lump of methylated spirit, so nobody had any tea. They thought it was time to get back. It was a fairly easy time going back, they were going with the stream. They went home and had some supper, presently Fred Brown began to groan, when they asked him what was the matter he said, 'I—I only dr-drunk some s-spirit and water, I th-thought it was le-lemonade, O—O.' Next morning everybody agreed that they had thoroughly enjoyed themselves."

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THE LION.—"The lion is the king of all animals. It is very fierce. Lion has very big pause. It has a dark brown skin. It is got a peace of heir on its tale and all round its next. The lion life on men and other things. When the lion is young it is called a cube. The lion are mostly found in woulds out in other parts of the world. There life are very unsafe because hunter go out killed them. The lion is very useful. Its skin is used for making firs and other thing. Its tees are very useful. The lion is used for showes. It is used in Inder."

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A SHIPWRECK.—"A shipwreck is an awful thing for sometimes you get wet and sometimes you get dround and sometimes you get burnt but the last is the worst. Once a big lynner got upset with a mortal wound in her side but all the people was saved bar one and he got eat. Sharks and whales feed on dead bodies and sometimes they eat them alive. We should never eat fish what eat us because their canyballs just like savages. Sailors catch sharks with a leg of pork and a thick string which they cut up for whalebone bone and blubber to make train oil."

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THE CAMEL.—"He is called the ship of the desert because he runs over the sand like a ship and dont sink in. He runs different to the horse because he lifts up two legs on one side of his body and then two on the other. He has about a hundred stumics and each holds about a quart so when his master kills him he can have a good drink. His hump is made of fat and he eats this when he cant get grass or hay. Some camels are not camels because he has two humps and his hair dont grow all over him and were it dont is called calluses [callosities] because it kneels down and wears away. The Arab loves his steed better than his wife and in our books theres a piece about him called the Arab and his steed. His master was a prisoner and his faithful camel took him round the waist and bore him swiftly to his morning friends."

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THE CRUSADES.—"The crusades were a body of men women and children who followed the red cross. They were invented by Richard the I and flocked in thousands round him to go to Egypt and some were stricken with deadly disease but they marched on. Then they began to lessen in number and fell gradually under the burning sands of Egypt and laden heavy with heavy armour. At last Peter the Hermit cited Cairo but the Catholicks bore down on him and he retreated. After travelling about for many weary months he joined an opera company and was afterwards buried in Westminster Abbey."

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ABOUT THE INTERJECTION.—"An interjection is a shout or something said by a person too surprised or pained or frightened to make a sentence of his thoughts. It is not quite a human language. The lower animals say nothing else but interjections. Accordingly, ill-natured and cross people by their interjections come very near to beasts."

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CONCERNING ROBERT.—"Policemen are men who are employed by the Government, to control the boys, ruffians, and all individuals which annoy or illuse the public. The boys politely term them 'coppers,' the burglars 'cops' or 'narks.' The cooks are very fond of him, and call him 'dear Robert,' and now they are going 'on strike' cooky will mourn, and the uneaten rabbit-pie will go into the dustbin, and there will be quite a gloom over the kitchens of Belgravia. There will be no kissing over the railings, and if Bobby don't keep his eyes open Tommy Atkins will collar the cake. Policemen must be over or a certain size, and must have (I believe) big pedular extremities, as all policemen's feet seem to be large. They have a fête, not foot, once a year, and then cooky gets a day off. Then they have kiss-in-the-ring, and other games, which introduce a mutual contraction of the Orbicularis Oris."

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WHAT I SHALL DO IN THE HOLIDAYS.—"What I expect to do in my holidays is the greater part of the time to mind the baby. Two years and a-half old. Just old enough to run into a puddle or to fall downstairs. Oh! what a glorious occupation! my aunt or Sunday-school teacher would say, but it is all very well for them, they ought to have a turn with him. I am going to have a game at tying doors, tying bundles of mud in paper and then drop it on the pavement. I shall buy a bundle of wood and tie a piece of cord to it, and when someone goes to pick it up, lo! it has vanished—not lost, but gone before. I shall go butterfly catching, and catch some fish at Snob's Brighton (Lea Bridge). I shall finish up by having a whacking, tearing my breeches, giving a boy two black eyes, and then wake up on Monday morning refreshed and quite happy to make the acquaintance of Mr. —'s cane." The following, written a little later, will convince every London teacher that R.H. had practised fishing in the New River:—"Man goes fishing, takes his rod and enough tackle to make a telegraph wire and starts on his piscatorial expedition. He arrives, and happy man is he if he has not forgot something, a hook, his bait, or his float. He sits there, apparently contented; he catches a frog or some other fine specimen of natural history, and a cold, and a jolly good roasting from his bitter half, when he arrives with some mackerel which he had bought at the fishmonger's. He, poor man, did not know that they were sea-fish, but his wife did. When juveniles go fishing they take a willow, their ma's reel of best six-cord, a pickle jar, and a few worms, and proceed to the New River happy. When they arrive they catch about fifty (a small thousand they call it), and are thinking of returning home, when a gent with N. R. on his hat, and a good ash stick in his hand, comes up. 'Ullo there,' says he, 'what are you doing there?' 'Fishing, sir,' answer they meekly. The man then takes away their fish and rod, gives them some whales instead (on their back). And they return home sadder but wiser boys."

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## CHAPTER V.

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### THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTY.

TEACHER: "*On what occasion did Our Lord use the words, 'With God all things are possible'?*"

SMALL CHILD: "*To the woman who had seven husbands!*"

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It would be a real novelty to write a book having even the most remote reference to education without bringing this in. But lest the headline should terrify the reader with the fearful apprehension that it is my purpose to plunge once again into the bitter and apparently never-ebbing waters of religious strife, let me hasten to say that I have no such maleficent intention. In the classification of my budget of anecdotes I find I have an abundant selection of those which have arisen in connection with the daily Scripture lesson; and, as I have already said, they represent the richest harvest of all. The reasons for this I have endeavoured to set forth. It only remains for me, in submitting the following stories, to add that no irreverence is intended. There are, I know, some curiously constituted people who find offence in the most ingenuous laugh if provoked by what they deem a sacred subject. I would respectfully yet firmly adjure them not to

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read the stories which immediately follow.

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THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT—NEW STYLE.—In the first place the daily *viva voce* recital of the Commandments leads to quaint distortions when the youngster comes to commit to paper what he has been saying day by day for a year or so. Here are two startling variants on the Seventh of the selfsame Commandments—

"*Thou shalt not kick a duckery.*"

"*Thou shalt not come into the country.*"

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SOME NEW VERSIONS OF THE TENTH.—Here is a weird distortion of the Tenth:—

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"*Thou shalt not cumt thy neighbours house, thou shalt not cumt thy neighbours wife, mornin' circus, mornin' 'oss, mornin' ass, mor anything that is his.*"

Quaint in its way, but not so fearfully and wonderfully contrived, is the following misquotation also of the Tenth Commandment:—

"Thou shalt not covet ... nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything *dangerous!*"

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"THOU SHA'T NOT BOW DEAN!"—Still affecting the Commandments, though a story of another colour, is the following:—

In a village in Yorkshire dwelt the two granddaughters of a former vicar. These good ladies often met in the streets the children who attended the village school. On such occasions they expected the latter to acknowledge them—the boys by raising their hats and the girls by curtsying. Now one sturdy urchin often disregarded the ladies, and they accordingly spoke to his father respecting his conduct. The parent questioned the boy, and soon found out that the complaint laid against him was true. On being asked why he did not lift his cap, the culprit replied, "Ah dean't think ah ou't ta dea sa. *Dean't us larn at t' skeal, 'Thou sha't not bow dean ta ony graven image'?*"

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IN BRAID YORKSHIRE.—The diocesan inspector was questioning a class of boys about the story of Joseph as a slave, interpreter, &c., and incidentally asked the following question: "What did Joseph's father think when the brothers brought Joseph's coat covered with blood?" The reply of a small boy quite upset the official's gravity: "Please, sir, *he thought a coo had tupp'd him!*"

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ON BREAD AND CHICKEN.—Imagine the surprise of the schoolmistress when a little lad, in giving his version of the "Temptation," informed her that Christ partook of *bread and chicken* in the wilderness. Judicious questioning elicited the fact that the young hopeful had based his opinion upon two extracts: "*Man shall not live by bread alone,*" and "*Get the hens, Satan!*"

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THREE EVILS.—It was the annual Scripture examination, and the inspector was questioning a class upon the Catechism. "It was promised for you in your baptism," said the official inquisitor, "that you would fight against three great evils. Tell me what they are." "*My godfathers and godmothers,*" was the reply of one youth.

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IN THE APPLICATION THEREOF.—The school had been closely questioned by the inspector in Scripture, and at last a bright idea seemed to strike him, for he said: "Suppose Christ came into this room now and offered to perform a miracle for you, what would you ask him to do?" There was silence for some moments, and then up went a hand. The inspector asked for a reply, which was: "*Cast out a devil, sir!*"

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A BASTE BUT NOT A BULL.—The following occurred in a Dublin school during the Scripture lesson:—"What does the Bible say will happen to the proud?" asked the examiner. "*Please, sir, they will become animals,*" replied one bright little chap. "Oh, that's a curious answer. What text have you to prove it?" queried the interrogator. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself *shall be a baste!*" promptly replied one of the youngest of Ould Oireland's hopefuls.

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THE FLESH POTS.—A class was in the habit of singing at close of school the well-known Grace: "These creatures bless," &c. Having some doubts as to the accuracy of the words being sung by one boy, the master asked him to repeat them. He was not a little astonished to hear recited the words—

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"These creatures bless and grant that we

*May feast on pounds of rice with Thee.*"

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OVERHEARD IN THE PLAYGROUND.—*Small lad to a friend:* "I say, Jack, what do you think our teacher told us this morning?" "I dunno." "Well, he said there was once a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, *and as he was going the thorns sprang up and choked him!*"

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SAMIVEL, BEWARE!—Inspector: "Why was Elisha sorry when the Shunamite's son was dead?" Ingenious lad, who has just been devouring Mr. Pickwick: "*Because he didn't like being left alone with a widow.*" (Inspector smiled.)

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SOME UNFAMILIAR EXHORTATIONS.—Children, as I have said, often get hold of the wrong words in

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prayers and hymns. For instance, one child was heard to pray: "Forgive me all that I have done *on Christmas Day*" (amiss this day). Another was heard to plead: "*And give us an eagle*" (and deliver us from evil). While a third after meals repeated: "*Let manners to us all be given*" (Let manna to our souls be given).

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NOAH'S FIRST TASK.—At a recent Scripture examination the examiner asked the following question in the infants' class: "What was the first thing Noah did when he came out of the Ark?" A tiny girl put up her hand, and on being asked, said: "*Please, sir, he buried all the drowned people.*"

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WHY A DOORKEEPER?—Teacher: "What did David mean when he said he'd rather be a doorkeeper of the House of the Lord?" Boy: "Because, if he was a doorkeeper, *he could walk about outside while the sermon was being preached.*"

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A QUESTION OF A MAIN DRAINAGE.—Subject: Scripture lesson on "The Flood." Teacher had explained how it rained and rained until the tops of the highest hills were covered. Pupil of inquiring mind suddenly puts up her hand and asks: "*Teacher, wern't there no sinks?*"

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AN ALTOGETHER UNEXPECTED REPLY.—A teacher who had given a lesson on the Birth of Christ and the Virgin Mary was proceeding to question the children, and asked: "Who was the mother of Jesus?" To her great astonishment, a small girl chirped out: "*Please, m', the blessed bird canary!*"

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THE LITTLE "DOWN-ALONG'S" DOVE.—The inspector was examining a class of Westcountry infants, and had asked: "When our Lord was baptised, what bird came down on His head?" One little Devonshire dumpling at once retorted: "*Please, sir, a little yellor-hammer, sir!*"

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THE PART THAT NEVER DIES.—During a Scripture lesson a teacher of little dots was greatly surprised upon asking: "What part of you is it that never dies?" to receive from an excited youngster, "*The Holy Ghost.*"

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WHO WAS SORRY?—A class was being questioned on the prodigal son's return. The teacher: "Who was sorry when the prodigal son returned?" Little Boy (after deep thought): "*The fatted calf, sir.*"

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ABOUT ELI.—Teacher: "Tell all you know of Eli." Small Girl: "Eli was a very old man, and Eli was very sick *and Eli brought up Samuel.*"

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A HOMELY VIEW.—Head mistress: "What was the first thing that the little boy Samuel did when he got up in the morning?" Cheery little mother: "*Please, mum, he carried up a cup of tea to Eli!*"

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MIXED.—A small boy, who had been reading about Sir Walter Raleigh and the Virgin Queen, in writing of Elijah, said: "As Elijah went up to Heaven he dropped his mantle, *and Queen Elizabeth walked over it.*"

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"I BELIEVE."—"Write down what you are saying," said a teacher once to a pupil who with others was reciting the Apostles' Creed. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate," came out "Suffered under *bunch of violets!*" At the little village school of Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, it was once set down "*Suffered under Bonchurch Pilot!*"

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"AND TO BED YOU GO."—"Tell us a story, please," said the little ones once to their teacher on Friday afternoon. She, consenting, asked whether they wanted a new one or an old one. "Cinderella," said one; "Aladdin," asked another. Then from a rather heavy boy, "*I want the tale of Citrate of Magnesia and to bed you go.*" She paused in complete obfuscation. Then a sharp little girl said: "That's wrong, governess, it wasn't Citrate of Magnesia, but it *was to bed you go, and they were all in the fire and not burnt.*" The teacher recognised the Bible incident of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego!*

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WHAT HAPPENED.—Scene: Class of infants and Standard I. Time: Scripture lesson. Teacher, impressively (to children anxiously watching—in imagination—the development of an old-world tragedy): "Then Abraham having bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, took the knife in his hand—when lo!—What happened?" Big dunce from the gallery (in a voice hoarse with excitement and pent-up feeling): "*Hisaac 'ollered out.*"

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BIBLICAL CRICKET.—The vicar recently came down to distribute the prizes to the successful athletes at the school sports. In his prefatory remarks, he mentioned that games were not unknown even in scriptural times, and asked if any boy could furnish a text to prove this. "Yissir," said one urchin, "our Lord said to a team of His disciples when they was agoing to play in a cricket match: 'Beware of the *'leven* of the Pharisees.'"

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THE ONE THING NECESSARY.—Venerable Archdeacon: "Now, my dear children, I will ask you a few questions in your Catechism. Which of you can tell me the two things necessary in Baptism?" "Quite right, 'Water.' Water is one thing, and what is the other? What! can none of you think what else is necessary? Well, little girl, what do you say?" Little Girl: "*Please, sir, a baby.*"

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DIVISION OF LABOUR.—The subject of a Scripture lesson to a class of girls in Standards V. and VI. happened one day to be the Resurrection. Whether the curate, fresh from the 'Varsity, failed to make the matter interesting because of faulty arrangement of matter or indifferent method is not recorded. But the girls did not show much attention while the changes which are to come to our vile bodies were being tabulated. So, turning to one girl more conspicuously inattentive than the rest, the curate sharply asked: "Mary Jane! who made your vile body?" "*Please, sir, mother made the body and I made the skirt,*" replied Mary Jane.

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TAKING THE BONES.—A curate had been talking diligently for half an hour to a class of school children, but their attention was not very freely given. The subject was "The Doings of the Children of Israel," and very special mention had been made of how they had been commanded to take the bones of Joseph with them when they made their exodus from the land of Egypt. Suddenly pouncing upon one boy who was particularly inattentive, the curate said: "Whose bones did the children of Israel take with them out of Egypt, Sam?" Sam was nonplussed for a moment, then a brilliant idea struck him, and his answer came out triumphantly: "*Their own!*"

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MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH.—The teacher was one morning giving a lesson on "Moses and his talk with God," introducing, of course, the mystery of the burning bush not being consumed, and laying particular stress on the reverent attitude of Moses in taking off his shoes before approaching the sacred place. At the close of the lesson the teacher questioned his pupils to gauge their interest, and among other queries he submitted the following: "Why did Moses take off his shoes before approaching the bush?" Judge of his consternation when he received the following reply from a little fellow of eight years: "*Please, sir, to warm ees feet!*"

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CLEVER TEACHER.—The vicar of a Somerset parish was noted for his extremely precise enunciation. He was in the habit of taking the Scripture lessons in the village school, and had spent some time on "The Lives of the Patriarchs." One morning he questioned a class upon the story of Jacob. "What did Isaac tell Jacob to do when he left home after obtaining the blessing?" asked the vicar, pointing to a dull, big boy. "He told un to pay the man, zur," was the response. "To pay the man!" replied the vicar wonderingly; "what man?" "Please, zur, I doant 'zacly remember what his other name were, *but 'twere Dan somebody or other.*" The vicar lost the point of the answer; but the teacher, with keen appreciation, quoted softly to herself, "*Arise, go to Pa-dan-aram,*" and she thought the boy was not wholly to blame for thinking that *Dan Aram* was a man, and ought to be paid.

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ROUGH ON THE DEACON.—"Explain," said the teacher, "all you can about the words Bishop, Priest, and Deacon." "I never saw a Bishop," wrote one hopeful. "A Priest is a man in the Old Testament, and a Deacon is a thing you pile up on the top of a hill and set fire to it!"

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THE THIRTEENTH APOSTLE.—The question was: "How many Apostles were there?" "Thirteen," said one little chap. "Thirteen!" repeated the teacher in astonishment. "I thought there were only twelve!" "St. Matthew," replied the boy, "tells us the names of twelve, and St. John gives us the name of the other one—*Verily, that Jesus used to talk to so much.*"

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## CHAPTER VI.

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### THE FOND PARENT.

*"Political Economy is the science that teaches us to get the greatest benefit out of the least possible amount of honest labour."*—WEARY WILLY, JUNIOR.

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There is no more universal fallacy than the firmly-rooted prejudice that finds a comment in the old tag that "Everybody's goose is a swan." How impregnably established is this conviction in the parental mind—when in contemplation of the capacity of its wonderful offspring—only teachers know. Eternal are the complaints that whilst Jimmy Miggs has been promoted to the Third Standard "Our Willie" remains in the Second! And brilliant is the diplomacy that is needed to make the situation parentally endurable. Then there is the irate parent, the sacred person of whose immaculate hopeful has been gently touched with the discriminating hand of discreet personal chastisement. Ah me! What havoc such an one can work with the calm serenity of the schoolroom. Strangely enough, it is amongst the thriftless and self-indulgent minority of working classes—those who shockingly neglect and ill-treat their children themselves—that the teacher finds the greatest trouble in this matter of objection even to the most moderate and wisely-administered corporal punishment.

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For myself, I hit upon an excellent expedient when the peace of the school was suddenly ravished by the sudden and unbidden entrance of some angry "mother." With great suavity I offered her a chair and considerably pressed her into it. If she could be induced to rehearse her complaints whilst still sitting down the fires of her fury would soon flicker out. Indeed, I have never yet met an angry woman in any walk of life who could sufficiently express her feelings whilst sitting down. *Verb. sap.*

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The parental "Note" is often very amusing, sometimes abusive, and occasionally clever and caustic. Excuses for absence, which involve a reference to ailments with rather unspellable names are, naturally enough, badly boggled. Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Influenza, Lumbago, Inflammation, Diarrhœa—what tribulation these half-dozen words represent to be sure! And what excruciating distortions the parental note bears upon its usually rough and crumpled face. I remember *neuralgia* once being rendered "*real raw jaw*," which is not so far out after all! "Very bad with *New Roger*" is not so near a shot. I also recall a note of excuse that informed the teacher that Charlie couldn't come to school "*because he has got haricot veins!*" This is as curious as "*In bed with Piper's Dance!*" I have seen a "note," too, which speaks of Mary being "*down with an illustrated throat, with glaciers on both sides!*" And, finally, there was once the alarming case of Alfred, who had "gone to the hospital to have some *aneroids* taken from his nose." But let a few of these little missives speak for themselves:—

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A NOVEL MODE OF TRAVELLING.—The following excuse for lateness from a Dover parent is very appropriate to a seaside town: "Dear miss, please excuse mary being late as she *as been out on a herring.*"

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MONEY MARKET DOWN.—Here is a verbatim copy of a note received: "Tom is not fit to come to school yet, as doctor Blight said I have to tell you as they have *Inflamation in the Consols*. John and Harry."

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ONE FOR THE TEACHERS.—The following note is from an irate parent: "Willie — was absent From school this morning because Is mother is at market and I have no one here to do anything as you Do know I have Told you before know kindly state the Reason That you and all of The Teachers was absent from school for a month without asking our leave. Mr. A."

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"HARY AND EMENA."—Please sir hary and emena are unfit to attenion school hary is got to go to the infirny with Exmoor and emena all over him and not able to come I have seen Mr. Bennett." This excuse was to convey the information that Harry and Emma had gone to the infirmary because both were suffering from eczema, and that the mother had seen the attendance officer (Mr. Bennett) about it.

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TO INTRODUCE MAUD P.—A new scholar recently appeared at a Board School with the accompanying letter: "Maud P. will be 6 years of age next january 30th 1905 God Willen it she live she have not atended Scoole Much as she is Never well far lange toGether she suffer with a bad feat she have had 2 wounds an it if you like to lett she take off her sliper an shoken you Can see it i fear it will break aut again as it is Very read and inflamed at Night and she Complained of pain it was in the furst place threw a kick fraw another Child at W— P— Scoole the Cause kindle see she is not hurt if you plese and Not to wipe she as she is a such a timed Sence Child ben ill so Much have rather spoilt her but she is i trust honest and triful and laven so kindness will do ware sharpness faile she only stain with Me to see if she Gett on all rite as her home is 2 Miles from a Scoole at — her parents keep she i am her Grandmother & Canat see Very well so i fear My ritien will be hard to read."

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PARENTAL RAGE.—"If you please A— B— what made you not give F— C— his ticket on Friday for he had been 10 times so he ought to have had it so if you please dont to give him it on Monday morning i shall go farther to work with it. for i think i know more about school then you do for i when their long before you did he as been to school all the week so he as earnt his ticket so if you dont give it to him by fair means you shall by foul so you can please yourself for you are not master nor misstres yet and i dont think that ever you will be we have to pay rates so we have to pay part for the school and it was down right a shame that he was not put up when the others was for he is always at school wet or fine bad or well he never stop away their was never such teachers as you had to teach me when i went to school they know which way to teach a child and that is more than you do if he his not put up before long he shall go to another school for he does reading and writing very well at home at night so by that means he must do it good at school. so if he dont bring his ticket home with him on Monday dinner time you can look for some body to make you give it up for it was not in your place at all to keep it i know school rules."

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DROPPED INTO POETRY.—The following couplet was once received in reply to an inquiry as to the reason for absence:—

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*"Grim tyrant of the powers that be,*



*Take note! The lad had leave from me."*

On another occasion the reply came back:—

*"George stayed away to make the hay*

*To please his own dear mother,*

*And you can take the case to law*

*To save all future bother."*

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## CHAPTER VII.

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### LITTLE SCIENTISTS AT SEA.

*"Gravity was discovered by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when the apples are falling from the leaves."*—LITTLE JIM, aged 10.

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*"If the earth did not revolt it would be either all equal days or all equal nights,"* is the deliberate judgment of one young geographer; and the state of mental obfuscation here discovered finds a counterpart in many geographical answers given in the earlier days. *Sodom and Gomorrah* have been described as *the two most famous volcanoes in the world*; and the Nile has been mentioned as *rising in Mungo Park*. *Penzance* has been spoken of as *"the place where the pirates come from"*; and the Red Indians have been located as coming from *Red India*. Here is a brief list of what I may call geographical "howlers."

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IN THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON.—"The sun never sets on English possessions, because the sun sets in the West, and all the English possessions are in the North, South, and East."

"The Arctic regions are neither hot nor cold. They abound in birds of beautiful plumage and of no song, such as the elephant and the camel."

"A table-land gets its name from its steep sides and flat top. It's all right when once you are up on the top, but it's no joke getting up."

"The tides are a fight between the earth and the moon. All water tends towards the moon, because there is no water in the moon, and Nature abhors a vacuum. Gravitation at the earth keeps the water from rising all the way to the moon. I forget whether the sun joins in this fight."

"What divides England from Ireland?" asked the inspector, who was elderly and deaf. The teacher trembled with apprehension as she heard a boy answer: *"The Land of Goshen, sir."* The inspector was obviously pleased, and said approvingly: "Quite right! Quite right! *The Atlantic Ocean!*"

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Some time ago the *Stella*, a South-Western Railway packet, struck on a rock near one of the Channel Islands. In an examination on General Knowledge I asked the name of the rock. A boy replied: *"Rock of Ages."*

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SOME HISTORY LESSON BLUNDERS.—Now let me turn briefly to the History lesson and note the curious blunders and anachronisms that a modern rendering or a juvenile misapprehension of old-world facts reveal. Let me set out a few instances:—

"The cause of the Peasants' Revolt was that a shilling poultice was put on everybody over sixteen."

"The poll-tax was to be paid by everyone who had a head."

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"The Fire of London, although looked on at first as a calamity, really did a great deal of good. It purified the city from the dregs of the plague and burnt down eighty-nine churches."

"King James I. was very unclean in his habits: he never washed his hands and married Anne of Denmark."

"Henry VIII. was a very good king. He liked plenty of money. He had plenty of wives, and died of ulcers in the legs."

"Edward III. would have been king of France if his mother had been a man."

"The conquest of Ireland was begun in 1170 and is still going on."

"The Pilgrim Fathers were the parents of the young men who took journeys to the Holy Land in the Crusades. They had to give an allowance to their godly sons while they were away in the East. But they never grudged it, because it was an honour to be a Pilgrim's father."

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"Sir Philip Sydney gave the last drop of water in his jug to a dying soldier on the field of Waterloo, as was mentioned in the Duke of Wellington's despatches."

"John Milton is the celebrated author of the excursion, and lived chiefly in the lake country near Carlyle."

*Teacher:* "In whose reign was that palace built?" *Scholar:* "Edward the Confectioner's."

"George I. was the son of the Electric Sophia."

"Isaac Walton was such a good fisherman that he was called 'the judicious hooker.'"

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IN THE SCIENCE CLASS.—Not less amusing are the mistakes which arise during the "elementary science" lesson. Here are a few cases in point:—

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"A vacuum is nothing shut up in a box. They have a way of pumping out the air. When all the air and everything else is shut out, naturally they are able to shut in nothing, where the air was before."

"A drug is any wholesome vegetable food for taking once in a way but not for regular food."

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WITH THE LITTLE BABBAGES.—"Things which are double each other are greater than anything else."

"Circumference is a straight line round the middle of a plane."

"Two straight lines cannot enclose a space unless they are crooked."

*Question:* "If the sum of two numbers is a multiple of ten, what relation is there between the figures in the units place in the squares of the two numbers?" *Answer:* "(1) The same relation. (2) Ought is the relation existing between them."

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DOMESTIC ECONOMY.—*Question:* "Give directions for sweeping a room." *Answer:* "Cover up the furniture with dust sheets, scatter damp tea leaves over the carpet, then carefully sweep the room into the dust pan and throw it out of the window."

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The following notes are selected from the answers given at a recent examination of girls between twelve and sixteen years of age:—"Cheese is as wholesome as 8½ pounds of beef.—Beef is a useful article of food obtained from different animals, such as the cow, sheep, pig, &c.—The lean of beef belongs to the animal kingdom, and the fat to the vegetable kingdom.—Butter is good for the brain.—Milk is called a model food because it models the form of the child.—Without eating potatoes we would become very delicate, because potatoes are very necessary to sustain human life.—*Pot-au-feu* is mashed-up meat.—*Crétins* are generally served up with green pea soup.—If a man lives without food for a considerable time, say sixty days, he will die at the end of a month; or if the constitution is delicate, he may only live for a week, or less."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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### A MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTION.

*"The Triple Alliance is Faith, Hope, and Charity!"*—EMMA JANE.

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THE BEST SIDE.—A penny was the object in question. The children had examined its superscription—obverse and reverse, when little Polly shyly said, "I like this side best, teacher"—pointing to Neptune and the shield. "Why, Polly," demanded the teacher. "*Cause you can see the Queen riding on a bicycle!*"

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JONAH'S PRAYER.—It was an infants' class of forty children or thereby. The young teacher had found the way to the hearts of her pupils, and the children quite forgot they were engaged in work. Everything she said and did was real and right in their eyes, and her Bible stories were a source of wondrous delight. They would not have been astonished had they met Abraham or even some of the antediluvians in the street. The head master, on visiting the room, found them all interested in the career of Jonah, and told them he would come again to learn what they could tell about the errant prophet. As he expected, he found the story familiar to them, and so, with the view partly of trying their power of expression and partly of witnessing the perplexity of the embryo scholars, he asked them to tell him Jonah's prayer while he was in the whale. Words to express their pent-up knowledge failed most of them, but one more vigorous than the rest relieved himself thus: "*Jonah just said, 'God, lat me oot o' this.'*"

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"WHEN THEY'RE RUNNING ABOUT."—It is the venerable old question, "What is a noun?" that has drawn out the hoary answer, "Name of an animal, person, place, or thing." Of course the inspector follows up with the almost equally antique "Am *I* a noun?" and the little fellow tumbles into the creaking old trap with a cheery "Yes, sir." "Are you a noun?" proceeds the inspector, and the "Yes,

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sir" of the reply shows very little loss of confidence. "Are all the boys in the class nouns?" The sturdy little grammarian feels from the tone that someone has blundered, and the "Yes, sir" this time has an uncertain sound. Everything up to this point has been done in the most approved fencing style—three cuts up and one down; all the moves are as hackneyed as in the King's Knight's Pawn opening. It is only when the inspector is about to effect Fool's Mate—But let me give it as it happens. *Inspector*: "What is a noun?" *Boy*: "Name of an animal, person, place, or thing."—*I*: "Am I a noun?" *B*: "Yes, sir."—*I*: "Are you a noun?" *B*: "Yes, sir."—*I*: "Are all the boys in the class nouns?" *B*. (a little doubtfully): "Yes, sir."—*I*: "And are all the boys running about in the playground nouns?" *B*. (brightening up): "Please, sir, no, sir. *When they're running about they're verbs!*"

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WHERE THE OSTRICH LAYS ITS EGGS.—A class was being questioned by H.M. inspector on the ostrich. He asked the size of the ostrich egg, but could only get "Very big" or "Very large" for answers, so he asked them to mention something that would show him *how* big they were. After some hesitation, one boy put his hand up, and when asked, replied: "Please, sir, as big as your head." The inspector laughed, and then asked: "Where does the ostrich deposit its eggs?" Again the same boy put up his hand and looked very anxious to be asked. When the inspector said, "Well, my little man, where?" the boy replied, "*Please, sir, in our school museum!*"

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"SUFFIN' RED."—In Norwich tomatoes are called by the ordinary folk "marters." This by way of prologue. A young curate spent twenty minutes explaining to a young class what a martyr was. "Now," said he, "what is a Martyr?" The answer he received and did not expect was: "*Please, sir, suffin' red what you eat.*"

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"HE HASN'T TO EAT SWEETS."—"Now, Johnnie," said a teacher, "if I gave you a dozen sweets and you divided them equally between your brother and yourself, how many would you give him?" "*Please, sir, none sir! Cos' mother says he hasn't to eat sweets when he has worms.*"

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HE KNEW.—H.M. Inspector (examining village school): "What is the opposite of a 'spendthrift?'" No answer. "Well, what would you call a man who sends you on errands and gives you nothing for going?" *Boy*: "*Parson, sir.*" [Confusion of parson who was present and had gained a reputation for close-fistedness.]

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JACK'S PRAYER.—Little Jack's father was visiting London and Christmastide was approaching. He had promised to bring a toy train for his little son as a present from Father Christmas. The day that the father was to travel Jack prayed—

"God bless papa, and bring him home safely,

*And—and—and his luggage!*"

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UNDER A NEW NAME.—First class had taken poetry for the year from Scott's "Marmion." In repeating simultaneously, one girl, whose understanding of the sense must have been very hazy, amused her classmates by repeating instead of—

"Where's Harry Blount, Fitz-Eustace, where?"

"Where's Harry Brown which used to swear?"

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THE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE NOSE.—At a visit of one of the inspectors a "chat" had been going on with the babies about "The Elephant and its Trunk," and at the finish the H.M.I. pounced upon the accepted duffer of the class with "Now, my dear, you shall tell me what your nose is for," and was staggered with the reply, "*Us haves it to wipe, sir?*"

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A GOOD REASON.—A short time ago a teacher was taking a lesson on the use of the hyphen. Having written a number of examples on the blackboard, the first of which was "bird-cage," he asked the boys to give a reason for putting the hyphen between "bird" and "cage." After a short silence one boy, who is among the dunces, held up his hand and said, "*It is for the bird to perch on, sir.*"

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WHY THE KITTEN DIED.—Visit of grandma—both four-year-old twins at once: "Grandma, Ninny's dead." Grandma, surprised and sorry, "Poor Ninny, he must have been poisoned?" Great burst of grief from both twins. Then a sudden lull from one of them. "Don't cry, Ella; don't cry so much! '*He died to save us all!*'" [They had been to a children's service with the maid on Good Friday.]

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WHERE THE SNOW COMES FROM.—The other day a master visited the infant room during a snowstorm. He was curious to know what ideas the little ones had of snow, and questioned them about it. One little girl of five volunteered the information that the snow was swept out of heaven. "But how does it get into heaven?" asked the master. "Please, sir, *the angels scratch it off their wings,*" said the tiny tot.

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BLISS.—Teacher (word-building): "Quite right! L-i-s-s spells *liss*, and if I put 'b' in front what word do I get?" *Small Boy*: "Bliss." *Teacher*: "Yes; but that's a new word to you, and so I must tell you what it means. It means *peace* or *happiness* or *comfort*. Now make me a sentence containing this new word *bliss*." *Small Boy*: "My big brother had a *blister* on his toe."

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FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST.—Here are four replies that well repay consideration:—

*Antidote*: A silly ant.

*Oblivious*: Without a liver.

*Sciatica*: A sigh from the head.

*Anchorite*: A good man who anchored himself to one place.

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WHY HE LAUGHED.—The master of a school had been much annoyed by a trick played upon him by one of his boys. At last he thought he had caught the offender and severely chastised him. To his surprise, the boy, instead of resenting the chastisement, burst out laughing. The master, in a tone of anger mingled with surprise, said: "How dare you laugh, sir? Why are you so doing?" The boy, trying hard to suppress his laughter, said: "*Cos, please sir, you are hitting the wrong boy.*"

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.—A little Yorkshire patriot of ten years gave the following written version of "God Save the King":—

"God save are greasure King, long

leave are noble King,

God save are King.

Sened are Victoria, happy

and glory us

God Save are King."

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A MODEST REQUEST.—It was "play-time." Wordy warfare was being waged between two cherubic little brothers of four and five summers. As the teacher drew near:—"Please, teacher, can Stanley play on my harp?" cried the bigger. "Yes, I shall! Yes, I shall!" taunted little Stanley, dancing with mischievous joy. "But, Harold, you haven't a harp," said the teacher. "When we're in Heaven!" he muttered fiercely. "*He says, when we're in Heaven he shall play on my harp!*"

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NOT SO FAR OUT.—At a recent visit of H.M.I. to an Essex school the children were saying a piece of poetry entitled "The Wind in a Frolic." In this piece occurs the line: "*So on it went capering and playing its pranks.*" The inspector stopped the class here, and asked the class to tell him the meaning of capering, and also the name of any animal that cuts capers. The answers given by several boys were a kitten, a pup, a goat, a lamb, &c. However, a very happy thought struck one small boy, who immediately put up his hand and said: "*A motor car!*"

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THE BEAR SONG.—*Billie* (aged four): "Mother dear, sing me the bear song." The fond mother casting about in her mind for the song in question, but to no avail, began to sing from her customary list in the hope of hitting the right one, but her efforts were cut short by the youngster's disapproval. The mother's list of songs becoming exhausted, she changed from song to hymn, and her efforts were rewarded when she reached the hymn, "Hark, my soul"; but not until the third

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verse was being sung,

"Can a woman's tender care

Cease toward the child *she bare*,"

did this fond mother appreciate the bear song.

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MORE WAYS THAN ONE.—The teacher was busy at his desk, trying to discover the error which prevented the register from balancing, when a youngster of seven years walked forward with his hand up. "What do you want?" said the teacher, without turning round. "Please, sir, Jock Broon's callin' me names," was the reply. "Oh, get away!" exclaimed the teacher, again settling to his work. He had totalled up to near the top of the column, when the same youngster again appeared and said: "Please, sir, Jock's doing it again." The teacher was so annoyed at the second interruption that he sharply reprimanded "Jock," and threatened to punish him if he again repeated the offence. Turning to his desk, the teacher made a determined effort to discover the error in the totals, when his tormentor again appeared. Seizing the cane, the teacher turned to him and demanded to know what he wanted. "*Please, sir, Jock's whistlin' it*," he answered.

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A MIXED GRILL.—The wife of a duke is a "ducky."

A veteran is "a man what does hosses."

Coolies are "men that live in cold countries."

Mailboats are "boats that only carry men."

A husbandman is "a man with two wives."

"The first words of Zacharias on recovering his speech were: 'I am dumb.'"

Of course it was a boy who wrote that a graven image is "*an idle maid with hands*."

"Six days shalt thy neighbour do all that thou hast to do."

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"*THEY 'AD TO DO IT*."—An inspector once asked a teacher during a lesson in Mental Arithmetic if she ever allowed a pupil to propose questions to the children. The teacher replied that she had done so. H.M.I. then asked, "Who would like to ask the other children a question?" Several hands went up instantly. "Come on, Tommy." Tommy marched in front of his class with an air of importance and confidence, born of experience, and blurted out: "A million articles at half-a-crown each." *Inspector*: "Well, Tommy, what do you make it yourself?" *Tommy*: "Please, sir, *they 'ad to do it, not me*."

LITTLE JIM.—Some years ago a teacher was hearing a class read the poem "Little Jim." He had been trying very hard to teach expressive reading. The children had been brought almost to tears by hearing the teacher read the verse describing the death scene, when he called on a boy to read the verse describing the return of the dead child's father. The reader evidently trusted too much to memory, for, in all earnestness and with beautiful expression, he read—

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"He saw that all was over

He knew the child was dead;

He took the candle in his hand

*And walked upstairs to bed."*

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AN EXCELLENT REASON.—"Who," asked the teacher, "is your favourite writer?" Johnnie answered, "Samuel." "Why?" replied the teacher. "*Because*" answered Johnnie, "*I like to read about him!*"

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WHY YOU COULDN'T.—As an exercise in composition upper standards had occasionally to write what they could upon a given maxim. The one given was: "You can't put old heads on young shoulders." One boy gave up his paper to the master, who, upon scanning it, found the first sentence to be as follows: "*Of course you can't, and if you did they wouldn't fit.*"

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SOLD AGAIN.—During the annual examination the children in the Fifth Standard were asked to give an example of a sentence containing more than one subject. This, the inspector thought, would constitute a poser. Instantly, however, up rose a ragged, shock-headed "hoyden," who straightway began to quote from Browning's "Pied Piper":—

"Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,

Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,

Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,

Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens,

Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,

Followed the Piper for their lives."

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THE SCHOOL HOUSE WAS EXEMPT.—The master of a village school in the vicinity of Dundee was in the habit of giving out an essay to be written at home by the pupils of the first class. One Friday afternoon he gave as the subject for the weekly exercise, "Local Events." At that time scarlet fever was very prevalent in the district. One pupil of promising parts took this fact for the subject of his essay. He dwelt on the sad ravages which had taken place in the neighbourhood as the result of the epidemic, and finished by saying how pleased he was that the dreadful scourge had not visited the school house, "*for the Lord delighteth not in the death of the wicked.*"

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A SYMPATHETIC RENDERING.—A boy in a Board School recently gave the following rendering of the



verse in the "Wreck of the *Hesperus*":—

"Then up and spake an old sailor,  
Had sailed the Spanish main;  
'I pray thee put into yonder port,  
For I fear *the horrid cane*."

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HEAVEN-SENT PHYSIC.—*The Diocesan Inspector*: "Now, my dear children, tell me how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed." *Sharp Boy*: "Brimstone and treacle from heaven, sir."

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A LESSON ON FRACTIONS.—*Teacher* (giving lesson on fractions): "Here, children, is a piece of meat; if I cut it in two, what shall I have?" *Class (tutti)*: "Halves!" *Teacher*: "And if I cut my pieces again in two, what do I get?" *Class (tutti)*: "Quarters!" *Teacher*: "And if I again do the same?" *Class* (half-chorus): "Eighths!" *Teacher*: "Good. If we continue in the same way, what shall we have?" *Class* (a duet): "Sixteenths!" *Teacher*: "Very good. Let us cut our pieces once more in two, what then shall we have?" *Class*: Several bars rest. Dead silence. However, in the corner one pair of eyes twinkled. *Teacher*: "Well, Johnny, what shall we have?" *Johnny* (solo): "Mincemeat, ma'am!"

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"DON'T BE AFRAID, FIDO."—A little dog was trembling with fear at the high wind. Little Polly put her arms round it, saying: "Don't be afraid, Fido; *all the hairs of your head are numbered*."

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THE THING THAT THERE ISN'T.—"What is a nib?" asked a little reader of four years. "Oh, I know!" said Dick; "*it is that thing that there isn't when you buy a pen*."

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A QUAIN PRAYER.—A dear little child was saying her prayers aloud beside her mother's knee, and added a prayer on her own account: "Oh, please, dear God, make me pure, *absolutely pure as Epps' cocoa*."

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WHAT HE DID FOR A LIVING.—*Teacher*: "Now, John, what did Moses do for a living while he was staying with Jethro?" *John*: "*Please, sir, he married one of his daughters*."

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AN OLD FRIEND UNDER A NEW NAME.—The six-year-olds had been hearing the story of the Good Samaritan. Teacher: "Who came along after the priest?" Willie: "*Please, miss, the fleabite.*"

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WHAT BECOMES OF THE MOONS.—H.M.I.: "You have all heard of new moons, full moons, and crescent moons. What becomes of the old moons?" "*Please, sir, they are cut up to make stars,*" was a girl's reply.

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CUTE!—The teacher was questioning the class at the end of the object-lesson on the "Cat." "How is it that pussy can see in the dark?" said he. "*Because they feed her on lights,*" answered the smart boy of the class.

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GROSS DARKNESS.—In reading from the Bible that gross darkness covered the face of the earth, the teacher asked what gross darkness meant. The top boy in mental arithmetic said: "*One hundred and forty-four times darker than ordinary darkness.*"

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A NOVEL WEAPON.—"With what weapon did David slay the Philistines?" asked the examiner. "Please, sir," answered a child, "*the axe of the Apostles.*"

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FAITH.—"What is Faith?" asked the inspector. "*Faith,*" replied a ten-year-old, "*is that quality which enables us to believe what we know to be untrue.*"

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A FISHING-NET.—"*A fishing-net,*" wrote an ingenious Standard III. boy, "*is a lot of little holes joined together by a bit of string.*"

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TOO LITERAL.—Teacher (to newly-joined pupil): "What's your name?" Boy: "Smiff." Teacher: "Where do you come from?" Boy: "I dun'no." Teacher: "Ever been to school before?" Boy (more brightly): "Yus." Teacher: "Was it a Board School?" Boy: "*No, brick.*"

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EXCUSED (scarlet fever is bad in village).—Teacher: "Why did you stay away from school yesterday?" "Please sir, muvver's ill." Teacher (anxiously): "What does the doctor say it is?" "*Please sir, he says it's a girl.*"

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DEFINING A PARABLE.—The definition usually taught for a parable is, "An earthly story with a heavenly meaning." At an examination one boy wrote, "A heavenly story with no earthly meaning."

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JACOB'S DREAM.—There is an amusing and, I believe, a true story concerning that wonderful dream of Jacob's and the angels going up the ladder to heaven. "Please, sir," asked one of the boys in the class to which the story was being rehearsed, "why did the angels want to go up the ladder when they had wings?" This nonplussed the teacher, who took a strategic movement to rear by saying, "Ah, yes! Why? Perhaps one of the boys can answer that." And one *did*. "Please, sir," said he, "*because they was a-moulting.*"

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W.H.S.B.—I am told that an inspector of schools recently asked a boy attending one of the West Ham School Board's schools what the letters W.H.S.B. carved over the door meant, and was at once informed "*What Ho! She Bumps.*"

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A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE.—The following amazing and amusing attempt at composition was the actual effort of a boy who was being examined for a "full-time" exemption certificate. The inspector had told the children to write *in their own words* the substance of any story they had ever read in their own reading-books. This is what the budding "full-timer" produced: "A Fox and a Crow in porse I well no, many Good Things are request a Crow having venchurd a Dairy too go found a nice peace of chease which she flew in her beek to the top of a tree. A Fox just dined for chease felt inclined. She saw her fly." Poor chap! he had tried to reproduce the following:—

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The fox and the crow,  
In prose I well know,  
Many good little girls can rehearse.  
I think it will tell,  
Pretty nearly as well  
If we try the same fable in verse.  
In a dairy a crow  
Having ventured to go,  
Some food for her young ones to seek,  
Flew up in a tree,  
With a fine piece of cheese,  
Which she joyfully held in her beak.  
A fox who lived by,

To the tree saw her fly,  
And to share in the prize made a vow,  
For having just dined,  
He for cheese felt inclined,  
So he went and sat under the bough.  
"Tis a very fine day."  
Not a word did she say.  
"The wind, I believe, ma'am, is south  
A fine harvest for peas."  
Then he looked at the cheese,  
But the crow did not open her mouth.  
Sly Reynard, not tired,  
Her plumage admired,  
How charming! how brilliant its hue!  
The voice must be fine  
Of a bird so divine,  
"So pray, let me hear it, now do!  
"Believe me, I long  
To hear a sweet song."  
The silly crow foolishly tries,  
But she scarce gave one caw,  
When the cheese she let fall,  
And the fox ran off with the prize.

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ESPECIALLY FOR ME.—Last Christmas I was distributing the prizes at the Upper Kennington Lane Board School. I wound up with an exhortation to the boys to be good during the coming year. Said I: "Now, boys, see that when I come again next Christmas I shall hear an excellent account of you, and shall not have to be told that you have got into any trouble or mischief. "*Same to you, sir!*" shouted the whole school with one accord. Whether this was quiet humour or a mechanical reply to the time-honoured "Merry Christmas, boys!" which they had taken my final words to imply I cannot say. But I am trying to live up to the injunction as this little book attests.

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THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.—Teacher: "Yes, children, we are animals. Quite right. How do you know we are animals?" Tommy: "*Because it says we are Jesus's lambs!*"

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LOYAL SUBJECTS.—Teacher: "What did the angels sing when they came to the shepherds?" Little One: "*God save our Gracious King!*"

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NEED FOR CAUTION.—One morning the curate of the parish visited the village school to conduct the usual morning service. He proceeded to give a lesson to the upper standards on "Regeneration." He commenced by asking the class if any of them could tell him the meaning of the word "Regeneration," but no reply was forthcoming. It therefore fell to the curate to define the word. He said, "Regeneration means to be born again." Addressing himself to one little fellow, the curate said, "Now, my little boy, wouldn't you like to be born again?" "No, I shouldn't," answered he. "For why?" asked the curate. The boy quickly responded, "*Because I should be afraid of being a girl next time!*"

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NOT TO BE BEATEN.—A short time ago a lady gave a children's party, to which a little boy of four was invited. The next day he was giving some account of the fun, etc., etc., and said that every little visitor had contributed either song or recitation, music or dance, for the pleasure of the rest. "Oh dear! Jack!" said his mother "How very unfortunate you could do nothing!" Jack (with bravado): "Yes I could. I was not to be beaten, *so I just stood up and said my prayers!*"

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FOLD ARMS.—Inspector enters babies' room smiling. Inspector: "Now, all look at me; I want you to be very good. What is it to be good?" Baby hand rises. Inspector: "Well?" Baby: "Please, mam, to fold our arms." Inspector: " Oh! How does that make you good?" Baby: "*Please, mam, it keeps our bellies warm.*"

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SELF-POSSESSED.—She was four, and had just been promoted from the babies' class. It was a "number" lesson, and the little maid was first given three small blocks and then two others. "How many have you now?" she was asked. "One and one make two," was the reply. "Yes, I know, but I asked how many blocks you had now?" "One and one make two," was again the answer. "Yes, but what do three and two make?" The little arithmetician removed her thumb from her mouth, jerked it in the direction of the small boys at the other side of the room, and said, "*One o' them'll tell you.*"

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ONE REASON.—Vicar (catechising on cruelty): "Can any boy tell me what those marvellous insects are that travel on tracks of their own making in the woods?" Chorus: "Ants." Vicar: "Quite right. Now I have seen boys cruel enough to stamp on the laborious ants. Should you do so?" Chorus: "No, sir." Vicar: "Girls don't stamp on ants. Why not, Todd?" Todd: "*Please, sir, 'cos they gets up their legs!*"

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ROUGH ON THE SCHOOL-BOARD MAN.—Letter from parent: "Dear Miss,—Pleese to scuse my Arry from a comin to scool this afternoon as 'e was nocked down by a bycycle this mornin an I dont want none of them nosey old scool bored men after me, from Mrs. —."

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WHY RACHEL WAS AWAY.—"Dear Madam,—Plese exkuse Rachel Abrams as she had to go and fech her mother's liver."

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'NUFF SAID.—A tiny tot in the babies' room was being scolded by her teacher for having dirty hands. "You naughty girl! how dare you come to school with those dirty hands?" With tears streaming down her face the little tot answered, "*Pease, teacher, I ain't dot no more!*"

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A SENSATIONAL OPENING.—Teacher giving object-lesson on "Mice" to five-year-olds before H.M.I. introduces lesson by asking, "What animal is it which, when you are in bed, comes out of its hole and runs about the floor?" Five-year-old (in loud tones): "*It is the li-on!*"

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EXCUSED.—"Plese sur mister will you escus Charlee not been to scool as he as got no trouses and is farther wont let him come without—your torueley Mrs. B—."

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THE PHARISEES.—By a small Londoner: "The Fareses was a very minjy, measley lot. One day one of them gave Our Lord a penny, and Our Lord held it out in His hand and looked at it with scorn, and said, '*Whose subscription is this?*'"

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"ON SATDY."—Composition exercise by a nine-year-old: "On Satdy I do all the work, and then I go over and do all my Ants, in the afternoon I take Missis greens baby out in the Pram, i get a apeny on Satdy, sumtimes I by bulls i's. On Satdy nite I have a baf and wate up for my farther."

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THE SOUL OF WIT.—The teacher had given to each of a junior class a simple and familiar subject for composition. For twenty minutes the class composed, and was composed. The genius of the little group had been instructed to write about "Our Cat." The result of his twenty minutes deep cogitation and tremendous effort was the following essay, almost matchless for brevity, clearness, completeness, and, moreover, depth of pathos: "*Our cat is dead!*"

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A BIT ON EACH WAY.—Some lads who were beginning to write composition were told to write an essay on the horse. One lad had given a good description of the animal and wished to write something about its tail. He wrote the following sentence: "*The horse sometimes has a long tail or*"

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*tale.*" When asked why he had written down the two words he replied that "he thought that if one was marked wrong the other would sure to be right."

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THE EXCEPTION.—The Tenth Commandment, up to date, as given at a recent Scripture examination by a lad of seven summers: "Thou shalt not covet my nabours wife, thou shalt not covet my nabours house, nor his servant nor his made nor his ox nor is ass nor anything but is ears."

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SEE THAT YE FALL NOT OUT.—Down in Hampshire a curate was giving a Scripture lesson on Joseph and his brethren. He asked the boys why Joseph said, "See that ye fall not out by the way." A boy from a neighbouring village, used to riding about the farm, replied, "*Cause they had no tailboard to the caart.*"

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IT IS POSSIBLE.—During a Scripture lesson, which was being taken by a clergyman, some boys were asked each to give a text from the Bible. One lad said, "And Judas went and hanged himself." "Well!" said the reverend gentleman, "that is hardly a good text," and, pointing to another lad, asked *him* to give a text, and the lad said, "*Go thou and do likewise!*"

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INDIGNATION.—The following story is an amusing instance of the way in which boys mix their stories historical or scriptural. When asked for the reply of Naaman the leper to the command to wash seven times in Jordan, a boy gave the answer as, "*Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?*"

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NO ROOM FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.—A short time ago a teacher was giving a lesson on the Birth of Christ, when she referred the class to the 9th chapter of Isaiah, and verse 6, which reads: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, *and the government shall be upon His shoulder,*" &c. Here the teacher asked what was meant by the government being upon His shoulder. One child, holding up her hand, said, "*Please, teacher, it means that the child Jesus will have to be vaccinated.*"

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THE WIDOW AGAIN.—The teacher had been giving a lesson on Magna Charta, during the course of which he tried to impress on the children the benefits certain Articles conferred on Englishmen at the present day. He especially drew attention to Article 20, and called upon a boy at the close of the lesson to repeat that Article. Boy: "No freeman, merchant, or villain, shall be excessively fined for a small offence; the first shall not be deprived of his means of livelihood; the second of his merchandise; and the third of his *implements of husbandry.*" Teacher: "Can anyone tell me the name of an implement of husbandry." Little Girl: "*Please, sir! a widow.*"

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THOUGHTFUL.—Billy, an urchin of five, going to school, takes an apple from his pocket, spits on it, and rubs it vigorously on his dirty and ragged trousers. "Hallo, Billy! What are you doing that for?" Billy (holding up apple and looking pleased): "*'Tis for taicher. Her wont ait un if he's dirty.*"

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THE CORRECT THING TO SAY.—Town lad's composition on "A Half-holiday": "Yesterday we had a half-holiday and I enjoyed myself very much. After dinner I did the knives and forks and cleaned the windows and the boots. Then a boy came round with a football and wanted me to go to the park with him. But I could not go because my mother was going out and I had to mind the baby. When she came home we had tea, and then I went to my place and took out orders till nine o'clock. Then I went to bed and came to school this morning. I enjoyed myself very much."

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SUBJECT TO A PROVISIO.—Composition by boy, age seven. *Time.*—Morning previous to half-holiday for the opening of Kew Bridge by the King. *Subject.*—What I shall do this afternoon. "Wen I have had my diner I shall call for Bob Scott and his mother mite let me play tops with him in there yard. Then we shall go on the Common to here the band, and *if my tea is not ready I will wait to see the King go by* and I will wave my cap at him and I expect he will wave his at me."

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THE RAIN AND THE UNJUST.—A smart boy's composition on rain: "Rain comes down from heaven on the just and the unjust, but mostly upon the just, because the unjust have borrowed the umbrellas of the just and have forgotten to return them."

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A SURPRISING PRAYER.—"How do we pray for the magistrates in the Litany?" asked the Vicar. "That it may please Thee to bless and keep the magistrates, giving them grace to execute *all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons,*" answered the unconscious boy.

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THE "EGG-CUPS."—I had set the class, writes a teacher, an essay to write on "Good Manners." They had to think about it one evening and write it the next day in school. When correcting the exercise I came upon the following: "*When you have the egg-cups it is good manners to put your hand before your mouth and say, 'Manners before ladies and gentlemen.'*"

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BALAAM AND THE ASS.—The story as reproduced in a South London boy's essay: "It was about an owld gentleman as was a-wallopin' of a donkey and as the donkey was stupied he whached it with a stick, the donkey ran agin a wall and squeezed the gentlemans leg and he walloped it then and no mistake and serve it right. Then the donkey began to speak and told him, and told him he was wicked to serve him in that ere style, and a angel come down and took sides with the donkey and preached a sarmint to the owld gentleman and they all went away jolly."

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AN EXCUSE FOR LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL.—The village tailor sent a note to the schoolmaster as his son James was very late one afternoon. The following is the effusion:—

"Schoolmaster dear don't cane the youth,  
He's not in fault to tell the truth,  
His mother is the greatest sinner.  
She would not give the *kid* his dinner."

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DROPPED INTO POETRY.—The following reply, writes a teacher, was received by me some years ago from a parent, evidently of a poetical turn of mind, in answer to an inquiry as to the cause of his boy's absence from school:—

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"I'm full of wants and minus riches,  
Truth is, William has no breeches,  
I mean to buy a pair to-night,  
To-morrow he will come all right.  
Accept this plain apology  
From, dear Sir, ever yours, E. B."

On another occasion I suspected William of truant-playing, and sent a boy to make inquiry, when immediately came back the answer:—

"At one p.m. was sent to school,  
So must have played the nick,  
If thrashing truants is a rule,  
With my leave, use the stick."

William is now a hard-working and well-known missionary in —.

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FOUND OUT.—A school attendance officer quite recently met a lad who, instead of being at school, was wending his way to a public-house for a pint of beer. "How is it you are not at school, my boy?" said the man of law. "It's washing day, and I'm going for a pint of ale for my mother." He let the boy go on his errand and walked straight to the lad's house. "Good morning, Mrs. So-and-so. How is it your boy is not at school this morning?" "Ah! bless you," she says, "the poor lad's ill in bed, and has been the past two days. I'm afraid we shall never rear him, for you see he's been delicate ever sin he was born." "Can I see him?" returned the officer. "Certainly, if you'll wait a minute till I see if he's awake. He's had a bad night, and I should not like to disturb him if he's asleep." The good lady went on tiptoe to the foot of the stairs and called out very softly, "Johnny, Johnny, Johnny, are you awake?" Returning to the attendance officer she said, "You see, Mr. Schoolboard, Johnny's asleep, and it would be such a pity to disturb him." Just as she finished, in walks Johnny with the pint of beer. The old lady, to make the best of a bad job, threw up her hands and exclaimed, "*My dear Johnny, how did you get out? What a bad lad to get out of the bedroom window again, after all I've said!*"

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A TRIFLE INCONSISTENT.—An excited woman rushed into school one morning holding a lad by the

jacket collar. The moment she got inside she shouted out, "Now, master, here's a lad that's been playing the wag [truant], and I don't intend to leave this blessed spot until I see him skinned. Please, master, skin him alive! *I must see him skinned!*" she said. To make the best of a serious case, the master replied, "Well, I don't skin till ten o'clock, and it is only a quarter past nine yet, so you had better sit down till I'm ready." She took a seat, still holding the lad by the collar, and he went to his desk. In about five minutes she sent the boy to his class, and coming up to the master, whispered very softly into his ear: "*Please, master, don't touch the poor lad, he's so delicate, you could almost blow him away with a breath!*"

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JOHNNY WORKED THE CLOCK.—"Plese Sir dont cain pore jonny he as been keping the clock agoing with a stick cos is father mendid it an it wont go now an jonny kep the clock agoing so as I would no the time so no more as it leaves me at present. —."

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BLURTED OUT THE TRUTH.—A mother came with a truant one morning and said, "Please excuse my boy, he has been ill the last fortnight." The master said, "Very good, let him go to his class." The woman then turned suddenly round and, seizing the lad by the jacket, gave him a good shaking, saying at the same time, "*I'll break every bone in your dirty carcass if I've to come again and tell a pack of lies like this for you.*"

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THE POINT OF VIEW.—Overheard in infants playground. Little Girl: "*It's my grannie's funeral to-day. I've got threepence halfpenny and a packet of sweets already.*"

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A TRIFLE MIXED.—Poor Johnny had been on an errand for his mother and was consequently late for school. His mother, in order to coax him, prepared to write a note to his teacher explaining his lateness. The look on Johnny's face made the mother somewhat dubious about Johnny's going to school, and this is how the note read: "Dear Sir,—Please excuse Johnny for being late, *and kindly let me know if he hasn't been.*"

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SHE WAS SORRY.—A boy was absent from school. The teacher sent to his home to ask the reason. The answer came back that he was playing truant—sent by the mother. The next day the master made inquiries, and found that the mother had sent this message because she did not wish the boy's father, who was at home when the messenger arrived, to know that *she* had kept him at home. During this time the boy himself was hidden in a cupboard. A few weeks after a similar occurrence happened, and a like answer was sent to the master by the mother. The next day the boy appeared with the following note: "Sir,—Sorry my boy was away yesterday, but he had to go to the hospital and was kept, and I never sent him yesterday, and *I was sorry to tell a lye like last time. Please forgive me again.*—Mrs. —."

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"THE LAVENDER."—"Deer Sur,—Plese let Jon go to the lavender wen hever he wants as he as had some metson.—Yours truly, Mrs. —."

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"RES ANGUSTA DOMI."—In a village school in Devonshire the master had one morning been giving a lesson on the life of Jacob. Just as he was concluding he asked whether Jacob was rich or poor. Some stated that he was rich, while others held a contrary view. Eventually one of the lads who had stated that Jacob was poor was asked for his reason, and he replied as follows: "Please, sir, the Bible says Jacob slept with his fathers, and if he had been a rich man *he would have had a bed to his-self.*"

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THE POSTMAN.—"The postman has to be up erly in the morning to meet the males at the station. Then he takes them to the G.P.O. where they are sought out. Then he ties up his streets in bungaloes, and goes quickly from door to door, because the passengers dont' like to have their letters delaid. On his way back, he collects the pillow boxes, and conveys them to the G.P.O. Inside the postmen they are stamping letters. The postman is a simple servent because he works for the goverment and wear a uniform. He has a good time at Xmas I should like to be a postman then. He gets plenty of Xmas boxes and can read all the picture postcards."

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EXACTLY.—The other week Standard V. were asked to write an essay on "My Home." This is how one boy commenced: "Our house is in Peel Green Road. *It is on the left side going up, and the right side coming down.*"

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ON GIRLS.—By a boy.—"There are two sorts of children, boys and girls and of the two boys are the best. Girls cause all the rows and quarrels. They think they are wonderful if they can get a bird's feather stuck in their hat. They are proud and vain and are always gossiping and making mischief. I simply hate them. They boast of what they can do, this that and the other and a fat lot it is when it comes to the put. If there were no girls and women in the world, it would be a very peaceful place. They love to sit and rest. Girls do vary from day to day. On washing days they think they are nearly killed. They would rather gossip half a day, than walk half a mile. Its no good, they are a bad race and deceitful. If your wife sells anything she keeps a shilling back. Girls like to wear rings and think they are ladies. They bob their hair on the top like mountains and wears a fringe to make us boys think they are pretty, but aint they just deceived. The young men have a hard job to find a good and hard working wife in these days. Girls are cowards and I never knew one to face danger. If a cow looks at them they run and cry. Boys go about with their eyes open and their mouths shut, just the opposite to girls. Boys are also strong and useful while girls are timid, frightened weak little creatures. I would not be a girl for £10."

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"YOUR GRACE."—A certain duchess, well known for the interest she takes in the progress of education, once visited a school in L—— and began to talk freely to a mite in the first standard. Several questions were put to the child, to which the latter replied, "Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am." The teacher of the class was annoyed at the frequency with which the scholar used the word "ma'am," and at last said, "You must say 'Your Grace.'" The duchess laughed heartily when the child began, "*Lord, make us truly thankful, &c.*"

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ABOUT A "CINMATTERGRAF."—"We had a grand cinmattergraf at school on November 30th by Eddyston. Eddyston is America man. He invented to make it. Cinmattergraf works very fonny. If

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you swing a stone round it is in your eye a tenth of a cetend after you have stopet. If you are in a dark room and somebody brings a light it is in your eye a tenth of a cetend. The cinmattergraf is like a fonagrapt. It is like a mager lantin. A cinmattergraf is eaquil to five thousand candles. The ribbing rowls off one rowler on to another rowler. The cinmattergraf was worked by angle. It is like a soingnmersheen. It will play any song. The cinmattergraf talks like people. You cant understand what a gramophone says. When you light the oxgin it not give much light. When one of the things is burken the other blows in and it give bleu light. When the man shows the foters he has to put the lamp out. Because if he does not put the lamp out the pictures look shady. It is the light which helps to show the pictures. The pictures on the cinmattergraf are only an inch big. One picture that it showed was a woman laughing, and you could see every form her mouth was in. When all the pictures were put together they were a quarter of a mile long."

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CONCERNING THE HORSE.—Standard III. boy's essay: "The horse does not belong to the cat tribe, because its paws are hoofs. It breathes with its gills when it is young and chews the cud just like other people. There are many kinds of horses such as racer horses and hunters and worker horses and little welsh ponies. A mule is a horse with long ears and if a horse had long ears it would be called a donkey. You can see the age of a horse if you look in its mouth. It is defensive with its hind legs and when they kick you, you say, Woe."

---

THE RETORT COURTEOUS.—One of my boys, writes a friend, had his hair notched in a disgraceful manner one morning, and I quietly asked him who cut it. The accompanying note was the result: "from missus —,—sir—as you seam so anshus to no wear my boy ad is air cut i wish to tell you that i put im in the cole seller al larst nite so as the rats cood nibbel hit horf and i cood save tuppence."

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ON THE BABY.—"A baby is a man or woman as they first enter the world, and is sometimes called a infant, and they bring plenty of joy to its parents. Babies need much care because the bones are not strong enough for the baby to be used naturally. When a baby is a few months old a malecart is wanted so as to give it some fresh air, and it as to be nursed till it can crawl about on the flour. Most women like babies very much and wouldn't do without them. When first it is born it is very teisey and begins to cry, and they are enough to make anyone mad. It also needs a lot of care, for it will enhaul any disease. Baby is the pet of the family, especially mother, who if the baby is a boy he becomes her darling boy in after years. When baby is about four years old it is briched if it is a boy, but if a girl she remains in her same clothes. To look after a baby is very awkard if you ain't used to it, for they jump and kick and have to be carefully handled. It is crisined when it is old enough to eat solid food. Some babies are very tiresome and have to be nutritiously looked after. My father told me that he came in a little blue box, but learned men say we came from monkeys. If the mother tries to learn it to walk very early it will make them bandy. My baby is a dear little thing!"

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"To keep milk from turning sour you should leave it in the cow."—JANE, aged 10.

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"The Duke of Marlborough was a great general, who always fought with a fixed determination to win or lose."—OUR SAMMY, aged 11.

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EXCUSED!

TEACHER: "Why did you stay away yesterday, Jimmy?"

JIMMY: "Please, sir, muvver's ill!"

TEACHER: "Oh! that's bad! What does the doctor say it is?"

JIMMY: "Please, sir, he says it's a girl!"

---

FOND MOTHER: "Charley, do you know God's other name?"

CHARLEY: "Yes, mamma, we learnt it to-day. Harold be Thy name!"

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PARENTAL NOTE: "Dear Sir,—Don't hit our Johnny. We never do it at home except in self-defence!"

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HEAD MASTER: "How did God bless Abraham?"

SMALL BOY (in whose home there has just been a Double Event): "By giving him only one baby at a time!"

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MISTRESS: "Why is a motor-car called 'She'?"

SMALL BOY: "Because it is driven by a man!"

---

TEACHER: "Now, Frank, if you are not a good boy you won't go to heaven."

FRANK: "Oh, well! I went with father in Mr. B.'s yacht, and I went to the circus. A little boy can't expect to go everywhere!"

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H.M. INSPECTOR: "If I dig right down through the earth, where shall I come to?"

SMALL BOY (who has been commended at the Diocesan Examination): "The devil and all his works!"

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TEACHER: "What is a Mediator?"

SMALL BOY: "A chap who says hit me instead!"

---

JUVENILE COMPLAINTS.

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(AS DESCRIBED IN PARENTAL EXCUSE NOTES.)

"New Roger"—Neuralgia.

"Real Raw Jaw"—Neuralgia.

"Piper's Dance"—St. Vitus Dance.

"Haricot Veins"—Varicose Veins.

"Double Demoniacks"—Double Pneumonia.

"Scarlet Concertina"—Scarletina.

"Illustrated Throat"—Ulcerated Throat.

"Information of the Eye"—Inflammation of the Eye.

[AND SO ON.]

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TEACHER: "What is luke-warm water?"

SMALL GIRL: "Water that lukes warm but isn't!"

---

TEACHER: "Now, little ones, you can take off your warm overcoats. Can the bear take his off?"

LITTLE ONES: "No, miss!"

TEACHER: "Why not?"

DELIGHTED LITTLE ONE: "Because only God knows where the buttons are!"

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"The anshent Britons painted themselves all over blue with the juce obtained from the tree o  
nolledge of Good and Evil."—FROM HARRY'S COMPOSITION EXERCISE.

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TEACHER: "What is a widow?"

LITTLE GIRL: "A lady what marries the lodger!"

---

TEACHER: "What is this?"

YOUNG HOPEFUL: "A picture of a monkey."

TEACHER: "Can any child tell me what a monkey can do?"

YOUNG HOPEFUL: "Please, teacher, a monkey can climb up a tree."

TEACHER: "Yes, and what else can a monkey do?"

YOUNG HOPEFUL: "Please, teacher, climb down again!"

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BOY (reading): "She threw herself into the river. Her husband, horror-stricken, rushed to the  
bank——"

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TEACHER (interposing): "What did he run to the bank for?"

BOY: "To get the insurance money!"

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H.M. INSPECTOR: "If twenty feet of an iceberg be *above* the water, about how much is *below* the  
water?"

JIM: "All the rest!"

---

TOMMY: "Mamma, who made the lions and the elephants?"

MAMMA: "God, my dear."

TOMMY: "And did He make the flies, too?"

MAMMA: "Yes, my dear."

TOMMY (after a period of profound reflection): "Fiddlin' work making flies!"

---

TEACHER: "Why cannot we hear the bear walk about?"

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CHILD IN LANCASHIRE TOWN: "Because it hasn't got no clogs on!"

---

H.M. Inspector was examining a class of infants on the value of money. He held up a threepenny-piece and a penny. "Now, my children, which would you rather have, this small piece of money or the large one?" A little one held up her hand. "Well?" "Please, sir, the large one." "And why would you rather have the large one?" "Because my mother would make me put the threepenny-bit in my money-box, but I could spend the penny."

---

Tommy is in the Second Standard, and aged eight. The class was asked to write a short letter to teacher describing their doings on Guy Fawkes night. He began in right good style with the orthodox "Dear Miss C—." Everything went quietly till the close. It was then that Tommy shone. He wound up: "I remain, your loving son in who I am well pleased,—"

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"Manners is a very good thing when you are trying for a situation."—FROM JAMES HENRY'S COMPOSITION.

---

The essay was upon "Dreams." One boy who has a great dread of arithmetic dreamt he was in heaven, where his teacher kept calling out, "No sums right, stand up!"

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TEACHER: "Well, well, James! Home lesson sums all wrong!"

JAMES: "Yes, teacher. I knew they would be. Father would help me!"

**THE END.**

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Throughout the dialogues, there were words used to mimic accents of the speakers. Those words were retained as-is.

The illustrations have been moved so that they do not break up paragraphs and so that they are next to the text they illustrate. Thus the page number of the illustration might not match the page number in the List of Illustrations, and the order of illustrations may not be the same in the List of Illustrations and in the book.

Errors in punctuations and inconsistent hyphenation were not corrected unless otherwise noted.

On page 9, a period was added after "CHAPTER I".

On page 19, "ithers" was replaced with "others".

On page 40, a period was added after "Standard VII".

On page 54, a period was added after "are grisle".

On page 64, "sanwiches" was replaced with "sandwiches".

On page 64, "apetites" was replaced with "appetites".

On page 71, a single quotation mark after "*Cast out a devil, sir!*" was replaced with a double quotation mark.

On page 98, a period was added after "hot nor cold".

On page 107, a period was added after "B".

On page 119, a quotation mark was added before "is your favorite writer".

On page 120, a single quotation mark was added after "their lives".

On page 129, a single quotation mark after "sweet song" was replaced with a double quotation mark.

On page 132, a single quotation mark before "How many" was replaced with a double quotation mark.

On page 148, "an errand" was replaced with "on an errand".

On page 153, "November th 30" was replaced with "November 30th".

In the first advertisement, a period was added after "Field".

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