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# PARIS HIGH SCHOOL

## 1929 - 1951

DONALD A. SMITH

Provided by the descendants of D.A. Smith

STAFF. 1929 - 1930

Kathleen Ferguson, Margaret Cowan, Florence Flanagan, Florence Rodman

Donald Smith, Principal Cecil Ward Butcher

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# INITIATION

Awake! the golden morn is here,
The sun-rays brightly streaming.
"The Golden Morn."

For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.
"Henry VI, Part III."

Rise up! rise up, Sir Pedagogue,
I've fully dubbed thee knight;
Now comes the hour to sally out
The Dragon Ignorance to clout
And Callow Minds enlight.
Ergo Dogrul

On September 3, 1929, in the warm rays of the morning sun, I walked down Grand River Street towards the Paris High School. There it lay before me, a bleak, rectangular box, somehow resembling a factory or a jail, and throwing a long shadow over the front lawn and walk. Sweat began to ooze from the palms of my hands, and a multitude of shivers agitated my stomach. For a moment, fearing the unknown, I felt as though I must turn and hurry away. Yet at the same time I was eager to begin teaching -- to see whether I'd like it and be equal to the challenge.

On the lawn near the north side-door, about 75 boys stood or sat in chattering groups; or, whooping and yelling, chased and jostled one another. And along the walk leading to the south-door, bright clusters of girls were talking and laughing.

When I stepped up onto the walk leading to the front-door, suddenly the talking and laughing died away. All heads turned in my direction, and curious eyes appraised me. A short silence; then some masculine groans, and a sprinkling of female giggles and titters.

Under this scrutiny, I felt as though my feet were encased in pails of concrete, or that I were heaving along ice-caked snow-shoes. As I moved interminably forward, the flight of steps seemed to recede like a mirage into the shadow.

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At last, while still under the sharp eyes of my critics, I reached the first step, and with the door that promised escape looming before me, hurried up the ascent. Alas! I didn't know that a careless contractor had made the fifth step an inch higher than the others. Suddenly the toe of one shoe whacked into the top edge of the riser, and I pitched forward almost to my hands and knees, as though preparing to kow-tow to the noble academy. A burst of laughter assailed my ears. Mortified, I straightened up, yanked open the door, and almost leaped into the hallway, where I paused for a minute to regain my composure, feeling much like a beginning actor-hero who, upon his first appearance on the stage, has tripped over a rug and tumbled to the heroine's feet.

Finally I went through the dim hallway towards the office to announce my momentous arrival to Principal C. W. Butcher, B.A. Two senior boys, lounging against a wall, gave me a friendly smile. The taller one, with a faint grin asked, "Are you looking for His Eminence the Duke?"

"The Duke!" I said, somewhat disturbed, having guessed whom he meant and resenting his presumption.

"Yes, The Duke; or, as some prefer to call him, "The Deacon."

I had to smile. Suddenly I felt close to these boys, Mr. Butcher, during my first three years as a high-school pupil, had been my principal in Shelburne. The titles seemed to suit him.

The shorter boy now spoke, "He's down in 1B. He'll be back soon."

At this moment, Cecil Ward Butcher, his solid figure seeming to choke the hallway, bore down upon us. The boys quickly stood straight and looked serious.

With a warm smile for me, Cecil Ward sang out, "Good morning, sir! Good morning and welcome to your first day at Paris High School." Then to the boys, in a fatherly voice, "I'll discuss your problems with you lads in two or three minutes. First, I want a word with our new teacher."

With a rapid, heavy step and his broad back rigidly straight, he led the way into his cubicle-office; and after closing the door and pulling up a chair for me, sank into his creaking throne, clasped his strong hands behind his head, and gazed with half-shut eyes at the ceiling.

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I felt uneasy. Although seven years had passed, I hadn't quite lost my fear of Mr. Butcher. Four times during my last year at Shelburne High School, he had summoned me to his office to scold me for a boyish prank; and the last time, had given his big strap a place of honor on the desk, a warning not to be ignored. Somehow I felt as though we were back at S.H.S. -- that he (here I began to feel apprehensive) had finally found out about a practical joke I had played on him during my last month there, and was now preparing to scorch me with tongue and strap.

While I waited for him to lower his gaze and probe my eyes, the details of the joke flashed through my memory:

One day in early May, 1922, just after in the physics class he had harshly scolded me for inadvertently knocking over a piece of equipment, he said, "Donald, I hear by frequent report [he paused for effect and smiled ironically] that you have a muzzle-loading gun. Will you use it to help us to demonstrate the velocity of sound?"

"I guess so," I said sourly, for I was still smarting from his calling me a "bumbling idiot" -- a "quarter-wit" who should never be allowed to touch anything more complicated than a shovel.

"Good! after four, I'll explain the part you'll play in the experiment."

On the following day, he led his class, of which three of the members bore stop-watches, to the railroad track. Then he sent Murray Douglas and me 3540 feet up the roadbed, a distance that had been carefully measured on the previous day by him and two pupils. There Murray and I stood ready with the gun and a bag of white shredded-paper. I was to blast a barrel-full of shreds into the air, whereupon C. Ward & Co.-- when they saw the white mushroom above the muzzle -- would start the watches, and when the boom arrived, would stop them.

The flag fluttered, the gun banged, the paper flew like confetti, and the scientist recorded a time-lapse of three seconds. Mr. Butcher (we were later told) was ecstatic. He grinned as though he were Archimedes leaping wet from his bath. Impatiently he waited for a second blast to confirm the results.

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Suddenly, while I was pouring gunpowder into the mouth of my little cannon, a fiendish idea bounced off my skull like a Newtonian apple -- probably hurled from the arsenal of Beelzebub. I cackled with glee. Here was my revenge.

"Murray," I said, "when I yell 'now!' throw a big handful above the muzzle."

"What the hell are you up to?" asked Murray doubtfully.

"Go ahead and you'll see. Just do as I say."

Up went the paper; and two seconds later, "bang!" went the gun.

In the distance, we saw a commotion, as though a hive had been disturbed. C. Ward, like a king-bee, buzzed back and forth, and then seemed to call a conference. Finally, after five long minutes, the signal flag was again waved.

"This time," I said to Murray, "just to be different, I'll pull the trigger and you wait a second before throwing up."

"But you're ruining the experiment. Butch will kill us if he finds out," protested Murray.

"He'll never know the difference, if you keep your mouth shut."

When Murray and I arrived back at the classroom, we found our science-mentor in a tizzy. How, he continually asked himself and the class, could one account for the amazing discrepancies? Was the wind responsible? Did the sound echo from a nearby hill and bush? There must, he asserted, be a reasonable explanation.

During the two following periods in physics, puzzled and disturbed, he discussed the mystery, and came up with a series of brilliant hypotheses, any one of which would have done credit to Einstein. Meanwhile, since Murray had let the cat out of the bag, the other pupils were barely able to keep a straight face.

A week later, C. Ward was still puzzling over the phenonemon. As a result, I began to curse my stupidity, and became more and more fearful, dreading that a pupil would tell a parent, a parent would squeal to C. Ward, and I'd catch blue-hell. Thus I was much relieved when, about June 1, I moved to Creemore and tried my final examinations there.

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During the five or six seconds that all of this was flashing before my mind's eye, I had an uncanny feeling that Mr. Butcher was aware of my thoughts -- that he knew everything and was re-living his anger and mortification. I wondered why he had chosen me to come to his school.

For a while longer, he continued to gaze at the ceiling. Then he decisively lowered his arms, leaned forward, and looked me sharply in the eyes. Irrationally I thought, "Ye gods! here it comes."

"Donald," he said gravely, "I don't know just how to say this, but I must. When you were my pupil in Shelburne -- a rascal if I recall rightly -- I naturally called you 'Donald'. But now that you're a teacher on my staff, it would be improper for me to do so. It would lose you the respect of the pupils by placing you on a level with them. If I called you by your first name, they might be tempted to do the same. It's therefore essential that I address you in a manner suitable to your new status. From now on, here and elsewhere, I'll address you as 'Mr. Smith', and I'll expect you, at least around the school, to always address the other teacher by their surnames."

"I understand," I said, feeling much relieved.

Again he leaned back, clasped his hands behind his head, and again gazed at the ceiling. Somehow I felt as though I were going through the ceremony of being knighted; that Principal C. Ward Butcher, B.A. was about to rise, tap my shoulder with a blackboard pointer, and intone: "Rise, Mr. Smith, Duke of Chalkbox, Earl of Erudition, and Pasha of Pedagogy -- not to mention Companion of the Rod, the Ink-Well, and the Pencil Sharpener."

But instead of rising majestically to dub me, he leaned forward to signify that he had reached another decision: "Since you've had no experience, I'll organize your class for you. You can observe how it's done. Your home-form will be 1B -- at the north end of the lower corridor. When the pupils come in, keep them busy by having them copy their list of textbooks. You'd better go down there now and write it on the board. Here it is."

With the list fluttering in my hand, I left the office, smiled at the two senior boys, and went down to 1B. For a moment, I paused in the doorway, looking at the rows of shabby iron-legged desks and sniffing the strong smell of varnish and floor-oil. Then I entered, and going up to the teacher's desk, touched the top and opened two or three drawers, feeling somehow that this was the rickety-rock upon which I'd be basing my future.

Just as I finished writing the book-list on the blackboard, a hand-bell rang on the front-steps, and Mr. Butcher's voice shouted, "Everybody in now! Form-1 girls will go to Room 1A. Form-1 boys to Room 1B. The students of the higher forms will go to their respective classrooms."

A minute or so afterwards, the form-1 boys began to file through my doorway, most of them behaving with the diffidence becoming to newcomers. Each glanced at me before sitting as near as possible to the back of the room. Five or six jostled briefly to get a choice seat; and three or four whispered to a neighbor and then looked at me to observe my reaction.

After all were seated, Mr. Butcher came in. With a steady eye, he scanned the faces before him. His manner seemed to say, "I'm boss in this school, and don't you ever forget it. Who among you dares to challenge me?"

When duly satisfied with the degree of meekness, he said, "I'll now read the names of those who will be enrolled in 1A. This he did, while some of the boys who were to be separated from friends frowned and muttered to themselves.

After the reading, Mr. Butcher called out sharply in a military tone, "Boys of 1A, stand! To your right, turn, Now -- beginning with the row nearest the door -- march in single-file to Form 1A, but don't enter until the girls are all out."

Then, before leaving, he said to me, "As far as possible, Mr. Smith, have the girls sit in the rows nearest the windows. I'll be back in a short time to address the class."

I moved the remaining boys to one side of the room. Three or four, when they had to give up a back seat, groaned and grumbled, while their classmates smirked at them and me.

After two or three minutes, a pretty girl hesitated in the doorway. The boys all turned to eye her. She glanced at me, blushing the while, and looking as though she were about to run away. Suddenly, probably pushed from behind, she stumbled in, and was followed by a file of other girls, most of them shy and nervous, but a few boldly smiling as they wiggled their way to a desk.

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When everybody was seated and looking expectantly at me, I said, "You will please copy the list of books from the blackboard that you must have for tomorrow."

Obediently, in a flurry of activity, they began to copy the list, the knitting of brows and the pursing of lips indicating that a vital and laborious task was in the process of being accomplished.

At the back of the room, a hand shot up.

"Yes?" I asked a boy with an innocently mischievous face.

"Please sir," he said, standing up, "I can't read the first word of the first book."

A light titter rippled across the room.

"The first word," I replied, spelling the word slowly, is B - O - O - K and the words that follow it are 'list for Form 1B'"

"Thank you," he said with exaggerated politeness, "I thought it was the name of a book. I'm sorry sir, but I can't read your writing."

"I'm sorry, too," I said. "I guess my writing is not so clear as it should be. However, I'm sure you'll get used to it. It's taken me only about fifteen years."

He sat down, his face expressing both satisfaction and doubt.

Soon all of the pupils had copied the list. Then, with the minutes dragging by with my saying nothing and Mr. Butcher's not appearing, they became restless, and I began to feel increasingly uneasy. Where was The Duke? What the hell was he doing? Should I let the pupils talk quietly? What should I do if some became noisy? A feeling of uncertainty crept over me. What was I supposed to do?

Finally, before anybody tried to talk, Mr. Butcher bustled into the room and took his stand behind my desk. Again the well-timed pause, and the firm, probing look.

After he had given the impression of looking hard into every face, he said in part: "Boys and girls of 1B, I welcome you to Paris High School with the hope that you'll find your stay here both profitable and enjoyable. Try to make good use of your time. All of you cannot graduate with a Junior or a Senior Matriculation. You don't all have equal abilities or an equal desire to work and succeed. But all of you should try to do your best. It seems to me that a man or woman is truly educated only when he has developed his natural

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talents as fully as possible. Thus you should all do your best, and develop work-habits and attitudes that will help you when you go out to make a living."

During this address, the pupils earnestly paid full attention, though I suspected that they were not so much interested in understanding the words as in forming an impression of Mr. Butcher's character and personality.

When he finally dismissed them (Stand up! -- stand straight. To the right, about turn. First row, dismiss), they moved smartly like well-drilled soldiers. The Duke had convinced his subjects that he was master of his academic duchy.

That afternoon, before the staff-meeting, Mr. Butcher and I had a long discussion about school regulations and procedures. As we talked, it slowly dawned on me that the relationship established during our three years together as teacher and pupil at Shelburne High School was beginning to re-assert itself. Fundamentally, he was treating me as though I were still his pupil. On the one hand, he was paternalistic, authoritarian, condescending, and subtly remote; on the other, warm, friendly, concerned, and almost protective. I began to feel that he was again my teacher. As in Shelburne, in general I admired, trusted, and liked him, but at the same time, feared his displeasure, disliked some aspects of his puritanism, and was amused by his idiosyncracies. Suddenly, as by a flash of insight, I divined that our relationship was beginning to resemble not only the one that usually exists between teacher and pupil, but also between father and son. This revelation, coming at a time when I was troubled by being alienated from my own father, disturbed me. Would we end up being friendly or hostile?

At the staff-meeting, Mr. Butcher formally introduced me to the other four teachers -- all women. Then, having assumed a complacent and solemn mien, and looking almost with awe at the timetable he had inscribed on the blackboard, he said, "This is the schedule for the year. More than three weeks of intensive and steady work have gone into its completion. The problems involved were so complex that at times [here he smiled and rolled up his eyes] that I almost prayed for divine aid."

As I scanned the chart with its seemingly incomprehensible letters and abbreviations, I understood how an illiterate Israelite must have felt when Moses -- after sliding down the stony slope of Mount Sinai with the weight

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of two slabs of stone buckling his old knees -- began to translate the mysterious cuneiforms.

With Mr. Butcher's guidance, each teacher made a personal and a class-timetable. Then each went to his or her home-room to write the class-version on a blackboard.

And so ended my first day at Paris High School. Mr. Butcher had been kindly and helpful; the other members of the staff had been friendly; and the pupils seemed to be likeable and obedient. I began to look forward to the morrow, when I'd teach my first lessons.

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# FIRST LESSONS

It is much less what we do

Than what we think, which fits us

For the future.

Philip James Bailey

"What's in a name?" cooed Vermina Frumpsy --

Before John cooed, "Dearest Plumpsy Wumpsy!"

Ergo Dogrul

Nimrod the mighty hunter.

The Bible

The first morning of classes was warm and sunny. While I was going into the school, being sure to step high at the tripping-step, only a few pupils on the front lawn gave me more than a glance. Most of them were now much more interested in one another than in me.

In Form 1B, I began to write some history questions on the blackboard. Suddenly I heard Mr. Butcher shout from his office, "Mr. Tate [the caretaker], it's a quarter to nine. Time to unlock the doors."

Soon about sixty boys -- big and small and all carrying a load of books and scribblers -- had crowded into my room and were sitting at desks or on them, or leaning against the walls and window-sills.

"Why," I asked a senior boy, "do so many come in here?"

"Oh," he answered, "we always stay here until five to nine, when Mr. Butcher rings the bell that sends us to our rooms. The girls are down in 1A."

This information irritated me. With a mob of boys chattering and laughing, how was I to get any work done before classes began? And how could I control so many when only about half could sit at a desk?

Ten minutes later, the little electric-bell above the doorway tinkled (Mr. Butcher had pushed a button in the office), and the caretaker clanged the handbell from the front-steps. Soon most of the boys had left my room, and the 1B-girls had entered. Then the bell tinkled again. My first day of teaching had begun.

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I looked into the shining young faces. Everywhere there were smiles -- some faint, some tentative, and some sly; but nearly all friendly. "What a nice group of kids!" I thought. "We'll get along well together." And somehow I felt as though I were one of them -- that there was no real barrier between us.

"Good morning, class," I said.

"Good morning, Mr. Smith," they replied in a ragged chorus.

"We'll begin," I announced, "with a reading from the bible, continue with a recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and end with the singing of God Save the King."

I then droned through the required biblical reading, lead a muttered recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and, after blowing a squawking note on a reed-pipe, initiated a cacaphonous plea for the salvation and longevity of His Britannic Majesty, George V.

After these opening-exercises, while I was telling the pupils that I wanted them to read the first topic in the history textbook and then to answer in their scribblers the questions written on the blackboard, the door opened and in bustled Mr. Butcher. Having clattered to the front of the room, he boomed out, "The following are the announcements for the day", and then proceeded to read and explain items from a list. When he had gone, I found difficulty in regaining attention. Though I knew the interruption was necessary, I was annoyed.

After the pupils had worked for about ten minutes, I walked up and down the aisles to see how they were doing. To my astonishment, although all seemed equally industrious, I discovered that a few had already read the section and clearly answered the first questions; whereas others, looking puzzled and frustrated, were still wrestling with the first third of the reading assignment. Being up to this time only dimly aware of the differences in speed and comprehension (I had never even heard of a reading-test), I could hardly believe what I saw.

Towards the end of the period, I asked a few members of the class to read one of their answers. Again I was astonished. During my high-school years, I couldn't help noticing that in each of my classes there were two or three fellow-pupils who were looked upon as being "smart" and two or three

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as being "dumb", and at university I had learned a bit about intelligent-quotients. But I hadn't realized what a wide range there is in verbal ability. A few of the answers were, in varying degrees, clear and coherent; others were unbelievably vague and confusing. I was so deeply pre-occupied in thinking about the problems involved in these variations that only when the bell tinkled at 9:35 did I remember Mr. Butcher's twice-repeated warning: "Be sure to give a definite assignment in homework. Let your class know at once that you require regular home-study. Otherwise they'll neglect your subjects in favor of the others." As a result of my pre-occupation, my first class escaped for one day the burden of homework in history.

From 1B, I went to the science-laboratory to teach zoology to about ten Form-2 pupils. I began the lesson with misgivings; for I knew very little about the subject -- only what I had learned during a three-month course at university. Also I had discovered that the laboratory equipment consisted of little more than the skeleton of a cat and of a bird; the more-or-less preserved body of a clam, a rat, and a fish; and a stained assortment of tweezers and dissection knives.

When the pupils had seated themselves at two long science-desks, I began by discussing a definition of zoology and the reasons for studying it, and then stressed the importance of keeping a neat and complete notebook. Finally I asked them to bring grasshoppers for the next lesson.

During the period, I began surreptitiously to use the Smith Memory Method for Recalling the Names of Pupils. On the last page of my notebook, beside the name of each pupil, I jotted down a brief description; for example (names false):

| name | outstanding feature |
|---|---|
| Alice B. | Petite |
| Mona M. | Trés Gros |
| Lucy M. | Gros |
| Kate K. | Angularis |

Towards the end of the period, Mona said, "Mr Smith, may Lucy and I look over your notebook? We want to see how to do one."

"Certainly," I said, pleased to see that my words had produced fruit. With a big smile, I handed her the book.

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By chance, she opened at the last page and saw her name followed by "Très Gros". She flushed, giggled hysterically, and drew Lucy's attention to her name and "Gros" Another blush, and another wild giggle. Then "Très Gros" slammed the book shut and with a toss of her head thrust it at me. Obviously she was far from being amused. In fact, the glare in her eye and the set of her jaw suggested that she'd like to hurl me to the floor, place her bulk upon my skinny midriff, and bounce until my eyeballs popped.

My brow became hot and sticky, and when I tried to continue the lesson, I stammered. What a relief to hear the bell! I almost fled from the room, leaving behind a buzzing class, dominated by the fury of two hornets. Right then and there I decided to abandon any further use of the Smith Memory Method.

During the third period, I had physical training with the senior boys. I formed them into two lines, had them form fours, and like a drill-serjeant, yelled orders such as "Left -- right; left -- right; about turn; halt -- one, two, three. Then I led them in a series of arm-waving and leg-jerking calisthenics. Three or four of the boys, with sighs and groans, moved languidly. The majority, however, were willing and energetic.

After the drill and exercises, while the members of the class were practising for field day, three boys came up to me and said, "Mr. Smith, will you please demonstrate the new way of doing the high-jump?" The request embarrassed me. After a moment, I said, "I'm sorry. I've not been trained in the new method. In fact, I really knew very little about field-sports, for I had received no training in the schools I had attended, and very little at the Ontario College of Education.

The boys looked at me doubtfully, as though disillusioned. Evidently they had been told that their new teacher was an efficient coach. Uneasily I wondered what they'd think when they discovered that I had hardly ever had the opportunity to play basketball -- that, in fact, I was far from being proficient in any sport.

As I watched the boys running and jumping, I felt wholly inadequate. What a fool I was, I thought, to take a job that required the teaching of physical training! How could I hope to gain the respect and co-operation of the boys? When the period came to an end and I gloomily walked towards the school to teach a poem to Form 1A, I was troubled by my lack of ability in physical training.

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The lesson on the poem (a ballad, the title of which I have forgotten) did much towards chasing away the gloom and restoring self-confidence. The majority of the pupils were interested in the story, and eagerly answered my questions. Here, as in the history lesson in Form 1B, I observed with concern that a few pupils read very slowly and with little understanding and couldn't answer even the easiest questions. And towards the end of the period, during oral reading by the class, I was distressed by the jerky, stuttering, bumbling way in which about half of the members performed. For the most part, the reading by the pupils detracted from an enjoyment of the poem.

And so my first day of teaching went on till four o'clock. When the final bell rang, I was exhausted. My back, legs and feet ached, and my throat burned. And at the same time I was worried because I had discovered that I was not qualified to teach effectively zoology and physical training, and needed better qualifications for English. Only in history, in which together with political science, I had an honors degree, did I feel sure of myself. I determined then and there to take an honors course extra-murally in English so that I could teach more of it and so escape from subjects like physical training and zoology.

After going to my boarding-home room and resting for a while, I decided, partly for recreation, to cross the highway to a field of dry stubble, there to catch some grasshoppers for the morrow's class in zoology. Since, like most young men of the day, I had no casual or sports clothes, I donned a pair of frayed and rumpled trousers and a faded dress-shirt. No doubt I looked like a refugee from skid-row.

Just when I was about to cross the road, clutching a can in predatory hand, an old model-T Ford touring-car came rattling by, trailing a billowing cloud of blue smoke. The top was down, and two men rode in the front seat and an ancient lady in the back. She held her bonnetted head proudly high, as though she were Her Grace the Dowager Duchess of South Dumfries Twp., or Her Eminence the Marchioness of Senility, bowling along in her golden coach.

While jiggling past, she deigned to glance haughtily at me and my can. Suddenly the glance became a hard stare. A disdaindful frown rearranged the criss-cross wrinkles on her imperious visage, and her expression seemed to say,

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"How revolting! an able-bodied young man begging for pennies. Disgusting and disgraceful! What's my world coming to?"

As she passed by on the other side, her talon-like fingers clamped themselves tighter on the clasp of her purse. No widow's mite for that bum!

"Silly old crow!" I muttered, while spitting out the taste of oily smoke.

When I had climbed over the wire-fence and begun to move through the rustling stubble, a small cloud of grasshoppers whirled away on clacking wings. At first I tried to snatch up stragglers by slowly bending over and then, with the speed of a chameleon's tongue, suddenly shooting out a hand. But in vain! I caught not one, and my back began to ache. Finally I was reduced to crawling around on hands and knees, springing hither and yon like a cat confused by a thousand milling mice. At last I had seven or eight victims in my can, and would have had the required dozen had some not escaped when I took off the lid to add another.

After a particularly violent scramble, I chanced to look towards the highway. A young girl, whom I took to be a P.H.S. pupil, was standing there, peering at me as though short-sighted. She evidently was bewildered.

"Probably a Form-2 girl," I thought. "Thinks I'm crazy."

Feeling foolish in my role of pouncing predator, I turned my backside towards her and went on with the snatching.

A moment later, the fence squeaked, and a burst of hysterical laughter made me cringe. Then a dumfounded voice squealed, "Holy Judas! what in hell are you trying to do, you silly ass? Have you gone nuts or something?"

While grasshoppers rattled around in my can like thirty pieces of silver, and I was thinking that "jumping" would be a more suitable adjective than "holy", I slowly stood up, turned around, and looked into an amused and bemused face. All at once, as though by magic, her mouth gaped and amusement and bewilderment gave way to astonishment and dismay. Obviously she had thought I was somebody else.

For a second or two, she quivered against the fence, staring at me; then, blushing scarlet, she spun around and stumbled across the shallow ditch to the shoulder of the roadway, along which she retreated so speedily that she raised little eddies of dust.

She had, I later learned, mistaken me for a boy-friend.

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While climbing over the fence on my return from the big-game hunt, I began to laugh. How the eyes of the silly girl had bugged! She'd sure keep out of my way for a while. Then I thought of her shouting, "Holy Judas!" No doubt about it! the next time I went hunting grasshoppers, I'd use a binder-twine lasso formed with a hangman's knot.

Feeling light of heart, I said to myself, "Well, my lad, for the most part this has been a good day. Perhaps tomorrow will be even better."

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# ANARCHY

> A teacher, above all else, must be able to maintain discipline. He can teach very little to an unruly class. It's my duty to rid the school of anybody who can't keep order.
>
> C. Ward Butcher

> Whenever we see in another, or feel within ourselves, an impulse to overdo, overact or underact, we may suspect that a state of anxiety exists.
>
> Arthur J. Jersild

> If you strike a child, take care that you strike it in anger ... a blow in cold blood neither can nor should be forgiven.
>
> Bernard Shaw

During the first three weeks of September, I felt that I was doing fairly well as a teacher. Most of the pupils seemed to be interested in the lessons and to like me, and I liked them. But towards the end of the month, I suffered a bitter disillusionment, particularly in the first forms. A number of pupils in these classes had begun to talk out of turn, especially while I was teaching literature, and when ordered to pay attention, did so for a short time, but then went on with their chattering. I began to feel helpless, and the chattering increased.

About twice a month, an assembly under the auspices of the Literary Society was held in the gymnasium. As part of the program, a school paper was read by its editor-in-chief. During the first meeting in October, the following was one of the items:

A Literature Lesson in Form 1B

Mr. Smith: Why did Old Mother Hubbard go to the cupboard? -- Esther! turn around and stop talking.

Lloyd: (always eager to help) She was hungry and wanted to make a stew.

Mr. Smith: When she got there, what did she find? -- Jesse and Ivor! pay attention or I'll give you a detention.

Vincent: She found the dog scratching himself on a shelf.

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Mr. Smith: Very funny, very funny -- Eddie and Cecil! stop that talking. You've done nothing but gab since the period began. Now, to continue after that rude interruption. When she saw that the cupboard was bare, what did Old Mother Hubbard do? -- Freda, since you like talking, you may answer the question.

Freda: First she put a dress on the bare cupboard. Then she hitched the dog to a buggy and took off for town to get some bologna-sausage.

Mr. Smith: Are you sure it wasn't mouse-meat? -- Barbara and Margaret! See me here at four o'clock, and don't forget.

Barbara and Margaret: (in unison) Oh, we'd just love to, Mr. Smith. May we stay until after five o'clock? Until it's dark?

The audience, during the reading, laughed uproariously; and many eyes scanned my face to see how I was taking the "kidding". A forced smile betrayed my sense of humiliation.

About three days later, Mr. Butcher called me into his office, closed the door, ensconced himself on his throne, and said in a kindly tone: "I don't like to tell you this, but I hear downtown and from two or three board members that your discipline is bad. What seems to be the trouble?"

"Some of the pupils in the first-forms insist upon talking while I'm teaching," I answered. "Nothing I do stops them. Detentions are useless."

Mr. Butcher thoughtfully scratched his head; then he said, "Your problem comes mostly from a lack of force. You give the impression of being too mild -- too friendly and easy going. The students aren't afraid of you.

I knew he spoke the truth. Lately, I'd often wished I were more like him -- unusually aggressive, forceful and domineering. Now, apprehensively I asked, "What am I to do? They've really got the better of me."

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"You'll have to change your attitude and methods. You've got to show them who's boss, and rule with a hand of iron. Always remember that most children in groups are cruel -- that they'll show no mercy if they get you down.

"I'm finding that out the hard way.

"Let me tell you something else. Deep down there's a part of you that's hard and tough. Make use of that and you'll be all right. You've got to be ruthless to survive."

"What in particular should I do?"

"Do what I do; be rough with the rascals. If you gain the respect of the boys, you'll also gain that of the girls. And another things; avoid trying to be funny, at least until you have full control. And don't be too friendly. Keep a good distance between them and yourself.

"Isn't it too late to try to change things?"

"I think not. Perhaps you can't change things much this year. But you can keep them from getting worse. And you'll learn how to control classes so that next year, with a fresh start, you'll do all right."

"I'll try to do better," I promised.

"Good!" he said. "Remember that I'm always here ready to help."

That night in bed, as I tossed and turned, I worried about what I lacked and failed to do that encouraged some of my pupils to be unruly. Finally I decided that Mr. Butcher's analysis was right -- that I had been much too easy and friendly, and that I must try to use his methods. I recalled that when he arrived at Shelburne High School, the place was bedlam, and that within two weeks he had restored order. I recalled, too, being told that when he came to Paris the school was in disorder, and that very quickly he had banged the trouble-makers into obedience and conformity. Thus I determined to imitate him, believing as a former pupil that his methods were effective.

Towards dawn, I fell asleep. But within an hour I awoke with a start. In a nightmare I had been trying to teach "On His Blindness" to a rowdy class of about 300. Continually the pupils talked and giggled and made humorous comments about the poem and me. And they laughed uproariously at my puny efforts to restore order. When I tried to whack my worst tormentor, I couldn't move a muscle. I felt as though I were bound by chains.

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On the following morning, I had no sooner begun to teach a history lesson to Form 1B than a number of pupils began to talk and laugh. I stood silent until, probably from curiosity, all were quiet and looking at me. Then, as resolutely as possible, I said, "You must not interrupt a lesson by talking. You mustn't talk while I'm teaching."

Almost immediately, a boy at the back of the room muttered, "Oh yeah!" and turned around to make a comment to a friend, while the other pupils waited to see what I'd do. The fateful moment had come. I strode down to the offender, clamped my hand on the back of his neck, squeezed as hard as I could, and banged his forehead against the desk. When I let go, his face was contorted with pain, and there were tears in his eyes. My grip in those days was very strong, and the desk-top was maple.

During the following ten minutes, I taught without interruption. Then two boys began to talk back and forth across the aisle, and one drew back his fist as though he were going to strike the other.

"You two boys! quit your fooling and stop talking," I shouted, wagging my finger at them.

For a moment, they stared at me defiantly; then they went on exchanging threats.

Suddenly boiling with rage, I rushed down the aisle, grabbed them each by the neck and propelled them violently from the room. "Next time," I yelled, "I'll bang your empty heads together and throw you out without bothering to open the door.

During the rest of the lesson, nobody interrupted me.

When I entered Form 1A, I sternly announced that I'd tolerate no talking that interfered with the lesson. For about ten minutes, there was no interruption. Then a boy turned to his friend behind him and began to talk and laugh.

After standing silent for a while, I called out, "You there! turn around and be quick about it."

In reply, he gave me an insolent look that seemed to say, "Who the heck do you think you are, big boy?" and went back to talking and laughing, more noisily than before.

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Again driven by an overwhelming rage, I thundered down and stood over him. For about five seconds, he went on talking as though I weren't there. Then he looked up and sneered. Like a flash, I drew back my hand and slapped his face so hard that his head shot sideways and the echo of the smack seemed to clash along the walls and ceiling. During the rest of the period, the class was attentive.

Later, in the black quiet of my room, I reflected upon what I had done. My feelings were mixed. I was pleased that by being tough I had been able to enforce a measure of obedience. But I was troubled because I felt guilty for having used violence against boys who were much smaller and weaker than I. And I was vaguely aware of a small inner-voice that whispered accusingly, "Deep down, you enjoy being aggressive and cruel. You liked banging those gabby rips."

During the weeks that followed, although disturbed by conflicting emotions, I continued with considerable success to use strong-arm methods. As Mr. Butcher had predicted, during the rest of that year I was unable to win back all of the lost ground; but I gradually began to gain control, with the result that during my second year, as far as I can recall, only occasionally did I have to squeeze a neck or pitch a culprit from the room. Incidentally, just once (in September, 1930) did a parent complain about my violent methods: In Form 3, a good-natured and usually-obedient boy sat beside the rear-door of the classroom. One day, when the bell rang for the noon-hour, he slipped away without waiting for the dismissal ceremony.

On the following day, when at the beginning of the period I warned him against repeating his disappearing act, he smiled agreeably, giving the impression that he felt himself to have been the victim of a sudden impulse and that he wouldn't repeat the offence. Yet when the bell rang and while I was looking the other way, out he sneaked.

Furious, I hurried to the doorway and looked into the hallway. There he was, leaning against a stair-post, grinning to himself and waiting for the plaudits of his cronies. Before he knew what was happening, I had seized him by a wrist and the back of the neck and violently propelled him to his seat. There, for good measure, I gave his neck so hard a squeeze that later other pupils asserted that his tongue had shot out and his eyes popped.

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During the noon-hour, his mother phoned me: "I want to tell you," she said angrily, "that you were so rough with my son that he is lying here sick and can't eat his dinner. What have you to say for yourself?"

"It's more to the point to ask what he has to say for himself. He deliberately defied me. However, I'm sorry that I hurt him so much. He made me very angry. I guess I lost my temper.

"You shouldn't be teaching if you can't control yourself."

"Well, I won't last long in teaching if I allow pupils to defy me. Again I say I'm sorry this happened, especially since I like your son. I hope we never have another set-to."

"He likes you too, and that's one reason I'm not saying anything to Mr. Butcher or the board. But don't let it happen again. -- Good day, Mr. Smith."

At the time, this incident didn't bother me much, perhaps because Mr. Butcher said, "You did right and I'll support you. We can't tolerate a gross challenge to our authority. But be careful. Don't be so rough that you cause bodily harm.

Two or three years later, however, when I had come to know the boy better, I regretted what I had done. I realized from experience that I could easily have dissuaded him from repeating his offence by merely telling him just before the bell rang (so he couldn't plead a weak memory) that he was to remain five minutes after the others had gone, and that if he ever repeated the offence, he'd be detained on three successive days. But all of this was being wise after the event.

The success I was having in my battle to regain control of my classes made me more confident and optimistic. Previously, towards the end of my first-four months of teaching, I had become so deeply discouraged by my problems, including unfavorable criticisms from an inspector regarding both my discipline and methods, that I decided to resign at the end of May and return to a college or a university to study for another profession. I felt that I was not cut out to be a teacher. However, during the second part of the year, I changed my mind. Among the reasons were the following: I was making progress in asserting my authority; the inspector, during a return visit, had complimented me on my "skilful" questioning; Mr. Butcher, who

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was very understanding and helpful, was urging me to remain, saying that I had the makings of a good teacher; the pupils, for the most part, seemed to like me and my lessons; I enjoyed teaching, except when badgered into being ruthless; and I had asked a girl to marry me.

I don't know what the fundamental reason was for my having trouble with discipline. I can only surmise that my inhibition against being aggressive towards pupils was somehow related to my early experiences -- such as the unhappy marriage of my parents, the long illness of my mother and her death when I was thirteen, and a following alienation from my father. However, the immediate causes seem to be discernable. One was that as a teacher, -- though not, I think, as principal -- I had a tendency to overlook minor infractions of rules. While teaching, I'd often become so engrossed in developing an idea that I'd fail to notice that a pupil was misbehaving until he'd done something that interrupted the lesson. Before I became aware of this tendency and tried to check it, I was too often inconsistent, with the result that some of the pupils developed attitudes and habits that gave me trouble.

Another reason was that I tended to identify with the pupils -- to see things from their point of view and to sympathize with them. Thus I found difficulty in setting myself apart -- in assuming the role of a remote figure of authority. Because of this tendency, many pupils looked upon me (unconsciously at least) as being one of them, and resented and were confused by me being one moment their friendly equal and the next their autocratic superior. Here, too, inconsistency weakened my control.

But important as these reasons were, they were less significant than the inhibition, mostly unconscious, that I had against being aggressive if I felt that the aggression was perhaps not wholly justified -- that it wouldn't meet with almost universal approval. If a doubt lurked in my mind, I felt guilty and anxious, and irrationally feared that I'd lose the good-will and support of pupils and parents, and thus of my job. The desire to avoid anxiety seemed to strengthen the inhibition.

There was a touch of irony in all of this; I was worried about being able to hold my job. Therefore I wanted good-will and support. Therefore I was not sufficiently aggressive. And therefore (what I feared most) I was in grave danger of losing my job.

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However, I gradually found myself able, when necessary, to ride rough-shod over the inhibition without, consciously at least, becoming anxious, Indeed, when I felt wholly justified, I rather liked being able to lord it over my humble subjects. Nevertheless (for reasons I'll describe in later chapters), since I felt unsure of holding my position and of getting another, occasionally I found difficulty in being aggressive. By far the most notable example concerned a class through which I want to impress an inspector by showing off new ideas for teaching English.

I liked the boys and girls of this class very much, strongly identified with them, and wanted them to like me. They were friendly and polite, and generally industrious and co-operative; but a small group had an over-powering urge to chat, even when I was teaching. Somehow I couldn't become angry enough to override my inhibition to the point where I could deal effectively with the offenders. I felt helpless and anxious, and the anxiety produced something like a vicious circle; for the following train of silly thoughts went round and round in my head: If I punish any of them harshly, the whole class will think me unjust and so dislike me; if the class dislikes me, it won't co-operate fully when an inspector is present; if it fails to co-operate, my lessons will be a failure; therefore I mustn't unduly antagonize any of the pupils. This particular class made me feel weak, frustrated and anxious. When teaching it, I felt ineffectual, and sometimes disliked myself.

Looking back on those first harrowing weeks of 1929, I realize that to some extent they undermined my self-confidence. Even ten years later, when nearly everything was going smoothly, always in the back of my mind was the vague fear that one day a class might escape from my control, and I felt a sense of shame that the first ones had almost done so. This fear and shame was aggravated every time I had difficulty in overriding my inhibition against being aggressive.

No doubt it was these feelings that often made me think: How much more I'd enjoy teaching if I didn't have to be policeman, judge, and executioner! if all of the pupils wanted to attend school and were eager to learn! Unfortunately for such a wish, we don't live in the best possible of all worlds.

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# DISCIPLINE

> Teachers shall avoid such punishments as shaking, pulling the ear, slapping with the hand, striking with the hand, striking with a pointer, or hitting a pupil without warning.
>
> Paris Board of Education, 1901

> I am very apt to think that great severity of Punishment does but little Good, nay, great Harm in education; and I believe it will be found that ... those children who have been most chastised, seldom make the best men.
>
> John Locke (1632-1704)

> Bodily punishment is never necessary with children unless they have been injudically managed; and thus, it would not be used by a wise man, who had time to recourse to inducements.
>
> David Williams (c.1800)

About 1947, when I entered a classroom in a local elementary school to give a talk on local history, I found the forty-odd pupils sitting bolt-upright, each with hands clasped almost exactly on the centre of his or her desk-top and nose pointed towards the front blackboard. At a signal from the teacher, all hands were simultaneously unclasped and deposited on a lap; at a second signal, all the pupils stood erect in the aisle.

"Class, this is Mr. Smith from the high school, who will speak to you on the history of Paris."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Smith!" -- almost in perfect unison.

Another signal, and everybody sat down, again bolt upright, hands clasped, and nose pointed at mine. I felt as though I had a captive audience in a reform-school, and was reminded of my entrance-class teacher who, when reading to us or giving a lecture, required us to sit straight and motionless with hands behind the back:

> For Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do.

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The Paris teacher whose class I was addressing stood high in the esteem of many parents. "She's got the best discipline in town," they said. "She really makes her pupils toe the line."

According to the old ideas of class-control, she was indeed an excellent disciplinarian -- a first-class martinet and despot, skilled in the art of making pupils obedient through fear.

At Paris High School between 1929 and 1951, none of us teachers came near to being this kind of autocrat and drill-serjeant. Nevertheless, we depended more than the modern teacher upon fear and regimentation to command obedience, especially from pupils who had no other motive for being submissive.

From what I observed, a group of pupils rarely obeyed a man-teacher simply because they liked him and admired his scholarship, or lauded him for being just and sympathetic; nor a woman-teacher because she was pretty, well-dressed, and lovable. These qualities probably made the rebels more amenable; but without some degree of fear, they didn't command obedience. On the other hand, the rebels were usually subservient to a teacher who inspired fear, even though he or she might have an unpleasant personality, obviously knew little about developing a lesson and about the subject-matter, and was sarcastic and grossly unjust. In fact, the ability to inspire fear seemed to be the one requirement for success in maintaining discipline.

Teachers who were feared (or respected, if the fear was combined with esteem) somehow gave the impression that they'd always be obeyed, and that they'd always punish the slightest disobedience. The one at P.H.S. whom I recall as maintaining the highest degree of class-control through respect was a middle-aged woman. Enthroned at her desk like a queen, her face grave and stern, except when she occasionally permitted herself a faint, twinkling smile, she presided over her subjects with calm deliberation and regal inflexibility. If a pupil misbehaved, she fixed him with a hard and steady gaze, prolonging it until she sensed that the rebel was wholly cowed. If she deemed the offence a challenge to her sovereignty, she would, at the end of the stare, deliver a coup-de-grace in the form of a crushingly caustic remark. She was both respected and admired.

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One day while a class was doing an exercise and she was sitting erect at her desk reading a textbook, a boy shoved the end of a ruler into a crack in his desk, bent it back, placed a compass against it, and pretended to his amused cronies that he was going to catapult the missile, point first, against the royal bosom. Suddenly, to his horror, the ruler slipped past his fingers, the compass shot towards the target on a high arc, and clattered down onto the desk immediately in front of the open textbook; indeed, some observers reported that it landed point first and quivered upright for a moment.

Her Majesty calmly went on reading for five or six seconds. Then, having slowly raised her head and bent her gaze upon the missile, she viewed it steadily and sternly. To the tense class, and especially to the malefactor, an infinity of frightening time seemed to crawl by. Finally, she looked up and began to scan the faces before her, row by row, until she divined that she had come upon the marksman. Fixing him with a prolonged stare, she at last asked coldly, in a tone that seemed to freeze him and brook no denial, "Are you responsible for this?"

The boy glanced into her piercing eyes. Then, pale and awkward, he stood up and answered, "Yes, but I didn't intend to. It slipped from my fingers."

Another long pause, then, "Come up and get the thing."

Stumbling over his feet, the culprit got the compass and beat a hasty retreat.

After a final pause, she said icily, "Since your misdemeanour was evidently for the most part accidental, I shall overlook it. However, be very sure that such a thing never happens again. And I mean <u>never</u>!"

Later the boy was reported as having exclaimed, "The old girl sure gave me the works! I was never so scared in my life."

Two other teachers whom I recall as having above-average class-control depended upon violent temper-tantrums to inspire fear. Ordinarily they were pleasant and friendly, and at times somewhat permissive, but if a pupil stepped over a clearly-defined line, they flew into a violent rage -- howling, bellowing and shrieking like a demented banshee, while verbally lashing the object of their wrath.

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This method was effective not only as a deterent to misbehaviour but also as a means for amusing the part of the class not under fire. Once a boy laughed so hard and long during a frenetic castigation that the teacher, struck dumb by fury, resorted to pulling his hair.

The teachers whose class-control was average, depended largely upon devices such as a long stare, a sharp scolding, lines and detentions. Their main strength lay in being able to give quietly the impression that they wouldn't tolerate disobedience, and that no offence would be overlooked. They were firm and consistent, even when permissive. And most of them were esteemed for usually being friendly, courteous, and just. Many pupils, fearing to lose the good opinion of these teachers, or perhaps wanting to gain it, tried to please them by being industrious, co-operative and well-behaved.

Unfortunately between 1929 and 1951, about a quarter of the teachers at P.H.S. were in varying degrees unable to control their classes, and nearly all remained for only one year. In the classes of some of these, the pupils talked incessantly, left their desk and even the room without permission, threw missiles such as darts, chalk and chalk-brushes, shot wads of paper with elastics and rulers, unscrewed desks from the floor and pushed them out of line, and occasionally set off a stink-bomb or a fire-cracker.

The most active of the trouble-makers seemed to enjoy cutting up. They would say something like, "Gee, do we have fun in that class." Yet paradoxically most of them finally began to blame and detest a teacher who made little effort to prevent their running wild; they really want a well-ordered classroom in which they could learn their lessons and keep out of trouble.

Except for their inability to exercise control, the majority of the unsuccessful teachers had most of the qualities that make a teacher effective and that inspire respect. But being unable to evoke fear, perhaps because they had an insurmountable inhibition against being aggressive, they failed.

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Mr. Butcher, who as principal set the general tone of the school, was fundamentally -- as far as I could judge -- kindly and considerate, and truly had the interests of his pupils at heart. These characteristics probably contributed to his being in some respect more permissive than the average principal of his day. For example, he allowed pupils, while they were walking from their home-room to the science-laboratory or to the gymnasium, to talk and laugh; also to have a free run of the halls during the recess periods, and to be noisy during assemblies.

On the other hand he was ruthless towards pupils who misbehaved in the classrooms, and had no compunctions about using physical force or long detentions to restrain or reform them. If through a classroom door he saw a boy badgering a woman-teacher, he was likely, at the end of the period, to enter the room and give the "laddie boy" a tingling head-rub, a sharp neck-squeeze, or a violent shaking. He was particularly ruthless towards pupils who defied his authority. Once he forbade a girl to leave the school during the afternoon to watch our basketball-team play in another town. When the girl defied his order and went, he was furious. Determined to make an example, he ordered her to take twenty one-hour detentions.

Finally, he was ruthless towards the boys who made a practice of skipping detentions given by teachers. To such offenders, he gave as many as ten strokes of the strap.

Altogether, Mr. Butcher made clear to everybody that he was master of his domain -- that in certain areas he would brook no disobedience.

To help the teachers in exercising control over the pupils, Mr. Butcher depended upon techniques that were almost universal in Ontario when he began his career. He had no doubts about their effectiveness, partly because (as I have already indicated) he believed that they had helped him to end the chaos that had crippled two schools to which he was called to restore order, and partly because, like most other principals of his generation, he was only dimly aware of better methods.

One of his basic techniques he termed "establishing the habit of respect and prompt obedience." For example, he required teachers to condition pupils, especially those in the first forms, to obey commands like well-drilled soldiers. The ideal dismissal procedure was as follows:

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When all of the pupils were ready to leave and were sitting erect, the teacher would issue a peremptory command: "Class -- stand!" When all were standing straight and facing forward, he would continue, "About turn!" And finally, if all had turned sharply to the right (otherwise the movement had to be repeated) he said, "Row 1 -- dismiss!" and so on.

A similar technique was used in the physical-training classes, particularly with the boys. At the beginning of each period, after the class had formed itself into two straight lines, the teacher ordered it to form-fours, and then to march smartly and precisely about the field or the gymnasium as though training to eradicate Napoleon and his Old Guard at Waterloo. When this drill had been satisfactorily performed, he subjected the group to calisthenics -- arm and leg jerks, they were called -- again demanding close obedience to his commands. If the movements were not exact and vigorous, the ordeal was continued until everything was done to the teacher's satisfaction, or until he had singled out a few "lazy bones" for further drill. Only after the majority had done well did he turn to games or other more pleasant activities.

One method of instilling respect that Mr. Butcher wouldn't use was that of requiring pupils to address men-teachers as "sir". He said that this smacked too much of servility -- of the English class-system. "Anyway," he would say, "if the men are to be addressed not by their surname but as 'sir' why should the women not be addressed as 'mam', 'my lady', or 'your ladyship'?" Furthermore, he detested the practice of addressing a boy as, for example, "Crabtree," and a girl as "Miss Crabtree". "Why," he would ask, "if a girl is to be addressed as 'Miss' Crabtree should a boy not be addressed as 'Mister' or 'Master' Crabtree?"

He believed that too much formality was harmful to friendly relations between the teachers and the older pupils.

Just as I imitated Mr. Butcher in using various kinds of violence, the women imitated him in using severe non-physical forms of punishment. They would give as many as 1500 lines for chewing gum (I must not chew gum in the classroom) and as many as 1000 for creating a disturbance (I must not disturb the progress of a lesson by talking out of turn ).

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When a teacher gave a detention, he or she wrote the pupil's name on a class detention-slip. At the end of the day, all the slips were sent to the teacher whose turn it was to preside over the detention-room.

During my first three or four years at Paris High School, the culprits who were not required to complete a homework assignment or to write lines were given an exercise in arithmetic (e.g., 132465879 x 9856 and prove), and were allowed to leave when they had the correct answer. However, when some of the teachers protested that this punishment unduly favored the pupils who were fast and accurate in multiplication and division, a change was made to the copying of poetry from a literature book.

If a pupil had received two or more detentions during the day, or if he talked or didn't scribble assiduously during the first half-hour, he was kept till five o'clock. Both teachers and pupils loathed this additional time. Each dragging five-minutes seemed like an hour. The teacher, weary after a strenuous day in the classroom, became irritable and short-tempered, and the pupils, restless and pugnacious. Clashes were frequent, which resulted in the handing out of a detention for the following day, and more ill-feeling. What a relief when Penman's five-o'clock mill-whistle signalled the end of the ordeal! Often teacher and pupils, with most of the tension suddenly gone, would exchange sympathetic smiles.

Though we were not at first aware of it, this system had serious faults. One was that some teachers depended too much upon detentions. Especially on the days when it was not their turn to preside, they handed them out right and left for trivial offences. Often the detention-room was full to overflowing -- much to the irritation of the teacher in charge, particularly if he or she seldom gave detentions. When a teacher could punish without having to preside over the offenders, he or she had little incentive to use other and perhaps more effective methods of dealing with minor offences.

Another fault was the pupils were forced to waste their time in useless copying. We later discovered that a detention was just as effective when the pupils were allowed to do homework, or -- chin in hand -- dream away the half-hour.

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Finally, the hour-long detention was a form of mental-torture, as the teachers well knew from sharing it. Some of the more aggressive boys, instead of resolving to reform, determined to have their revenge no matter what the consequences. This determination usually led to further misbehaviour, more detentions, and finally to a strapping.

Before describing Mr. Butcher's use of the strap as an indirect means of maintaining classroom discipline, I'll outline a situation that was faced by the staff and which at the time seemed to require and justify physical punishment.

Most of the pupils in the middle and upper forms were, from a teacher's point of view, well-behaved. Nearly all were friendly, helpful, and hard-working. But in one or both of the first forms, there was usually a small but troublesome group of rebels (mostly boys) who, ably supported by a few allies, taxed our patience and seriously interfered with the progress of their more amenable, able, and ambitious classmates.

Why did this group misbehave? The main reason was that the members resented being forced to attend. In the elementary school, their marks had been so low that the majority had been required to repeat a grade. Usually they had failed owing to one or more of the following reasons: low ability, little incentive to study because their parents were indifferent towards education and failure, and emotional problems produced by conditions in the home.

To these pupils, compulsory attendance meant boredom, failure, frustration, and humiliation. "What good is a schooling to me?" they would grumble in exasperation, echoing what they heard from their parents and friends. "I'm gonna work in the mill. I don't need to know nothin' about grammar and French and history. I want to get out of this lousy dump and make some money." School to them was a prison -- a place where they must put in time until, when aged fifteen and a half, they might be recommended for a work-permit, or when sixteen, be unconditionally released from bondage. It was also a place into which, when caught playing hooky, they were ignominiously dragged by a grim-faced chief-of-police (the truant officer) and where they received detentions and perhaps a strapping for their offence.

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Not much wonder that to relieve their feelings of hostility, to build up their self-esteem, and to wreak vengeance, they formed an aggressive group that harassed some of the teachers to the point where a period in a first form was an exhausting ordeal!

In trying to solve the problems posed by the malcontents, Mr. Butcher found himself in a quandary. His easiest solution would have been that of recommending to the attendance officer that they be granted a work-permit when fifteen, as their parents continually demanded, and earlier if they would be fifteen before November. But he couldn't bring himself to adopt this solution for three reasons: First, he sincerely believed that even if pupils failed to qualify for a diploma, they acquired worth-while attitudes and knowledge, and developed their intellect. In his forward to the year-book of 1929, he wrote:

> Some people are inclined to think that students have wasted their time by attending high school only one, two or three years. Perhaps with the exception of English, they will seldom use the facts they have learned, yet they will have obtained a general training and intellectual development that will give them a decided advantage over the less favored in the keen competition of our industrial and commercial life.

Second, he feared that the retirement of a large number of first-year pupils would bring departmental censure upon his head, for the officials, without considering local conditions, blamed a principal when the number of drop-outs was above the provincial average.

Third, since a decrease in attendance meant a corresponding decrease in government grants, he was reluctant to let pupils leave, especially duing the depression when the board needed every dollar it could get.

Occasionally he threatened to suspend some of the worst trouble-makers; but he seldom did because he couldn't endure the thought of their enjoying a well-earned holiday. Also, the thought of suspending a pupil filled him with anxiety. About 1929, when he suspended three or four girls for skipping school to attend a movie, he incurred the wrath and undying emnity of some of the parents, together with the condemnation of a number of other prominent citizens, all of whom said he had been unnecessarily severe. After that, he almost never resorted to suspension.

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Being unwilling to suspend or expel, Mr. Butcher had to rely upon the strap. Here he was far from being alone. Even as late as 1959, a poll at a headmasters' meeting in Toronto indicated that about two-thirds of the district-school principals were still whacking hands.

When a woman-teacher in our school took a rebellious boy to the office, Mr. Butcher would ask, "What has he done?" and then, "Do you want me to strap him?" If the teacher answered "Yes!", Mr. Butcher would say to the boy, "Miss says you deserve a strapping, come to the office at four o'clock."

At four, a large number of other pupils would loiter in the hallway outside of the office-door, pretending that they were about to get a drink or were studying a notice on the bulletin-board. They would be tense with excitement, for always the news of the coming ordeal had spread through the school, and drawn an excited audience for the drama.

When the malefactor appeared, the members of the audience would say things like:

Oh, man! are you going to catch it.

For once your clammy hands will be hot.

We're all behind you, well behind, so take it like a man.

Is little baby going to bawl for mamma?

With a smile of bravado, the man of the hour would saunter into the office.

"Shut the door and pull down the blind," Mr. Butcher would curtly say, much to the disappointment of the would-be spectators in the corridor. Then he would go to the cupboard, take out the strap -- two feet of hard-rubber machine-belt -- and turn to the now pale victim.

"Hold out your hands!"

Grasping the strap in both hands, Mr. Butcher would stike each palm three or four excruciating blows, making the wall quiver with the whacking sound, and causing the audience to wince with sympathy.

After the last whack he would say, "Now, go and behave yourself if you don't want more of the same. And run up the blind before you open the door."

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The running up of the blind would reveal a congregation of faces expressing emotions such as fear, defiance, sympathy, and amusement. Under searching eyes, the hero would strut out, grinning as though he and the principal had been enjoying a chummy tête-a-tête.

"Did it hurt much?" somebody would ask.

"Naw! nothin' morana little tickle. Took the itch out my palms."

Upon looking back, I find it strange that we teachers approved of strapping. Perhaps we did so because it had long been a part of school life. When I was a public-school pupil, some of my teachers used the strap as many as ten times a day, usually for trivial offences, such as having more than five mistakes in spelling. And the principal would often strap boys for fighting, throwing snow-balls, pushing in line, and teasing a girl. For years the strap had been the instrument and symbol of authority. Indeed, a photograph of the Paris High School principal of 1905 shows, hanging from the upper edge of the blackboard, a monstrous leather-thong.

About 1942, I began to turn against strapping and other forms of physical violence. One reason was my happening to observe that a series of strappings was often followed by an outbreak of vandalism. Walls were marred by random pencil-marks, desks were damaged, window panes in the basement were smashed, and the mechanism of wash-basins and toilets was broken. It was evident that resentment was being displaced upon the school building and its furnishings. Moreover, there was often an outbreak of gross misbehaviour against the teachers with the lowest level of control. In general, violence seemed to evoke more violence; only occasionally did it subdue an aggressive and courageous boy. This reaction made me think that, if ever I should become principal, I'd recommend that rowdy pupils who wanted a work permit be granted one, and that the others be suspended rather than strapped when they seemed to be incorrigible.

About 1948, an incident finally turned me completely against strapping. In that year, Mr. Butcher felt called upon to whack a number of first-form boys who were riotous in the classes of a woman teacher. One day he said to me, "I don't feel well. When I stand up, I become dizzy. I have to strap a boy. Since you're now the vice-principal, I want you to do it for me."

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I was reluctant to be an executioneer, particularly since I liked the boy, and had always got along well with him. However, feeling that I had to do my duty, I agreed.

Unfortunately, in bringing down the strap six times, I was so inept from lack of practice that I struck high up on each wrist, with the result that the boy shuddered with pain and glared at me accusingly.

Afterwards I said to Mr. Butcher, "I'm sorry, but I can't strap anybody unless I've made the decision. Today I felt like a hangman."

"I understand, though I think it your duty," he replied. "However, I'll not ask you again."

Later the boy came to see me. After showing his red wrists, much to my relief he said, "I know you didn't want to strap me. I'm not holding it against you."

When Mr. Butcher retired in 1949 and I became principal, he took his strap as one of his mementoes. I didn't replace it. Like many other principals and teachers, I felt that a long era of violence against pupils was coming to an end.

What to me was an ironic incident occurred about half way through my first year as principal. Three or four grade-12 boys came into the office, and one of them said, "Miss just gave us five detentions each. We want to be strapped instead."

"I'm sorry," I said, "I have no strap, and I don't intend to get one."

"If you'll excuse me saying so," the leader replied, "I don't think that's fair. I think we should have a choice."

I couldn't help laughing. How strange that these boys should be almost demanding the privilege of being strapped!

Incidentally, for a while a group of citizens vociferously denounced me for not strapping "young hoodlums". Often I wondered what they'd have said had I soundly whacked a pretty but insolent and unruly girl. Doubtless they'd have raised a storm of protest and accused me of being a sex-maniac with sadistic impulses. Yet all teachers know that girls, in their more subtle way, can be just as troublesome as boys.

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Time was to show that there are more effective ways of keeping order than using violence. In our school, after 1949, as soon as a pupil had received three detentions for misconduct, a report was sent to the parents. Usually they were able to bring about an improvement. If the report did no good, the pupil was isolated in a small room until he agreed to behave himself. If, when he returned to his class, he continued to misbehave, he was suspended.

Judging from experience and what I observed, I think that we teachers had to waste far too much time and energy in dealing with incorrigible pupils, much to the harm of their ambitious, hard-working classmates; and that the trouble-makers, if at least fifteen years of age, should have been given a work or a home permit, or suspended until the end of the year.

"But," somebody would protest when I expressed this opinion, "what will happen to a suspended pupil if he fails to get a job?" That, I maintained, was a question to which society at large must find an answer. The principal and teachers were no more able to deal effectively with an incorrigible pupil than with one suffering from smallpox. A boy with a communicable disease was sent home because his presence was a menace to the welfare of the other pupils — there or elsewhere to be treated by an expert. Why then not also a pupil who for one reason or other was a delinquent? Taxpayers continually complained about the cost of education, yet added to the burden by supporting the right of disturbers and drones to clutter the classrooms and waste the time of both principal and teachers. If James Conant was right in estimating that only about 15% of high-school pupils in the academic course had the attitudes and aptitudes necessary for deriving benefit from the subjects taught in a school like P.H.S., then certainly there was a prodigious waste of money, time, and energy.

Nobody in his right mind would insist that all children including the tone-deaf should be forced to take expensive music-lessons; or that the color-blind, unable to distinguish between red and green, should be required to take lessons in painting; or that a boy unable to toss a marble into a wash-tub at six feet should be forced to train as a member of an inter-school basketball team. Why then was there a general insistence that boys and girls should remain at high school when it was obvious that

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they were learning little or nothing of value? Even had Paris High School been able to offer a number of optional courses better suited to the non-academic pupils, the problem would have been only partly solved; for the majority of our trouble-makers had been mutinous in the elementary schools. Long before they came to us, their attitudes and behaviour patterns had been deeply ingrained.

The disobedient and non-working pupils deserved understanding and sympathy rather than ill-will and punishments. But the teachers, at least while in the classroom, found it hard to be compassionate. Their duty was to teach; they couldn't use the approved methods unless the whole class was orderly; and if they failed to keep order and thus to teach, they were likely to lose their livelihood. It was indeed difficult to be sympathetic towards a pupil who, however well one might understand his motives, threatened by his conduct to take away one's living, together with self-esteem, reputation, and hopes for the futre. When in peril, the anxious teacher resorted to punishments.

Isabelle "Dimps" Burt Smith, 1932

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# ROMANCE

She was a phantom of delight
When first she came upon my sight.
William Wordsworth

Some obstacle is necessary to swell the
tide of libido to its height.
Sigmund Freud

Love is a folly of the mind...an agreeable
illness, a sweet delight, a pleasure madness...
Wm. Shakespeare

On Friday evening, February 28, 1930, almost all of the pupils of Paris High School attended the annual At Home. First, in the gymnasium, the boys and girls, dressed in their best clothes, were paired by lot. During this mating-session, the announcement of some of the names was greeted by jeers, cat-calls, groans, and mocking laughter, which rose to a crescendo when an unhappy couple, showing an obvious and embarrassing disappointment, met out on the floor, and then, ten feet apart and ignoring each other, stumbled hurriedly to sit down. Not until they had slumped side by side onto their chairs did the razzing die away.

When all of the couples were seated in a big rectangle against the four walls, the games committee handed out copies of printed sheets for the surname contest -- a quiz of fifty items made up by Mr. Butcher from the names of fifty pupils. The following are examples:

1. Grows on the trunk of a tree
2. An aristocratic title
3. A very superior conveyor of kerosene

Answers: Moss, Barron, Bestwick

After the names of the winners had been announced, all of the couples -- shuffling, strutting, sauntering and bouncing -- paraded in a semi-circle to music from the Revellers, the school orchestra. Then they played games such as copper-pitching and musical arms, and a few danced to tunes such as "I'm in Love with You, Honey" and "I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby."

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When this part of the program was over, nearly everybody went to the classrooms to take part in a crokinole contest, or to play a variety of games on the blackboards.

In the almost empty gymnasium, I conversed for a while with the other teachers. Then, in no mood for shop-talk, I wandered alone through the dimly lit halls and classrooms, observing the pupils enjoying themselves. Since I felt very much out of things, I longed to be with my girl-friend in Galt. I was lonely and my self-esteem was low. I wanted companionship and solace.

After my first round, I hesitated in the lower hall. Should I return to the gym or go around again? I decided to go again, if for no better reason than to avoid further chit-chat about subjects and pupils.

Slowly and aimlessly I mounted the stairs and began to survey again the goings-on in Forms 3, 5, and ~~4~~. Then I strolled into Form 4. Here I paused for a while near the doorway, idly watching the pupils.

Suddenly, obeying an impulse, I went farther in -- why I don't know, unless (as I learned later) a certain girl in that room, while dressing for the gala event, had earnestly prayed that I'd talk to her and think her wonderful.

At the side-blackboards, a few first-year pupils were playing games like "X and O"; and at the front board, two Form-5 girls were playing a game with a Form-5 boy. When I entered and stood alone near the first row of desks, one of the girls gave me a bright, smiling glance, and then went on with her talking and laughing.

Idly I looked her up and down, while recalling that her name was "Dimps" Isobel Louise Burt (she was not in any of my classes), and that only two or three days earlier Mr. Butcher had sung her praises. With justifiable pride he had told me that during the previous year a P.H.S. debating-team, of which he was the coach, had won the Western Ontario Championship for small schools. "Our debaters, Betty and Isobel Burt, carried all before them," he said. "They were particularly good in rebuttal." Then he concluded by mentioning some of their other achievements. Among Isobel's were the winning of the junior and the senior athletic championship and a short-story contest open to all readers of the Brantford Expositor.

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At the time, my interest was lukewarm, for I had never really taken notice of Isobel (Betty had graduated) -- had never given her even a second glance. But now, in the soft, golden light, I found myself giving "Dimps" Isobel Louise a long second-look. I admired her large, dark-brown, lively eyes; her full lips and piquant nose, and her tall, shapely figure in a blue and white printed silk-dress. "How come," I asked myself in mild amazement, "that I've never noticed her before? Why she's beautiful! She's lovely."

> Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright.

Like a foolish Romeo, I moved closer and gazed at her profile. Again she glanced warmly at me, then whispered something to her friends that evidently concerned us. They laughed, and behaved as though they were daring her to do something. Suddenly she made up her mind. She turned to me with an inviting smile: "Would you like to play a little game with me, Mr. Smith?"

"Sure would!" I replied, moving still closer and looking into her eyes. "What have you in mind?"

"Well, perhaps we'd better begin with "X and O."

I was charmed by her voice -- low, clear, and musical.

> And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
> The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare.

While we stood together playing our game, and talking about her attitudes and beliefs, more and more I began to feel that I had always known this girl, and that I wanted to know her forever; that here at long last was my ideal woman -- warm, unaffected, candid, imaginative and intelligent. Tiny, shivering waves began to tingle through me, and I wished that each 'X' were a kiss and each 'O' a lusty hug. I moved closer, beginning to forget that I was a teacher and she a pupil -- that under the classroom lights we were being closely watched -- that we were not alone, far away under a silvery moon.

All too soon a boy stuck his head through the doorway and shouted, "Lunch is ready. Everybody come now."

Reluctantly I said to my Juliet, "Well, I guess that ends it. I've really enjoyed talking to you. You've made the evening for me." But I didn't turn away, and neither did she. We stood there in the empty room, unable to part. Finally I said, "Well, shall we go down to the gym?"

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Upon entering the hallway outside the gym, we found that the committee was busy pairing off boys and girls for lunch, this time by sending them through two doorways. My Juliet made no move to join the girls' line. Instead she remained beside me until all of the others had left. We stood by ourselves for a while longer. Then, seeing that she was in no mood to leave me, I took the fatal plunge.

"Shall we go in and have lunch together?"

"Yes," she said, and smiled more to herself than for me.

We entered the noisy gym and headed for a pile of planks (all of the chairs were occupied) that were stacked against a wall. For a monent, while everybody stared, there was a hush; we seemed to be running the gauntlet of a thousand startled eyes. Then there were murmurs, soft giggles, subdued exclamations, and crude laughter. Principal C. Ward Butcher raised his eye-brows, gazed at the lofty ceiling, and looked as though were intoning, "Oh Lord! please deliver me. What next?"

All of this continued for at least three minutes after we'd sat down.

I had expected some excitement, but not a furor, glancing around in surprise, I felt that there was something in the situation of which I was unaware -- that I was the one ignorant character in a play charged with dramatic irony.

There, side by side, we sat on the hard planks, eating ice-cream and cake, with Miss Burt looking radiant and triumphant. We talked of many things, and as we talked, I once more forgot our audience, and was aware only of her. And again, I felt that I had always known her, and wanted to know her forever.

"Your dress is pretty and becoming," I said at one point in our conver-sation. "It's by far the nicest in the gym."

"Oh! thank you," she said, smiling with pleasure.

"And you know, somehow you seem three or four years older than you really are. You seem as old as girls I knew at university."

"Thank you again."

As the minutes flew by, I felt a growing sense of frustration. Why did she have to be a pupil? Why did she have to be so young? (She was not yet eighteen). Why could I not, in a half-serious, half-mocking tone, say to her,

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"Not only is your dress by far the prettiest here; you are by far the most beautiful girl." and, "Miss Burt, of all the girls I've known, you're the only one I've ever thought I might like to marry."

I longed to sit even closer to her, to hold her hand, to kiss her, to whisper a hundred little compliments and endearments.

I have said that I felt there was something in the situation of which I was ignorant, but which was known to everybody else. The following, written by Dimps a few years later, reveals what is was:

> When September came, most of the female pupils at Paris High School with one accord fell in love with the new teacher, Mr. Donald Smith. I was particularly idiotic about him. Ever on the watch for him around the school, I'd peek into each classroom window on my way along the halls, hoping for a glimpse of him. If I saw him, I'd pause and gaze unashamedly at my idol. I became, in a funny sort of way, the joke of the school. Other pupils would point him out to me if I hadn't noticed him; and then I would breathe out exaggerated sighs, while clutching the clothing over my heart and simulating mad palpitations. Actually, I really didn't believe I'd ever register with him any more than I would have with Gary Cooper.
>
> Once, when I was sent to the office to ring the electric bells, I peeked through the window in the door between the office and Form 1A to see if by chance he was teaching there. He was. Since even the newly-arrived occupants of this form knew about my crush, they began to snicker as my head continued to come into view. Finally the teacher's face appeared on the other side of the glass, and for a moment a pair of very annoyed blue-eyes glared into mine. I fled in confusion, imagining how he was cursing the dumb fifth-former who had disrupted his lesson.
>
> Once I had a chance to gaze at him for several hours as he presided at an examination in our classroom. And I often went out of my way to come face to face with him in the halls or doorways. But he always passed with no sign of interest or recognition.

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At the post-commencement concert, towards the end of the evening, I had the supreme thrill of standing with him on the same chair in the doorway of the overcrowded gym in order to see the last part of the program. My performance, a dance with another girl, had taken place earlier, and I was still in a boy's costume with rather tight white-pants. "Surely," I thought, "he'll remember me after this!" But things went on exactly as before.

When the annual At Home came along, I tried desperately to look my best just in case my hero should glance my way. Lacking money for new clothes. I had pieced and patched a blue figured silk dress from an old one handed down by a distant cousin. The new style of ankle-length dresses for women had just made the short, knee-length skirts passe. Happily I managed to create the only "new look" dress at the party by putting a piece of plain material around the bottom of the skirt. My ear-rings I made out of part of a long chain of links and blue-beads that had been around the house for years, the remainder of which ended up around my neck.

I just couldn't believe my good luck when I found myself during the evening playing games at the blackboard with the man of my dreams. Surely it must have been divine intervention, for had I not prayed each night for months that Mr. Smith would fall in love with me? Joyfully I realized that he was finally noticing me as a person, and seemed interested in talking to me.

When we walked together across the wide expanse of the gym, no wonder we caused a sensation. And when on Monday, both the women's staff room and the classrooms buzzed with talk, I felt as though I were the most important person in the school. After this, I couldn't possibly let matters drift back to the state of merely a casual "hello!" in a school hallway.

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Finally, with the singing of God Save the King, the At Home came to an end, and Dimps left me. When I was in the lower hall and about to leave, the teacher of Latin -- a woman of regal bearing, speaking down to me from a staircase as though she were a goddess on Mount Olympus -- said with a serious smile and a note of friendly warning: "Beware! young man. You're playing with fire." Her voice in the hollow emptiness of the hallway echoed like that of the Delphic oracle prophesying doom from a cave.

Despite these words of admonition, I walked homeward with light feet and my head in the clouds, while an inner voice continually cried out: "You're falling in love with that girl. You're already mad about her. You think her perfect in both appearance and personality." In my boarding-house, I seemed to float up the stairs -- soar towards the stars.

Suddenly anxiety began to creep through me: I was remembering the excitement of the pupils, Mr. Butcher's troubled look, and the Latin teacher's oracular warning. I came spinning down from the stars and bounced upon hard ground. "Good God!" I thought, "what an idiot. Fooling around with a pupil in front of the whole school. Mooning like a love-sick calf. Making goo-goo eyes like a half-witted Romeo. Oh hell! what a muddy-brained sap-head."

As though hoping that a rationalization of my folly would free me from its consequences, I told myself that I had been lonely and bored, worried by classroom problems, low in self-esteem, and so in the mood to have a charming girl titillate my libido and caress my ego. I wasn't, I told myself, falling in love. I was only the victim of a passing infatuation.

Then I thought of Monday morning; of a blast from Mr. Butcher; of a razzing from the pupils; even of a demand from the board that I resign at the end of May for conduct unbecoming of a teacher. I was close to being in a blue funk.

Never again! -- never, never, never -- would I do anything so silly. And if I had to speak to Miss Louise Burt, I'd be very much the teacher, and very cool and distant.

While on the edge of sleep, although still apprehensive about Monday morning I felt safe in the arms of my resolution. But later in the deep night, having wakened from a dream, I tossed about with alluring visions of Dimps Louise floating in the gloom to mock me.

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On Monday morning, March 3, before leaving for school, I said to my landlady, "I bet I get a rare kidding this morning from the pupils."

"Why?" she asked, with a knowing smile.

"Because I was nutty enough to have lunch with Dimps Burt during the At Home."

"I've already heard about it," she said. "It's all over town. I've also been told that for a long time you've been sweet on her."

"That's not true," I replied. "Until Friday night, I'd scarcely noticed the girl."

She smiled again, evidently not quite believing me.

During my first lesson of the day (in Form 1B), to my surprise and relief, the pupils, excepting two or three who gave me a sly grin, behaved as usual. But when I entered Form 1A, I was greeted by broad grins and an air of expectancy.

After I had taught the lesson, and told the pupils to write their summaries, I began to make my daily inspection of the notebooks. As I approached the first desk, again the broad smiles and an atmosphere of tension! What were they up to? They had something up their collective sleeve.

I inspected five books. The smiles became broader. Three or four girls tittered. A boy loudly cleared his throat. Then suddenly I caught on. Glancing around the room, I saw that beside a number of notebooks was a new scribbler, and that on the front of each was a picture of Lake Louise. I couldn't help smiling, and perhaps looking a bit abashed. The class laughed uproariously.

In the other classes, there were a few smiles, but nothing more. And Mr. Butcher, although we conversed three or four times during the morning, said not a word about my indiscretion. By noon, I was feeling much relieved, and almost enjoying the sense of being sternly inflexible in holding to my resolution. I felt as tough as razor-steel.

At the end of the first period in the afternoon, while walking along the upper hall, I was startled by a face-to-face meeting with Dimps. Almost before I had begun to smile faintly while hurrying by, she said, "Mr. Smith, three of my friends and I want to see the big hockey-game in Galt tonight. My parents will let me have our car if I can get an adult to come with us. Will you please drive?"

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I hesitated. No! I was determined not to go, even though I wanted very much to see the big game between Paris and Walkerton for the Ontario championship. No! I would not break my firm resolution. But when about to give an excuse, I hesitated. I was reluctant to disappoint the hope that shone in those dark eyes. Then, to my wonderment, I heard myself saying, "Why, yes, I'd like to go."

"We'll call for you at seven o'clock," she said, and almost skipped back to her room.

"Well, I'll be damned!" I exclaimed to myself. "Here I am asking for more trouble. What a soft-headed idiot!"

During the rest of the afternoon, I worried so much that I almost decided to break my promise. But finally I convinced myself that there would be nothing wrong with going as a sort of guardian and chaperone, especially if my behaviour towards Dimps was the same as towards the others.

That evening, with two girls and a boy in the back seat and Dimps beside me in the front, I drove the Model-A Ford to Galt over a thin frosting of snow; and in the arena, saw Paris defeat Walkerton. During the car-ride and between periods, I made sure that I always talked to the whole group, not just to Dimps. More than once I congratulated myself upon being so cooly discreet.

But Fate intervened. At the end of the game, Dimps' brother came to us and said that he wanted to drive the car back to Paris so that he could take part in a victory-celebration. Thus I found myself, both to my pleasure and perturbation, not driving, but pressed tight against Dimps in the front seat, with one arm behind and touching her shoulders. Soon I began to fear that my good intentions would join all of the other paving-stones in hell.

As we sped along the east bank of the Grand River, my whole being began to glow with esteem and tenderness for the girl beside me. So far during the evening she had been friendly and warm, but at the same time restrained and respectful. "She is behaving not like a giddy schoolgirl," I thought with satisfaction, "but like a wise and mature young woman." Then, almost in anger, I asked myself, "Why is she a pupil? Why is she only seventeen? Why must I never be out with her again?"

After a while, overwhelmed by the beauty of the night and the thrill of touching her, I obeyed an irresistible impulse: I slipped a hand under the blanket, found one of hers, and gently pressed it. She returned the pressure.

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A few minutes passed, with the "firm-willed" pedagogue and his pupil sitting there palm to palm. Then, obeying another impulse, I whispered into her ear, "You're an awfully nice girl."

"Oh! oh," she softly said, and smiled as though amused -- as though she thought it funny that an English master should be so trite.

After that, I said almost nothing; for I felt a bit silly, and was depressed by the thought that this was probably the one and only time that I'd ever hold her hand.

When finally, after a noisy impromptu victory-celebration, I was left standing alone on the dark, icy sidewalk in front of my boarding-house, I felt empty and sad, as though I had just turned my back on the beginning of what might have become a happy relationship.

For three gloomy and seemingly endless days, I avoided coming face to face with Dimps. When I saw her at a distance in a corridor, I fled from sight, not wanting in any way to be tempted or to try answering the question that I knew her eyes would ask. But all in vain! Again a whim of Fate, and perhaps the determination and wiles of a woman, were not to be denied. Concerning what happened next, Dimps wrote:

> After Don told me on the way home from Galt that I was a "nice girl," I felt that I was making a bit of headway. But there were many things against our ever getting to know each other. I had a feeling that he was ready to bolt at any moment, and that I wouldn't see him alone ever. So it was a lucky day for me when I happened to turn around on my way downtown from school and recognized his tall, slim figure coming down the school steps and turning in my direction. Purposely I dawdled along so that he would catch up with me.

After four o'clock on Thursday, upon leaving the school to go downtown, I saw a short distance ahead of me, going slowly in the same direction, a tall, shapely girl in a blue coat. A leap of my heart told me who it was.

Waves of conflicting emotions surged through me. I felt an almost overwhelming desire to walk beside her. But I was determined to avoid the tender trap by turning aside at Fisher's Lane and going directly to my boarding house. Slowly towards this crucial point I followed her, keeping my distance, while admiring her curvaceous legs, and struggling against a growing temptation.

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Then it happened. As in a dream, my feet became light and carried me irresistibly forward. At the lane, where I should have sought safety in flight, I found myself almost treading on her heels. Suddenly, there I was alongside, gazing at her profile. She gave me a startled look, as though completely surprised, and then smiled with pleasure.

"Hello, Miss Burt," I said, trying to speak in a tone that was nothing more than friendly, as became a teacher conversing with a pupil.

"Oh! hello, Mr. Smith, you startled me."

"I'm sorry. I guess I should have sounded a warning -- like honking my nose or whistling 'Madam, will you walk?'" Then, in a further effort to be discreet and hide my excitement, I tried resorting to gentle irony: "May I enjoy the exquisite pleasure -- I might even go so far as to say, the ineffable thrill -- of strolling down the hill with you?"

"Why, yes. When you ask in that flowery way, how can I refuse?"

"Do you always say 'yes' to every young man who puts the question feelingly with flowers?"

"No, I don't. It depends upon what is asked and who does the asking." Then, having glanced up with a look of doubt and disapproval, she said, "Exactly, Mr. Smith, what are you trying to suggest?"

"Nothing important -- at least nothing that a nice girl like you could possibly object to. I guess I was just trying to make conversation."

While she was considering this and we were walking a short way in silence, again -- as on the evening when we first met -- I felt that I wanted to be with her always. "Good heavens!" I thought, "I've sure got it bad. Even worse than before. I'm a gonner."

For a moment I felt anxious. Here I was, once more playing the fool. Fiddling with fire. Asking for trouble. Tempting fate. And all for a girl I hardly know, except that I seemed to have known her always.

"It's a lovely day," she said, looking up at the blue sky.

"Perfect! It makes me dream of April, lilacs, Easter holidays and romance."

"Aren't you forgetting something?"

"What?"

"The birds!"

"Not at all. On my way back to school at noon, I heard a crow cawing down by the river. He made me think of springtime in Shelburne."

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"What did you think of? Or should I ask?"

"It was nothing much. Just of us small boys wandering through sunny fields and woods. I can still hear the cawing of crows and see the huge, shiny snow-drifts. We always got our feet wet in the little streams of water. They sparkled and gurgled everywhere."

"It must have been fun. I love walking in the country, especially in the springtime."

"It was fun, except that Mother was always cross when I came home with boots soaked and nose running. -- But tell me, what do you dream of when you hear crows on a day like this?"

"Mostly of the Grand River. From our house, we can see up and down it for about two miles. I always get a big thrill when the ice breaks up and the flood begins. For me, that's the beginning of spring."

"You sound as though you love the Grand."

"I do. I share its moods. Often I feel as though I were part of it.

"I know the feeling. In Creemore, on a frosty night, when the stars were twinkling close, I felt as though I were part of the hills and valleys. Sometimes I was even silly enough to wish I could feel that way about a girl."

"That's interesting. Do you mind telling me her name?"

"Not at all. It's Huldy P. Sourapple. Or something like that."

"Is she pretty?"

"Beautiful, in a bulky sort of way. She's cross-eyed, bow-legged, wears size-13 boots, and weighs about 240. If I ever became part of her, I'd have flat feet."

Dimps smiled, and then asked tentatively, "Forgive my curiousity, but have you ever felt that way about any girl? -- I mean that you were sort of part of her?"

"That's a hard question. All I can really say is that if you had asked me two weeks ago, I'd have said 'no'. Now I'll tell you something if you promise to keep it a deep, dark secret."

"I promise."

"Well, one night not too long ago, when I was lying on my back in a snow-drift sipping orange-crush, a bright star winked at me and whispered, 'The fatal hour, my dear sir, approacheth. 'Tis nigh! 'Tis nigh.' Since then I've hopefully been eyeing all the pretty girls, including one named Miss Isobel Louise Burt."

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"You've got quite a line," she said with a laugh. "A girl would do well to take everything you say with a big grain of salt."

"A line! That hurts. You've struck me dumb."

"That I doubt."

After we had again walked for a while in silence, I said, "How many miles do you live from the school?"

"Almost three."

"How do you get back and forth?"

"Occasionally I walk, but mostly I get a ride with my aunt who lives next door and works in Paris -- or with a friend. And now and then, I come and go on the L.E.& N. The Braeside stop is only a short way along the river-bank below our house."

"Do the cars run at times that suit you?"

"Only in the evenings," she said, while her dark eyes glowed briefly into mine. "One comes out about 7:00 and goes back about 11:00."

"Handy for your boy-friends, eh?"

"Could be. But my boy-friends don't live in Paris and they all drive a car."

"If I had a car," I said lightly, "who knows! I might drive out on an evening and ask you to go somewhere with me -- to a movie or star-gazing, whichever you prefer."

"Well," she said in the same light tone, "I can always get the family car, but I have no money for gas, so I guess that's out."

"Not necessarily. I think I could scrape up a handful of nickels. Perhaps some evening I'll come out and we'll try combining our resources."

"O.K., if you'd really like to."

"Like to! I'm longing to." Then, suddenly remembering that she was a pupil and realizing that I was getting in pretty deep, I continued in a melo-dramatic voice, "After all, obviously you're wholly irresistible -- an alluring thing of charm and beauty."

"Now you're making fun of me. I don't like it. And I don't like being called a 'thing'."

"Making fun of you! How can you accuse me of such a thing? I'm only trying to suggest a tiny piece of the truth. And as for calling you a 'thing', don't forget that Keats wrote:

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A thing of beauty is a joy forever
Its loveliness increases.

"All right, I forgive you. But if you'll pardon me for saying so, I'm wondering whether you always say what you really mean, or really mean what you say."

At this moment, we reached the street that leads to the bridge over the Grand.

"Well, here we are," said Dimps. "I must hurry to meet my aunt. I'm almost late."

"I enjoyed walking and talking with you very much."

"And I enjoyed talking to you. It was fun."

While we stood there for a moment, unwilling to part, I was thinking. "I can't let her go yet. I'll walk across the bridge to where she meets her aunt."

But just as I was about to tell her so, I saw across the street, closely watching us, a giggling group of first-year girls.

Hastily I said, "So long, Dimps. I must be on my way."

"Good-bye, Mr. Smith," she said, and left me alone at the cross-roads. I hurried away from the gigglers.

On my way up the hill, I suddenly knew that I had to see Dimps again that very evening. I decided that I'd go out for an hour or so; and after saying that I liked and admired her more than any other girl I'd ever known, would suggest that at the end of June when she'd have graduated, I'd come again to see her, if she wanted me to.

Over the telephone, I said, "May I come out to see you for a while? There's something important I want to tell you."

"I'll be glad to see you," she replied, her intonation somehow suggesting that she was not at all surprised at hearing from me. "When and how will your come?"

"After supper, on the L.E. & N., as you so kindly suggested."

"As _I_ suggested? I like that," -- in a tone of injured innocence.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you," I said.

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A few minutes after supper, the taxi I had summoned came rattling to a stop before the door. The car was small, and the driver large. Indeed, he was so stout that the chassis-springs on his side had begun to sag, giving a tilt to the whole rickety vehicle. At navel height, from rubbing against the steering-wheel, a strip of his vest had been worn threadbare.

Since he had occasionally been my chauffeur, we were acquaintances. For some reason or other, he seemed to enjoy needling me.

"Where to, teacher?" he demanded imperiously.

"The L.E. & N. station."

After taking off along Jane Street with a clashing of gears, he said with a leer, "I bet I can guess where you're off to."

"All right, where?"

"Out to see Dimps Burt."

"What makes you think so?"

"People I cart around tell me things. And after four I saw you walking her down the hill."

"What are people saying?" I asked, feeling anxious.

"Some just laugh. But some say you're a damn fool. If you ask me, you're looking for trouble. Teachers oughten to chase after their students. And I'll tell you something else....."

"Nobody's asking for your advice," I said rudely.

"Sometimes you get what you don't ask for, and deserve it. Now I'll tell you this. I think....."

Suddenly annoyed and more worried, I interrupted him again. Nodding towards the bright ornament on the radiator cap -- a naked, chrome-plated damsel with extended wings, leaning forward as though about to take off like an angel -- I said, "I'll tell you something. I'd rather chase a pupil than the thing you chase all day up and down the streets without ever catching it."

"What's that?"

"The naked ass on your nickle-plated lady."

"Very funny, very funny," he said. "You're really sharp for a teacher. In fact, you're so sharp if you fell you'd cut yourself."

"If you tumbled off a wall, they'd need a crane to hoist you up."

"If you fell," he replied angrily, glancing with scorn at my skinny frame, "they'd have to pick you up between thumb and finger, like a piece of wet spaghetti."

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After this witty burst of scintillating Parisian repartee, we rode along in silence -- he frowning as though still angry, and I feeling troubled by what he had said about my romance and staring nervously at the gleaming buttocks on his angel.

At the station, while accepting his charge of 25¢, my charioteer said with a smirk, "Remember teacher, don't do anything I wouldn't do, ha! ha!"

"Listen, Ben Hur," I replied, "there's something you can do right now that I wouldn't do."

"What's that?"

"Squeeze your blubber through that door, toddle to the front of this wreck, turn your precious angel arsey-versey, and kiss her tin backside."

His eyes narrowed and he leaned belligerently forward. Evidently he had received a sparkling inspiration -- was about to devastate me with a retort-pungent. But before he could utter a word, I turned and fled out of range around a corner of the station, chuckling to myself as I pictured him sitting in his chariot, open-mouthed and seething with frustration.

By this time, the sun had sunk below a curving hill beyond the Nith River, leaving the sky all aglow and the town in a luminous shadow.

After buying a ticket to Braeside for ten cents, I impatiently paced up and down the platform, cursing the trolley for being late. Finally, at long last -- a penetrating whistle! and then, coming swiftly closer, the throb of big electric-motors. Soon I would be there!

When the car stopped, I leaped aboard; and as it sped along at over fifty miles an hour through groves of trees beside the Grand, its whistle resounding form the high bank, I imagined that the quick clickety-click of its wheels was echoing the rhythm of my fast-beating heart.

In the twilight, the car ground to a halt, and I jumped down to the crunching gravel beside the fast-flowing river. Because of a recent thaw, the waters were rolling high, whispering and gurgling among the stones and tall, brown grass on the bank, and swirling and eddying over hidden boulders. Everywhere, the sweet odors and sound of the coming spring!

From the darkening woods, I saw Dimps emerge with a gambolling dog. As she came towards me between the shimmering rails, I felt as though I were moving through a beautiful dream-world. But when we stood face to face and had said "hello!", suddenly, as though washed away by a pail of icy water,

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most of my illusions vanished. Standing shyly there, in tam and short coat, she seemed like a naive child.

"Good Lord!" I cried to myself, "why she's only a little girl. What the bloody hell am I doing here?"

We walked over the ties towards the path that ran diagonally for about a hundred yards up through the trees, along the side of the high bank, to her home. "I love this place," she said. "I've had many happy times along that river."

I could think of nothing to say.

While passing a spring of water burbling from an iron pipe in the bank, she said, "Almost every day Dad comes down here to get drinking-water. The water in our well isn't fit to drink. It's full of gypsum."

"Oh," I said, in a flat voice.

By the time we'd arrived at the foot of the shadowy path, we were both constrained and ill-at-ease. In silence, she led the way upwards, while I lagged, dragging my reluctant shoes through the rustling leaves.

"Damn my stupidity," I muttered. "What a fool!" I resolved that when we reached the roadway, I'd say something like, "I came out to tell you that from now on I must stay away from you. People are criticizing me. I'm afraid of losing my job. I wouldn't bother to tell you this if I didn't like you and so don't want you to wonder why I suddenly appear to be unfriendly." Then, having said my little piece, I'd walk home.

Dimps, saying nothing, climbed the steep grade easily and rapidly. Vaguely I admired her vitality and strength. But at the same time, I continued to growl and snarl at myself: What a clown she'd think me for coming three miles to say what I could easily have said over the phone! And what a laugh she'd have at school with her girl-friends! By four o'clock everybody would be snickering. What in hell, I groaned, was I doing here?

Suddenly and unexpectedly I received a convincing answer. Near the upper end of the path, Dimps began to cross a small bridge that spanned a gully. Part way over, after hesitating briefly, she turned to face me. Her dark eyes, seeming to glimmer in the late twilight, began to search mine. All at once, as if by magic, I no longer saw her as an immature school-girl, but once more as a beautiful and knowing young woman, seemingly sure of herself, and surrounded by an aura, a mystery and romance. I knew I was deeply in love with her, and had been since we played our games of "X and O."

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After a moment, she turned away and gazed down at the pale river, while seeming to listen to the far-off lonely whistle of a locomotive. Then, having again turned to face me, she said, "On the phone, you said you have something important to tell me. Will you tell me now, before we're with Dad and Mother?"

Confused by my sudden change of feeling, in turn I looked away -- at the river flowing onward and murmuring its special song of spring, and then at a glowing star close to the horizon, perhaps Venus-Hesperus in all her glory. I didn't know what to say.

For what seemed a long while, we stood there in the quiet evening. Then, turning away, she said, "If you're not going to tell me, we'd better go on while we can still see the path. But" -- in a voice so sweet and low that is was enchanting music -- "I do wish you'd tell me. I'm dying of curiousity."

I moved close, hugged her tight, gently kissed her forehead, and said, "I can't risk your dying. I'd mourn the rest of my life. I came here intending to say that while you're a pupil, I don't dare be alone with you again. -- Now I find I can't say that. I can say only that day by day I'm becoming more fond of you."

Then, feeling full of tenderness, I softly kissed her.

Close together we lingered for a while in the young night, until she turned and slowly led the way up towards the stars.

After this tryst, although occasionally I worried about what Mr. Butcher and the board might do, I couldn't obey the voice of reason. About twice a week, I went out to Braeside.

Friends told me that I was foolish to risk being dismissed -- that I'd be lucky to escape ruining my career as a teacher; but I was lost to discretion. All I could say was:

> To be wise and be in love
> Is granted not even to the gods above.

As it turned out, Mr. Butcher said not a word, and neither did any member of the board. And perhaps because in school I almost never spoke to Dimps, the pupils soon showed no undue interest in our romance. Three or four times somebody wrote on the blackboard "DS loves DB", and one item in The Quill made an allusion to us, but that was all.

During the following year -- on August 15, 1931 -- we were married.

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# P U P I L S

"Alas! alack!" quoth Fogey Boggs,
'Most of the kids have gone to the dogs.
Ergo Dorgrul

Change, not in kind, but degree.
Robert Browning

Pupils are required to be respectful and obedient to their teachers, and kind and obliging to each other, to speak truth on all occasions; refrain from indelicate or profane language; and from mocking or nick-naming their school-fellows.
Paris Board of Education
1901

In 1967, just before I retired, an old man said sourly to me, "I bet you'll be glad to see the last of those kids up there. From what I hear, they're a pretty rummy crowd."

"Rummy! What do you mean?"

"I mean they have no respect for authority and don't know right from wrong, and are as lazy as pet-coons."

"To tell the truth," I said, "I really don't think they're much different from those I first taught in 1929. As far as I can see, there have been no fundamental changes."

"Well, he said, "you ought to know, but I can't agree with you. I still think they're a rummy crowd. And then he began to discuss the weather.

Later, while thinking of what this fault-finder said, I wondered whether there really had been basic changes in class-room behaviour, morals, attitudes, and classroom relationships. Finally I decided that, as far as I could see, most of the changes were superficial. The following, however are some minor contrasts that occurred to me:

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After 1951, school-spirit seemed to decline, probably because of the steady increase in the enrolment. Before 1951, two thirds of the pupils came from the Paris Central School, where as schoolmates they had long known one another well and had shared many experiences. They came to us with a sense of belonging to a group, and somehow identified their group with the whole school. But after 1951, about half of the pupils came from a number of smaller schools. Naturally, when they arrived they lacked the same group-spirit.

Another reason was that when the enrolment was only 200, each pupil knew all the others by name, and was aware of their strengths, frailties, and distinguishing quirks. And because most of the teachers taught at least one subject in each class, they too knew all of the pupils and in turn were so universally known that their idiocyncracies were a favorite and common topic of conversation.

Owing to the strong group feeling, the pupils were keenly interested in one another's doings, including out-of-school activities. They gossiped endlessly; and partly to learn the latest news, were eager to attend the At Home, dances, concerts, and interschool games. This sense of belonging and knowing was reflected in the programs of the Literary Society. In 1925, under the guidance of Mr. Butcher, it had been re-organized with the executive given functions similar to those of a modern students' council. Among other things, it sponsored dances, concerts, and skating-parties, and indirectly supervised the production of the year-book. Twice a month, the members (all of the pupils) met in the gymnasium with the president in the chair. After the secretary had read the minutes of the previous meeting, and various proposals had been discussed, one of the classes would present a program, usually consisting of recitations, vocal and piano solos, dances, skits, and a short play.

As the years passed, these programs gradually lost their literary qualities and took on the characteristics of the burlesque and other forms of low comedy. Occasionally they were amusing; too often they were so silly and crude that teachers and more sensitive pupils felt embarrassed. However, despite their faults, they gave almost everybody an opportunity to help in producing a program and to perform in public. Few pupils, in relation to these activities, had the feeling of being outsiders. In a year-book, a member of the society describes a program:

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" Now the program gets off to a booming start as the school orchestra play in their own inimitable fashion one of Rudy Valle's newest arrangements of that every-popular and entrancing dance-tune, "Our Cow Doesn't Give Milk; We Have To Take It From Her."

"After this --- the first act of a comedy drama, presented by Fifth Form students, entitled "Do Married Men Make the Best Husbands"? is in progress --- This play is a giggling frivolity throughout, and when the curtains fall on the final act, the audience are holding their sides, which are so sore from laughing that they are almost afraid to breathe.

The critic then appears and criticises the first-form students for their misdemeanours during the "best play ever presented" (same old stuff). This ironical young gentleman, forgetting that he was once a very badly behaved first-former himself, then takes his seat, accompanied by many diffusive raspberries.

In a later year-book, a pupil describes another Form-5 program:

" The highlight of the programme was the enacting of a wedding --- between the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kyebosh (Coo-boo Kyebosh) and an ex-executioner named Alyosius So-And-So Alleycat ---

" Soon the groom hurried in dressed in red slacks, black coat, and top hat. Then to the strains of the wedding march, the bride and flower-girl appeared --- The bride wore a costume of lace curtains while the flower-girl, whose long, blonde hair fell softly about her shoulders [she was in reality a boy] wore a blue-print dress and dark knee-socks and sucked a lollipop ---

" After the ceremony, the choir gave a pitiful rendition of "I Love You Truly". Then followed the cake-cutting. The bride tried to cut it with a knife, then a hand-saw, and finally in desperation resorted to pulling one end of a cross-cut saw.

The following are excerpts from a Form-5 play that is printed in the year-book, and that probably was presented in full at a meeting:

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ACT I

A group of Form 5 students is making hydrogen in the laboratory. One, named Ham, is gently snoring on his stool.

Eddy: To pour, or not to pour -- that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the lab to endure the scorn of outraged teacher if perchance a flask is broken. -- Ay! there's the rub. But yak not, for I will pour straightaway. (He poureth and getteth under the table.)

McRuer: Lo! there must be something rotten in the state of the generator. Note how yon foul brew foameth and gurgleth. Is that an observation or should we hit the d-i-r-r-t? (He hitteth the dirt.)

ACT II

Meanwhile Ham comes to and begins to apply more heat to the flask, not knowing that it is about to burst. A violent explosion demolishes him.

Gopher: Ay, he's dead, poor tool! But make haste with the formaldehyde, oafs. He will serve most nobly in biology class.

Eddy: Nay, stay thy hand. Poor Hamlet! his life hath been a blighted one. To think he never was a Ham, but died while still a mere Hamlet, grieveth greatly his dearest friend. I borrow his running shoes. They will serve most admirably for window-boxes.

Foster: Ay well. Even in death his mortal clay hath served a useful end; it kept acid off the table.

McRuer: Ay, right thou ar-r-rt. Now, let's hit the road. We shall keep his memory green in French class hence. Stay thy unseemly leering, loathsome Foster.

The small enrolment not only enabled everybody to take part in a program, but also, to a large extent, to determine their content. Since everybody knew everybody else well, there was a tendency to base much of the material upon one another's oddities in personality and behaviour. This tendency, is obvious, for example, in "The Quill", the society's newspaper, which was read before the assembly by the current editor-in-chief. The following are a few examples culled from year-books:

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Humor:

Mrs. Fair: Jane, your collar is high.

Jane: Oh, mother! He isn't.

Orm to Calvin: Paraphrase the sentence, "He was bent on seeing her."

Calvin: The sight of her doubled him up.

Personals:

We wonder:

Why Jimmy S. has been turning his attention to the back of the room lately.

Why Jack O. wishes he were still in 9A. Could it be a certain minister's daughter?

Why Harold M. grows red at the mention of a certain girl.

Why Katharine S. doesn't settle on just one boy.

Who at the boys is always winking;
Who winks and blinks instead of thinking;
Who at exams the floor is inking?
That's Esther!

Advertisements:

Wreaks the Mover: Desks and all school furniture moved at all times (preferably during French periods). Low rates.

"Skipper" Lewis is prepared to give lessons in the art of slick classroom skipping and unobtrusive appearance and exits.

Wanted: A dog-muzzle for a certain teacher who is always snapping at her pupils.

Wanted: Kissable lips for a girl in Form III who wants to catch a certain boy in Form V.

Wanted: A ventilating fan by the boys of Form II for use after the girls come from the gym.

Wanted: A tumbled-down shack for a couple in Form V whose initials are N and K, and who want to set up light house-keeping.

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True or False:

Pat L. is the school's shyest girl.

Fran I. thinks all boys are a nuisance.

Audrey B. wouldn't like to ride in anything but a Ford.

David M. always arrives like a mouse -- silent as a shadow.

Art R. is a masculine siren.

Vernon M. knew his Latin once.

Mary H. is the quietest girl in IXA. Her voice only goes up to Form V simply because there isn't anybody higher to hear her.

Superlatives:

The slowest, most inactive, and least energetic boy in the school? -- Felix M. His rate of walking averages less than that of a clam. He runs more slowly than a 1905 Ford with a clogged carburettor.

Third Form's most attentive young man (to the girls, not to his lessons) -- Don Mc.

The P.H.S. boy with the best permanent wave -- Norman S. (Our sincerest apologies if it is natural.)

These allusions to traits and activities were understood and enjoyed by everybody, and suggest the feeling of oneness that was the basis of a strong school-spirit.

Between 1929 and 1951, a change that took place almost imperceptibly was the younger pupils' becoming less juvenile and crude in their misbehaviour. Particularly before 1945 (usually when there was no teacher in the room), they tore paper into tiny shreds and showered it like confetti, shot wads of paper with elastics and rulers, squirted one another with water-guns, duelled with rulers, and stabbed one another on the buttocks with a sharp pen-point or the end of a compass.

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As one would suppose, they delighted in playing crude, practical-jokes. For example, on one another's back, they pinned signs that exhorted the beholder to "Kick Me" or "Pinch Me" And on desk-seats, they placed thumb-tacks and wads of sticky, well-chewed gum. I recall an embarrassing experience in which I was the unintentional victim of a joke.

One day, while the class was doing an exercise in English usage and I was sitting at a back desk to rest my feet, I suddenly realized that the seat of my pants was stuck tight to the wood. Carefully (the cloth was worn thin) I pulled myself loose, stood up with my back to the wall, and stealthily felt my rear. A juicy mass of gum, about the size of a flattened golf-ball and well-centred, was glued on like a stubby tail.

By this time, most of the pupils had completed the exercise and were waiting for the answers. Slowly, while asking questions and listening to replies, I sidled along the window-wall and then along the front blackboard, towards the door. Not until I was within ten feet of my goal did the pupils begin to be curious and puzzled and to observe me closely -- excepting one boy, over whose averted face played a knowing and derisive smile.

Finally, after what seemed an hour, I reached the door, backed up against it, and slowly took a firm grip on the knob, meanwhile looking into a flock of wondering eyes. Then, my voice loud as I assigned another exercise, I opened the door and shuffled backwards into the hallway -- out of sight. From the room there followed a buzz of excited voices, and one loud, mocking guffaw. The jokster must have been delighted: he had set his fly-paper for a small insect and had by chance caught a whopper.

In one classroom, the boys, when no teacher was present, often tossed small pieces of chalk behind a panoramic view of Quebec City that hung obliquely against the wall. Later a gust of wind would release a dusty, clattering shower.

One day, while at the blackboard, Mr. Butcher stood under the picture while vainly trying to explain a point in mathematics to an obtuse pupil. Finally, in despair, he raised his dark eyes heavenward: "Dear Lord," he seemed to say, "vouchsafe me a miracle before I go mad."

At that moment, a pupil returning to the room, opened the door, admitting through the windows a blast that swept along the walls and made the picture shudder. Down came a shower of chalk, rattling around Mr. Butcher -- some on his head, one pupil reported.

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For what seemed an hour, he stood there in the mess, trembling with anger. Finally, barely able to control his voice, he demanded, "Which of you have been throwing chalk behind that picture?"

After a long silence, a small boy raised his hand.

"Well?" Mr. Butcher said.

"Please sir, we know better than to throw chalk up there. It's big boys from other rooms who do it.

Mr. Butcher looked sharply into the innocent-seeming face. Then, probably knowing that the whole truth was not being told, but thinking that there was not much to be gained by holding a long inquisition, he said, "You tell those boys for me that if I catch any of them throwing chalk behind that picture, I'll skin them alive."

And so the shower passed, and sunlight gleamed again.

In one class, a small group of practical-jokers came close to being obscene. A trick that caused much suppressed merriment was played when a boy was walking up the aisle to write something on the blackboard or to give an oral recitation. If the teacher wasn't looking, another boy would deftly flip open the victim's buttoned fly. What an agony of embarrassment! The poor fellow crouching before the class, would blush, sweat, and stutter, meanwhile using his scribbler or fluttering hands as a screen. Occasionally the teacher, unaware of the cause of the furor, would add insult to injury by scolding him for behaving like a dolt.

One bold, brassy girl, who sat at the front, was particularly adept at embarrassing boys. When a victim, with closed fly, was standing before her to recite part of a lesson, she would catch his attention, glance at his fly, hold up two fingers to indicate that two buttons were undone ("two o'clock in the button-factory"), and then smile mockingly into his face. Immediately he would begin to mutter and mumble, flutter his hands, and try to recite while standing sideways.

Another crude joke, now and then popular in the lower grades, was known as "letting go a stinker". This was usually perpetrated while a woman was teaching, for delicacy required her to ignore the noise and the stench. It was seldom played on the men because they, after ostentatiously opening a door and two or three windows, would scan the faces in search of the stencher;

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and when they thought they had discovered him, or at least the area in which he was seated, would stare long and hard. They hoped, as usually happened, that two or three innocent boys would confirm his suspicions or betray the culprit by inadvertently or purposely glancing at him; or that some of the girls, suffering from revulsion, would view him with disgust. One or more of these signs would direct the teacher's steady stare to the offender, who would usually turn red and hang his head. Few gave an encore.

Another way in which the pupils' behaviour was probably more juvenile before 1951 was in their way of initiating newcomers. Boys were doused under a tap or a shower, or dragged seat-first through the thorns of a barberry-hedge. Girls, too, were at times doused and made to suffer other indignities.

In 1951, the pupils in general were much less juvenile and crude in their misbehaviour. Most of those who received detentions for misconduct were guilty only of interrupting a lesson by talking.

Since 1929, pupils have gradually established their own conventions with regard to clothing. In 1929, most of the boys dressed much like the genteel adults of their day. Indeed, Edwardian middle-class influence was then still so strong that about 90% of the older boys and about 65% of the younger wore a jacket, a shirt, and a tie. Later however, perhaps because during the depression parents couldn't afford to buy suits, almost all wore a sweater instead of a coat.

The clothes of the boys and their hair-cuts presented no problems, except that a few senior-citizens were outraged by the wearing of sweaters. One old fogey said angrily to me, "Mr Smith, it's disgraceful that the boys don't attend school dressed in tailored-coats, like young gentlemen should. It's an insult to the teachers and the young ladies. Butcher ought to do something about it."

But although the boys caused little concern, the girls occasionally perturbed Mr. Butcher. In 1927, he had ordained that all girl-athletes, while in the gymnasium or on the playing-field, must wear stockings and huge, billowing bloomers. During 1929, some of the girls began to rebel. Perhaps determined to be daring, they wore relatively short and tight bloomers and rolled down their stockings to the ankle. Mr. Butcher was badly shaken. What would the public and the inspectors say? But since talking to girls about anything even faintly related to sex bothered him, his protests were too mild to be effective.

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In 1930 came a real shocker. One morning, while teaching history in a middle grade, I happened by the merest chance to let my gaze fall upon the shapely legs of a pretty girl who sat in a front seat. She had thrust her feet out into the teaching-area as if to trip me as I strode back and forth. Suddenly my verbal flow of nothingness stopped as though washing up against a mighty dam. Speechless, I gawked down at two NAKED legs, and then at a provocative smile.

"Ye gods!" I exclaimed to myself, while little quivers chased up and down my torso, "what will Mr. Butcher do about this? Naked legs in the classroom!"

Mr. Butcher did nothing. He peeked around a doorway at the unmentionables and was suitably outraged, but found himself unable to issue a mandate Soon a number of girls were presenting shaven-shanks for the admiration and edification of the boys, and perhaps of the male teachers.

Were the 1929-1951 girls more innocent and naive than those of 1967? This is a hard question to answer because those of the earlier period, especially the ones who were proud to be known as "nice girls", were more given to concealment and dissimulation. However, I think they were more ingenuous, though I have no real evidence. Most of them, too, seem to have been more romantic. During the reading of a love-poem, their eyes would shine and their cheeks become delicately inflamed. Indeed, almost any reference to romantic love was likely to summon up a pretty blush. And they seem to have been relatively unsophisticated, for when somebody during a lesson accidently produced an erotic spoonerism or a double-entendre, about half would remain placid, probably because the point went over their head.

Once, however, all of the girls laughed at one of my unintentional spoonerisms. Dramatically I was reading a story about Maisonneuve's retreat towards the stockade of Montreal, pursued by an Iroquois war-party; of how, when two pursuers made a lunge at him, he took aim and pulled the triggers of his two pistols, and of how the pistols misfired. Somehow, with great emphasis, I interchanged "pis" and "mis".

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The only noticeable difference between the school romances of 1929-1951 and those of 1967 was that in public almost all of the later lovers played it cool -- behaved much like long-married couples; whereas the earlier lovers were all sighs, blushes and languishing looks, and titillated the interest of both teachers and pupils.

In particular, I recall a romance that was only a little more fervid than the average. Every morning, before coming to school, the lover would write an impassioned letter to his sweetheart, which about 8:30 he would place in her desk in Form 1A. When she arrived, she would read his tender sentiments, usually aloud to her circle of admiring and envious girl-friends; for she rejoiced in the power of her charms, and knew that lover-boy wanted others to wonder at and enjoy his poetic fancies.

Then, when the first bell had rung, they would hurry to their trysting place -- a cozy little nook in the front hall. There, leaning close together, and blind to everybody else, they would caress each other with looks and words. And all day long, at every opportunity, they would stand by themselves in a corner to gaze and whisper. Everybody, including Mr. Butcher, was amused by their antics.

Between 1929 and 1951, when damage was done in the school, somebody was likely to say, "The modern pupils don't appreciate the fine building and furnishings we give them. We do too much for them. They do far more damage than pupils did when I went to school."

Once at a board meeting, when some damage was being deplored, a member said, "Anybody who would deliberately damage school property is nothing but a hoodlum. If caught, he should be kicked from the school."

An hour later, when the same member was in a reminiscent mood, he humorously recalled a school-boy prank at the "Old" High School -- a building that contained the secondary school until 1923. "I recall one day," he said, chuckling with fond remembrance, "how we went into an old shed behind the school, picked up some broken desks, and threw them clear through a window -- the first through both glass and frame. They bounced and rolled down the steep bank towards the Nith. Boy! was 'Doc' Bell [the principal] mad when he found out."

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In fact, judging from the tales I have heard, more damage was done before 1929 than after; and from my own experience, I can say that more was done between 1929 and 1951 than between 1952 and 1967, perhaps partly because before 1952 the general atmosphere of ugliness and dilapidation, together with tempting objects like wooden-topped desks and paint-frosted basement-windows, encouraged it. I also can say that much of the damage during both periods was done thoughtlessly, not maliciously, and that often the motive was hidden, as the following incident, which took place after 1951, suggests:

One evening at a board meeting, the chairman of the building and grounds committee -- a conscientious and efficient man who did much to improve the appearance and comfort of the school -- complained that the tops of some recently-varnished desks had been marred. He ended by saying that he'd like to catch one of the vandals carving with knife and compass-point.

About a week later, while inspecting the desks of a classroom when no pupils were present, I was astounded to find a girl's name cut deep into the wood -- astounded because she was one of the most dependable and trustworthy girls in the school, and because she was the daughter of the aforementioned committee chairman.

After four o'clock on the following day, pointing to the carving, I asked her, "Did you do that?"

"Yes, Mr. Smith," she answered without hesitation, and hung her head.

"Why would you of all girls do a thing like that?"

"I don't know. I really don't know. I just felt I had to.

"Don't you know your father would blow his top if he found out?"

"Yes, I know he would. Please don't tell him."

"I won't," I said, "but you must get a boy to sand the top, and then re-varnish it."

"I will," she said, and did.

During the school-term of 1966-1967, after not having taught for a number of years, I took over English in Grade 12A, a class of able students, most of whom intended to enter a university. This gave me an opportunity to compare the fourth-year pupils of 1929-1951 with those of 1967.

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The two groups were in general equally well-behaved, industrious, and ambitious, and ready to accept responsibility for extra-curricular activities. But in one particular they came close to being basically different. The pupils of 1967 were much better informed about the problems of their day, and much more eager to discuss them. When I asked them in one of their essays to tell how they thought English and history lessons could be made more interesting and worth while, almost all wrote that there should be more class discussions on contemporary problems.

As a result, I had each member give me a list of topics that were of particular interest to him or her, and said that we'd begin our discussions with the topics that were most often chosen. The most popular were:

Abortions

The Population Explosion

Birth Control

Viet Nam

Racial Discrimination

American, Russian, and Chinese Imperialism

School Subjects and their Value

School Regulations

Topics 1 to 3 were discussed without embarrassment, sniggering, or covert glances; topics 4 to 6 without heat or rancor; and the last two with consideration for the feelings of the teachers and the principal. Each speaker, standing beside his desk, presented his opinions and arguments clearly and forcefully; and if he referred to those of an earlier speaker, was fair and courteous. It was evident that the 1967-class was more knowledgeable, sophisticated and mature than its predecessors of the 1929-1951 period. Also their ideas and attitudes seem to have been less conventional, as the results of a questionnaire suggest:

96% wanted O Canada to be our national anthem

86% wanted Canada to be a republic

38% would vote for the New Democratic Party

92% disapproved of the American policy towards Cuba

53% thought the U.S.A. was the world's most aggressive and imperialistic nation

85% were opposed to religious instruction in high schools

If the 1929-1951 pupils had answered a similar questionnaire, the results would have been quite different.

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What I liked best about teaching in a small school was that I came to know many pupils very well, especially if they remained for more than a year. Since I usually taught at least one subject in each form, I shared with the pupils a multitude of experiences, which somehow made me feel that they were my friends. This feeling has lived on through the years. Today, when I meet an ex-pupil, I get the same sense of pleasure that I do when I meet a boyhood chum.

Nearly always, there were five or six older boys and girls with whom I was particularly friendly, and occasionally one girl whom I especially admired -- from a safe distance. An incident involving a favorite lassie will suggest the kind of experience that I recall with pleasure:

The girl was a real charmer -- vital and intelligent, with black, glossy hair and dark, shining eyes, and a splendid figure. About 1938, she was the lively heroine of a play I was directing. At one point in the plot, the hero, played by a vigorous and handsome young man, who in general was a good actor, was required to rush into the room, stride up to his fiancee, hug her tight, and murmur an endearment.

For reasons that were entirely beyond my comprehension, as late as the tenth rehearsal he was still awkward and diffident. He would creep onstage, drag his toes to within twenty inches of the heroine's, slope forward as though giving an imitation of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, place his hands and arms loosely around her slim waist, and mutter his lines.

During the eleventh rehearsal, the heroine was utterly gorgeous in a tight, black sweater. Oh boy! I thought, as I intellectually assessed her charms, today lover-boy can't help giving an inspired performance. But no! the angle of declination was even closer to the horizontal and the hug more flaccid.

"For heavens sake, boy!" I exclaimed in exasperation, "touch your toes to hers and hug as though you were really in love. Why so backward?"

His response was to redden a little and stand with downcast eyes, looking like a timid and abashed suitor.

Suddenly the bright-eyed heroine, having swung her bosom in an exquisite arc to point full at me, smiled impishly and in a voice both alluring and challenging said,"Mr. Smith, perhaps you'd like to come up here -- and show him how it really should be done.

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Ye gods! before the red flash of an imaginary light had warned me to yank up my emergency brake and pitch out the storm-anchor, I had glided along the seat almost into the aisle. I must have looked silly, teetering there in a daze, looking like a driver who has just avoided a perilous collision; for everybody laughed.

After this, much to my surprise and gratification, the hero performed with all the ardor of a Casanova.

The majority of the 1929-1951 pupils, in my opinion, were more submissive to authority than those of 1967. For example, they accepted with scarcely a murmur the constant interference of Mr. Butcher in the affairs of the Literary Society, the athletic associations, and the year-book committees. For a number of years, he attended almost all of the executive meetings, indirectly introduced major policies, took a leading part in the discussions, and by one means or another vetoed proposals of which he disapproved. He also interfered openly in the nominating of the presidential candidates -- mostly by making sure that the pupils chosen to run for office were indirectly selected by him, that they were the ones "with whom I can work".

This excess of control deprived the executive-members of the freedom to discuss policies freely and to make their own decisions; but it produced smooth-running organizations and a series of presidents who, within the limits allowed them, were excellent administrators and leaders.

The executive of the 1951-1967 period, with much less guidance from the staff-advisers, were able to exercise more initiative and accept more responsibility; and probably in general were as effective. However, because there was less influence exercised by the staff in the nomination of candidates for the presidencies, a few third-rate administrators were elected. A president who is elected merely because he is entertaining and popular may turn out to lack good judgment, a sense of responsibility, and the desire to get things done.

Another example of submissiveness is that pupils seldom complained about the enforcing of regulations that seemed to them to have little to do with education. As part of his effort to maintain and improve the "moral tone" of the school, Mr. Butcher forbade the taking of cigarettes

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EXORCISE

into the classrooms and smoking within sight of the building; and he decreed that a boy who sneaked into the furnace room for a quick puff was, if discovered, liable to get a strapping. Since smoking, according to his code, was inscribed just below the mortal sins, he tried to ~~exercise~~ EXORCISE the evil by continually sniffing out its presence in the scholastic atmosphere, as though he were a nicotine beagle-hound. When he happened along a corridor even fifteen minutes after a departing visitor had lit a cigarette, he would, with quivering nostrils and in an accusatory tone, exclaim, "Somebody's been smoking in my school." And if by chance he smelled cigarette-smoke on a boy's breath or clothing (the pupils asserted he could snuffle the aroma at ten full paces), he would denounce him by saying, "Laddie boy! you've been smoking. What have you to say for yourself?"

He also forbade the playing of cards during the noon-hour, and the matching and tossing of pennies, and made it clear that the use of even mildly "improper" language anywhere near the school was a flagrant crime.

Furthermore, when a concert was being planned, he warned the drama-directors to be very careful about choosing a play. On no account were the actors to use "vulgar" or "improper" words, go through the motions of smoking cigarettes (a special dispensation allowed them to suck on an empty pipe), or pretend to drink beer, wine, or whiskey. Nor were they to administer a libidinous kiss with obvious pleasure and enthusiasm. And of course they must make no "indecent references to sex". This strict censorship was probably necessary, if for no other reason than to avoid trouble from the "cluck-clique", a small group of prissy critics that made it their duty and hobby to attend town plays and concerts in the hope of seeing or hearing something so "disgraceful" and "iniquitous" that they would be set to cackling for a month. They enjoyed being scandalized; the tiniest lapse magnified their sense of moral superiority, inflamed their righteous indignation, and justified the roasting of the guilty over the glowing coals of their execration.

A few pupils complained that Mr. Butcher went too far in decreeing that couples at a school dance must exercise restraint when holding hands and clasping shoulders, and must maintain a clear-cut gap of at least six inches between torso and torso. There must be no wanton hugging! No amorous nuzzling! No waltzing cheek to cheek!

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I never heard him mention such a decree, and certainly never saw him measure a torso-gap with a six-inch ruler, as some pupils assert he did. All I know is that he sat wearily through every dance, keeping a sharp eye upon the revellers. And well he might! There were in town a number of puritans who thought that dancing was a device of the devil for luring young souls to hell, and that therefore it was an evil pastime. Mr. Butcher felt that in the face of this hostile attitude, he had to make sure that rules of decorum were observed. A few minor lapses, and there would have been no more dancing at P.H.S.

Occasionally I thought that in enforcing his moral code, he was moved more by fear of public opinion than by a desire to impose his standards upon others. A number of townspeople continually blamed him and his staff for what they called "the disastrous decline of morals of our youth," and for the "rampant tendency towards laziness, sloppiness, and irresponsiblity". Indeed, they went so far as to blame us for misdeeds committed by pupils at night far from the school. To disarm such empty-headed critics, Mr. Butcher had to be strict. The following is a mild example of the kind of nonsense we teachers had to endure:

One day, when I happened to be standing on the school-grounds talking to a group of pupils, an effete gentleman with a soggy, yellow cigarette drooping from his flaccid lips, came up to me and said angrily, "Listen here, Smith! coming down the street, I met at least four boys smoking. What's wrong with you people at this school? Why doesn't Butcher put a stop to that sort of thing? It's disgraceful and a bad example to public-school pupils coming up the hill."

"Well, sir," I replied politely, "it's very hard for us to do anything when a distinguished and honored citizen like yourself sets so bright an example."

He sucked deep, blew a cloud of smoke into our faces, smiled complacently, and began to speak of something else.

If only the other wrathful critics could have been so easily disarmed!

Although the 1929-1951 pupils appeared on the surface to be more amenable to authority than their successors, I sometimes doubt that they really were. It is true that they almost never openly or directly questioned the right of Mr. Butcher to enforce rules that in the light of the curriculum, the examination system, and the organization of the

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school, seemed necessary to their success -- rules such as those relating to being punctual, bringing a note to explain an absence, leaving school without permission while classes were in session, loitering in a hallway or in the basement when they should have been in a classroom, missing a lesson without permission, and failing to take a test or an examination without good reason. Indeed, if a seer, after gazing into his crystal ball, had told these pupils that within a few years a minority of their successors would be agitating for the abolition of almost all rules, they would have looked upon him as being the victim of a hallucination. Nevertheless, a minority of our 1929-1951 pupils challenged the rules by regularly breaking them and accepting the consequences. The main difference between them and their predecessors is that the latter are more given to voicing their disapproval and opposition.

For myself, I can't imagine how a large school can function smoothly without a few hard and fast rules. And I wonder why the extreme big-city libertarians, who go so far as to advocate almost complete freedom for pupils, don't advocate the same freedom for teachers. Why shouldn't the latter also be free to arrive late, drink beer during the noon-hour, remain at home without presenting a valid excuse, leave school while classes are in session without permission, decide to miss a lesson when they feel tired and bored, and make little effort to do their best? And why, if pupils should be able to effect the dismissal of an unpopular or incompetent teacher, should the teachers not be able to exclude from their classes the incompetent and time-wasting pupil? Perhaps Tolstoy hit upon a fair balance of rights when he wrote of his non-compulsion school: "The pupils always have the right not to go to school and even in school not to listen to the teacher. The teacher has the right not to admit a pupil."

Critics of the school frequently asserted that during the years after 1929 almost all of the pupils gradually lost their urge to work hard and do well. In my opinion, this is not true. Relatively, there were in 1967 as many studious pupils as in 1929 -- as many boys and girls who were ambitious, conscientious, and eager to excel. Their number seemed smaller because beginning in 1951, many more idlers and semi-idlers remained in school after they were sixteen, indeed, a large number remained until they were eighteen or nineteen. Thus the real students became a small, almost-submerged minority.

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For centuries, the old have found fault with the young -- have deplored their dress, attitudes, morals and conduct. They forget that when young they themselves were criticized for similar faults. Perhaps criticism by the old is an expression of their fear of change -- of anything that seems to threaten their scheme of things. Or perhaps it is an indication of the pleasure most of us derive from finding fault and meddling in the affairs of others. Perhaps, too, the old criticize to ease their nagging sense of envy. The sour-faced man who called the pupils of P.D.H.S. a "rummy crowd" was, I suspect, munching on sour-grapes -- was full of the "base envy that withers at another's joy." Before condemning the young, he ought to have memorized an aphorism written by William Wycherly (1640-1715): "Old men give young men good advice when no longer able to set a bad example."

1938

1937

Dorothy Rae, Helen Taber, Florence Rodman

Florence Flanagan, C.Ward Butcher, Margaret Cowan

Donald Smith, Edward Barrett, Peter Bernhartd.

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# M O D I F I C A T I O N S

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
Alfred Tennyson

Changing conditions demand changing methods.
Gerald Kennedy

All change is not growth, all movement is not forward
Ellen Glasgow

Former pupils of Paris High School occasionally say to me something like: My heavens! how the high school has changed, especially since you left. There's nothing now to remind us of the old building. If Mr. Butcher could see what's there now, wouldn't he be surprised?"

Indeed, there have been many changes, and no doubt Mr. Butcher's eyes would widen with astonishment. When in June, 1929, he took me on a tour of his domain, he was as proud as the captain of a new ship. He showed me the six classrooms, the science-laboratory with its store-room, the library with about 250 books, the big furnace-room, and, above all else, the box-like echoing gymnasium with its basketball court and new equipment. In a voice vibrating almost with awe, he informed me that, including himself, there were six teachers and almost two-hundred pupils. "Donald," he said, "You can see that you are coming to a fine, practically new school, second to none for its size in the province. You'll like it here."

Having attended a small high-school and a continuation school, each with only three classrooms and about 70 pupils, I was duly impressed. However, I was not as much impressed as some of the pupils who came from the continuation schools of Princeton, Ayr and Drumbo to study in our upper-school class. A pupil from Princeton wrote in the year book: to be thrust into a huge school left us rather non-plussed." And one from Drumbo: "I couldn't get over the great number of rooms and teachers. For a long while I felt lost."

Yes, back in 1929, "Captain" Butcher had every reason, as he cast a sharp eye over his academic ship, to pace the poop-deck with pride.

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Of course the most obvious change since 1929 has been in size. Today's building is very much larger, the enrolment is over 1000, and the number of teachers about 70. A less obvious change, though very important to both teachers and pupils, is the improvement in the appearance and comfort of the classrooms.

Even in 1929, five years after the school was built, the classrooms compared with those of today were depressingly drab and ugly. By 1949, because during the depression and war-years very little money could be spent on redecorating and maintenance, they were shabby. The windows were dirty, many of the blinds torn, the paint on the walls and ceilings was dingy and scaling, the dull oiled-floors were spotted with ink-stains, and the varnish on the desks was sooty with age. Even the pictures, some of them of long-dead kings and queens, were ugly. There was almost nothing to appeal to the eye's sense of beauty. Not until 1950 did the board in a big way begin to brighten our surroundings with paint, varnish, and new pictures.

The pupils, perhaps depressed by the general air of dilapidation, made it worse. They flicked ink to the floor, made pencil-marks on the walls and wrote their names and ribald rimes on desks. Class after class of boys in the lower forms carved their initials and rude designs into the wood, and the girls scratched theirs in the remaining varnish, together with advertisements such as "P.U. loves B.O.", often encircled with the outline of a valentine heart. And a few boys bored holes through the top, as though drilling for their textbooks and scribblers.

The general atmosphere of deterioration was made worse in the lower form by the pupils' endlessly scattering the floor with shreds of paper. This was a curious practice because it seemed to be a form of self-punishment, in that it often delayed dismissal at four o'clock by as much as five minutes. Almost every afternoon, after the final bell had rung, the teacher would say, "Pick up all the paper from the floor, John [or some other boy] take the basket around." If, after the basket had been carried up and down the aisles, the teacher spied some neglected shreds, he or she would say, Row 2 and 5, there is still paper under your deks. Remain where you are and pick it up. Rows 1, 3 and 4 -- prepare for dismissal."

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Occasionally when scraps of paper lay midway between two rows, an argument would begin over which row was responsible. It would usually be settled by the teacher. Assuming his best judicial manner, he would decide which row the scraps were closer to, and order certain pupils to pick them up. Perhaps it was fitting that each day should have ended with a conflict between the teacher and part of the class, and one group of pupils and another. School-life, as teachers would tell you, was one long struggle.

Anybody who on a rainy day has seen a modern classroom softly flooded with white light can hardly imagine the dismal, yellow dullness of our classrooms. From the ceiling of each room hung four ivory-coloured globes, and within each was a two-hundred watt electric-bulb. On a dark day, they glowed so feebly that the pupils towards the back of the room couldn't see what was written on the blackboard, and all found difficulty in reading their books. Consequently, often nothing much could be taught. Both teachers and pupils dreaded gloomy weather.

About 1946, new lamps, not much better than the old, were installed. The electric-bulb in each was stronger, but its effectiveness was reduced because much of its radiance couldn't penetrate the white bowl, or was absorbed by the dingy ceiling. This fault was aggravated by a game some of the first-year boys played between periods -- that of seeing who was most skilful in tossing wads of paper, broken pencils and pens, pieces of chalk, and other junk up and into the bowl.

One day, about a year after these new lamps had been installed, and while I was teaching history to Form 1B, I noticed a blue haze eddying about the room, and smelled acrid fumes. Thinking that part of the building was on fire, I hurried to the door and snuffled the hall-air like a noble conflagration hound. My twitching nostrils detected not the slightest sign of smoke. Puzzled, I came back, wondering why the pupils were unperturbed, and why three or four boys at the back were pictures of angelic innocence. Suddenly, seeing one glance up at a lamp, I too looked up. Smoke was drifting from the bowl, and over one edge protruded part of a textbook.

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Having switched off the light, I stood close to the boys and asked, "Who tossed that book up there?" Not a word -- only intensified expressions of absolute ignorance. Again I demanded that the culprit should confess. This time, one of the boys said, "We honestly don't know, Mr. Smith. It was there when classes began this morning."

Knowing that it would be useless to try to extract a confession, I contented myself with mounting a scathing verbal-attack against the unconfessed idiot who had endangered property and perhaps lives, and against the boys who knew that the book was smouldering, yet had not warned me.

At the end of the period, when on my way to another class, suddenly I paused on the first step of the stairs. An intuition! Hurrying back, I entered the room -- just in time to surprise a grinning rascal switching on the lights, getting ready to smoke out the next teacher.

Furiously I grabbed him by the neck and an arm, yanked him into the hallway and shook him violently. That was the last time I ever laid aggressive hands on a pupil, and the last time anybody tossed a large object into the lights of Form 1B.

The blinds of P.H.S. were the opaque-roller type. When, on a hot, sunny day they were pulled down, they shut out so much light that the room was in semi-darkness. Occasionally, in a sharp burst of startling sound, one would wind up, making the girls gasp and jump, and disturbing the course of the lesson. And on windy days, when a door was opened, they would flap so hard that sometimes an old one would be torn to ribbons.

These flapping blinds once gave rise to a devilish prank. A woman-teacher, who loved flowering plants, decided to place a number of geraniums on the window-ledges of her room. These she tended with loving care -- indeed, almost with adoration. They were the joy of her school-room life.

Perhaps inspired by Satan, a boy devised a cruel joke, and enlisted the aid of eager companions. On a bright, windy day, having closed the windows, they pulled down the blinds and fastened the cord of each around the throat of a geranium. Then tensely they awaited the fatal hour.

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The floriculturist entered the room, shut the door, and having briefly drunk in the beauty of her blooms, began her lesson. After a while, noticing that the room was hot and close, she said, "You boys [naming two] will please open the windows." They did so, very carefully. Then the lesson continued, with the blinds gently waving in the breeze.

At last the moment came! One of the pranksters asked to leave the room. When he flung wide the door, a mighty blast of air rushed through the windows; and the blinds, flapping violently out and up, yanked the plants off the ledge, swung them into space, and sent the pots crashing to the floor. There, by the neck, dangled the lovely flowers, with roots sprinkling soil. The lover of flowers looked as though she had just seen her children sacrificed to some fiendish god.

Since there were no lockers, the pupils stored all of their books, scribblers, pencils, pens and rulers in the desks. A few kept their compartment neat and tidy; the majority rammed and stuffed in not only books and scribblers but also wads of torn and crumpled paper, old lunch-bags, candy-wrappers, and other trash and rubbish. Thus, when asked to take out a textbook, about half of the searchers would end up with most of their belongings on top of the desk and with a litter on the floor. The resulting confusion and mess often infuriated the teacher.

Because the majority of pupils used steel-nibbed pens, each desk had a small ink-well. These wells were periodically filled by the janitor, who poured from a brass vessel with a long, thin spout. The wells were a source of continual annoyance; for a pupil during a lesson, asserting that his well was dry, would ask permission to fill it; or, complaining that somebody had added chalk-dust or pencil-shavings to his ink, would ask to take the well to the basement sink to wash it.

The steel pen-nibs were also a nuisance. They often dripped ink onto a desk, the floor, note-books, and clothes; and their sharp point was used by some boys to jab a neighbouring rump, with the aim of evoking a smothered yowl. Occasionally, too, belligerent boys, when unobserved by the teacher, would use the pens to spatter ink on a page of each other's note-book. In one of my classes, spattering led to a startling disturbance.

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On a sunny spring-morning, after I had taught a lesson in Form 3 Canadian history, I told the pupils to study the mimeographed outline and then to write their note. Soon, except for the soft rustling of paper and the scratching of pens, the room was cosy and quiet. Feeling a bit drowsy, I sat at my desk, trying to do some background reading, and wishing that the noon-hour would soon come.

After a few minutes, having chanced to look up. I saw at the back of the room two boys glaring at each other across an aisle. They were big, heavy-set lads -- strong and aggressive.

"Ah! ah," I thought (I knew their tricks), "those nuts are threatening to spatter each other's notebooks.

When they saw that I was watching them, they resumed their scratchings, faces dark with fury. Two or three minutes later, thinking that I had quelled their belligerency, I again lapsed into a half-coma, and lazily continued to read, lulled by the warmth and the stillness.

Suddenly a shattering smack -- as though somebody had slapped a side of beef with a hugh fly-swatter! Startled, I looked up. There, towering over his seated enemy, stood one of the boys. His arm, ending in a clench fist, seemed to be moving slowly back and forward like a mighty piston-rod. Another tremendous smack! I felt as though I were dreaming.

The victim, also like a figure in a slow-motion film, floated to his feet. His arm also glided back and forth. A third resounding smack!

Meanwhile all of the other pupils had turned and were staring in amazement. They too seemed to feel that they were dreaming. The room, while the pugilists were getting ready for round 3, was silent.

All at once, four boys rose smoothly, glided to the combatants, and gently separated them. At this point, having stood up, I said calmly, probably sounding like somebody in a hypnotic trance, "Take A into the hall. He'll remain there till the end of the period."

Within a minute, the peacemakers were back, and the shocked and unbelieving class, with scarcely a ripple of whispering, was again scratching and rustling, as though nothing untoward had happened.

Later, I learned that the two smackers had spattered each other's notebook.

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Especially from 1930 to 1946, unlike today, teachers and pupils suffered from a lack of teaching-materials and aids. Colored chalk for emphasizing points on charts and maps was looked upon by the board as an unnecessary expense. Thus the teachers who used it brought their own. They also bought the colored marking-pencils and the erasers used in the classroom for marking exercises.

Stencils and mimeograph paper were strictly ratinned. Indeed, often there was none for classroom use. Since I disliked having pupils waste their time in drawing outline maps and copying questions from the board, I bought a pan with a layer of a gelatine-like substance for re-producing type-written material, maps and charts; and knowing how useless it was to ask for an extra supply of mimeograph paper, collected sheets from the pupils' notebooks. These came off messy, and tended to roll up into cylinders; but during a school year, they saved hours of classroom time.

Maps and charts, too, were in short supply. Once I rejoiced in receiving from a candy-manufacturer a new map of Canada, printed on a hard-surfaced paper that lent itself well to the use of coloured chalk for marking routes and boundaries. Unfortunately, the outer edges were emblazoned with the firm's name and pictures of chocolate bars.

For three months I made good use of this map. Then an inspector arrived. "Do not use that thing," he commanded. "A school must not lend itself to advertising any commercial product."

"What about the free book-covers that are plastered with advertisements? Is their use forbidden?"

"No, they're different," he replied. "They protect the textbooks."

"Well what about the blotters from places like banks?"

"They too are different. They're not up in front of all the class, and they are not used as a teaching-aid."

Since there was no use in arguing, I obeyed. Then one day I had an inspiration; I pasted heavy paper over the advertising and went on using the map. When the same inspector returned during the following year, I expected to be reprimanded. Instead he said, "The surface of that map lends itself well to the use of coloured chalk. It's quite effective."

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The shortage of mimeograph-stencils and paper, of maps and charts, and of reference books, was certainly a hindrance to most teachers. At that time, we didn't even dream of having a radio, a film-strip projector, an overhead projector, a movie-projector, or a tape-recorder. Today it seems almost amusing to recall that when about 1950 the board, after prolonged discussion, decided to buy our first film-strip projector, nearly all of the members came to the school for the salesman's demonstration.

Between 1929 and 1951, an effort was still being made to keep the boys apart from the girls. When, about 1865; girls were first admitted to the Paris Grammar School, the principal was perturbed. He declared that the presence of the female sex would have a harmful effect upon the industry and morals of his boys; and he strongly agreed with an inspector who maintained that the moral tone of all grammar schools would be lessened and that the close proximity of the boys would blunt the young ladies' natural feelings of delicate reserve.

To lessen the proximity and its fearsome results, the principal of the grammar school at first tried to keep the boys and the girls apart. He forbade their walking to and from school together and conversing in the hallways or on the playground; and he kept them segregated in the classrooms. Gradually, however, he modified his rule against walking and talking, and contented himself with enforcing regulations that were then common to most Ontario secondary schools.

From 1929 to 1951, a number of these regulations were still in force in Paris High School. For example, boys and girls were required to enter and leave the school by separate doors -- one at the north end with BOYS carved over it, and one at the south end with GIRLS. It was a serious offence -- indeed, almost an indecent transgression -- to go through the wrong door, a fact that challenged the more daring boys to slip occasionally through, revelling in their wickedness.

The separate cloak rooms, to, were intended to keep the sexes apart -- one in the boys' basement and the other in the girls', with a locked door between. And so was the regulation that required boys, before classes began, to congregate in one room, and the girls in another.

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In the classrooms, the girls were usually seated at the desks on the window-side of the room. About 1940, Mr. Butcher, having become less fussy about this rule, was criticized by an inspector, who went so far as to assert that "since a boy might take advantage of the opportunity presented, he should never be allowed to sit behind a girl." Unfortunately for posterity, he neglected to state what the opportunity was, or what nefarious act a boy would be tempted to commit.

Today it seems strange that neither teachers nor pupils ever wondered about the purpose or origin of these regulations. Everybody accepted them without question as being part of school life -- like the pupils' being kept out of the building until ten minutes before classes began, and the main doors being reserved for the coming and going of teachers and other notables.

In 1929, the signal-system at P.H.S. was operated by hand. To announce the beginning of the morning and the afternoon period, Mr. Butcher, after consulting a pocket-watch that he drew from a vest-pocket, pressed eight bell-buttons on his desk. When he was busy in a classroom during the day, a pupil in Form 1A, guided by a large railroad-clock that majestically swung its brass pendulum above the room door, went to the office and pushed the buttons. After 1932, the secretary, by referring to a small electric-clock, did most of the bell ringing.

This system often irritated both teachers and pupils. The secretary, busy with clerical work, would frequently lose track of time, with the result that some periods were from three to seven minutes longer or shorter than others. (If one was too long, the next had to be shortened.) When cut off while developing the last part of a lesson or giving homework, teachers would fret and fume; and pupils would become angry when at dismissal time a tardy bell kept them fidgetting in their seats -- although they were much pleased when classes began late or the recess period was unusually long.

In connection with the bells, one of my most vivid memories is that of hearing Mr. Butcher's voice echoing in the upstairs hallway as he shouted to the secretary, "Bells, please! bells, please."

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During the time of which I write, there was no intercommunication system. This meant that each teacher had to conduct his own opening-exercises, and that every morning Mr. Butcher had to go from class to class to make the announcements -- an annoying practice, for we teachers would no sooner have got the pupils into a receptive mood than he would pop in, stride to the front of the room, and proceed to divert thoughts and feelings to other activities.

In connection with the making of announcements, one day a co-incidence led to a wild burst of merriment. As I have already said, many of the pupils, when not referring to Mr. Butcher as "The Deacon," called him "The Duke," frequently embellishing the title with adjectives such as "noble," "majestic," "mighty," and "splendiferous."

One day, my first lesson involved the dramatizing by Form 3 pupils of a scene from "As You Like It." Shortly before nine o'clock the boy who was to read the stage-directions -- the possessor of a powerful, expressive voice and a flamboyant sense of humor -- came to me with a request:

"Mr. Smith, just to add a little interest to the reading, may I make a few additions to the stage directions?"

"All right, we'll give it a try. But don't carry things too far."

"Thank you," he said, "I'll be careful."

When the reading got under way, the actors read with so much force and feeling that they and the audience were obviously enjoying the experience. In particular, everybody was amused by the embellished and sonorously delivered stage-directions.

Part way through the reading, the booming voice cried out, "What ho! what ho! now entereth the mighty duke. Make way! make way." The class laughed when the pupil-duke began to sidle onto the stage.

Suddenly, at this precise moment, the door at the back of the room squeaked open and Mr. Butcher -- exuding an aura of confidence, authority, pomp and majesty -- made his entrance. He paced to the front, faced the class, and impressively paused for attention.

Thirty astonished mouths fell open and thirty pairs of incredulous eyes snapped wide; then a tremendous burst of laughter shook the room, swelling into a hurricane of guffaws.

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Poor Mr. Butcher! he was so taken aback, so shaken and flustered, that he lost his poise, dropped some of his notes, groped for them with purpling face, and glanced at his fly. Then, after hesitating in bewilderment, he abruptly fled, slamming the door as though a horrible spectre were pursuing him -- as perhaps it was in the form of laughter.

At the end of the period, he was waiting for me at the foot of the stairs. For a moment he gazed at me, his eyes revealing a deep hurt. Then he asked, "Why did they laugh at me?"

"They weren't laughing at you, Mr. Butcher. They were laughing at a remarkable co-incidence. They weren't making fun of you."

While I was describing what had preceded his entrance, he gradually relaxed, and began to smile wanly. Finally he was able to let out a tight, little laugh. However, for two or three days, he seemed to remain in a state of mild shock.

Before 1951, classes didn't rotate at Paris High School, except to go to the science laboratory or to the gymnasium. Instead, the teachers went from room to room, burdened with textbooks, notebooks and teaching-aids. The system had serious faults. For example, a teacher of history would often have to draw on a blackboard in two rooms the same map or chart, and write the same outline and questions. If he was unable to do this on the day preceding the lesson, his work would be less effective. Moreover, the system led to harrowing exasperations. A teacher, although he had printed P.L.O. in colored chalk around what had taken half an hour to write on a blackboard, would often enter a room to find that somebody had inadvertently erased everything. And teachers of mathematics and foreign languages, who wanted their pupils to work at the blackboards, were often enraged upon finding that three quarters of the space had been pre-empted. When classes began to rotate, the teachers could keep all of their aids in one room, and use the blackboard space as they saw fit.

Another fault of non-rotation was that an undue strain was placed upon the pupils, especially the younger ones. It was cruel to require them to sit continuously on a hard board for as long as two hours. In fact, most of them were unable to do so. They plagued the teachers with requests to sharpen pencils, put tiny wads of paper into the basket, borrow a book, get help from a classmate, open a door or close a window, or leave the room. Any excuse for standing up, stretching, and going for a stroll!

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Between periods, when there was no teacher in the room, the majority of the younger pupils, defying the rule that required them to remain seated and keeping a sharp eye on the doorway so that they could promptly sit down when the teacher appeared, leaped up to stretch and relax. Unfortunately now and then some of the boys did more than stand and stretch. While one of them placed himself at the doorway to watch for the teacher, the others scuffled, fought duels with rulers, shot paper-wads from elastics, and threw chalk-brushes. One group found amusement and relaxation in playing "chalk-pool". From the back end of the room, the boys hurled pieces of chalk towards the front corner, striving to see who could bounce the most pieces from the blackboard down into the waste-paper basket. What a mess on the board and floor! Since no teacher was able to catch the players and they refused to confess, Mr. Butcher was reduced to keeping the whole class after four, a punishment that angered the innocent -- not against the pool-sharks, but against him.

The rotation of classes, introduced about 1950, produced gratifying results. At the end of almost every period, the pupils found relaxation in moving, while talking and laughing, from one room to another. This greatly lessened the strain of the school routine. Moreover, since each teacher was usually in his room or standing in the hallway near the door, the more active boys had no opportunity for scuffling and throwing things. Finally, relatively few pupils used the former excuses for a brief escape from their desks. For example, the number asking to leave the room, even after the enrolment had more than doubled, fell off by three quarters. Rotation had an excellent effect upon the efficiency of the teachers, the conduct of the pupils, and the general atmosphere of the school.

When I was a high-school pupil, all of the examination marks were published in the local paper. Evidently the purpose was to encourage hard work through an appeal to a sense of pride or shame.

In Paris, at least between 1929 and 1949, only marks and term-averages above 49 were published. The pupil with a very low mark was thus spared some ignominy. The publication of the upper-school grades always excited interest. Hundreds of readers compared the achievements of one candidate with those of another, of one teacher with those of another, and of our school with those of neighbouring schools. In general, the ability of the pupils and the staff was judged by the results of the "departmentals".

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The officials of the Department of Education asserted that only in small part did they judge the efficiency of a staff by the grades. But the principal and teachers were not that easily fooled. They knew only too well that the inspector had a tendency to rate them on this basis, and that when reporting upon the efficiency of the school to the board, he discussed the results of the middle and upper-school examinations -- praising or damning on the basis of how one teacher's record compared with that of another, and the over-all record of our school with the provincial averages. They knew also that the board and the parents judged them to a large extent by the grades obtained.

In an effort to achieve high marks, the teachers, from the first forms onwards, endlessly stressed the skills and facts that would help in Form 5; and both they and the principal tried to exclude from Form 5 pupils who were almost certain to fail. Indeed, the drive to have "good results" was so strong that teachers would frequently say things such as:

- My Form 2 class will sure do well on the departmentals when it gets to Form 5.
- Unless you work harder, my lad, you won't do well in Form 5.
- I'm behind in my Form 5 course. I hope I don't lose any more periods to games and concerts.
- John won't do well in Form 5. He hasn't got what it takes. He should be encouraged to quit at the end of Form 4.
- Last June my class pulled down nine firsts and six seconds. And 100% of the papers had a mark over fifty.

Mr. Butcher, proud of the examination record at P.H.S., often boasted about it. During his commencement speech, he usually congratulated himself; and he published the grades in the year-book for posterity to admire. He candidly admitted that having the upper-school pupils do well was the main purpose of the school.

In the present Paris District High School, the principal doesn't teach, and is helped in performing his administrative duties by a vice-principal, guidance officers and three secretaries. In 1929, Mr. Butcher:

1. Taught mathematics and physics during about forty of the forty-five weekly periods;

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2. Performed his administrative duties mostly after four o'clock, in the evenings, and on Saturdays;
3. Did most of the clerical work (except when helped by his wife), such as recording the marks, typing and filing correspondence, completing reports to the department of education, and operating the mimeograph machine. He even laboriously, with only two fingers, cut stencils for non-typing teachers;
4. Counselled pupils who were falling behind in their work, or who couldn't decide what subjects to take in the upper-school;
5. Attended most of the executive meetings of the Literary Society and the athletic associations;
6. Advised the business committee of the year-book;
7. Helped the board-secretary to complete reports for the department of education;
8. Interviewed the majority of salesmen who regularly called at his office; and, when authorized by the board, ordered school supplies.

In addition to being in the classroom about forty periods a week, in effect Mr. Butcher often taught two lessons during one period. While presenting a lesson to a main group, he would supervise as many as seven pupils from another class who worked at the side blackboards. These he would help with their difficulties.

About 1932, when because of the depression the enrolment had risen to almost 270, Mr. Butcher found that he could no longer keep up with his work. Almost in desperation, he asked the board to give him a secretary. What a to-do! The members, after having discussed the matter for hours, finally decided that one should be appointed. But how to convince the members of the town council that one was necessary? Some of these, together with many taxpayers, were likely to say, for example, "Why the hell does Butcher need a secretary? He only works five easy hours a day. The town can't afford it. We've got to economize.

The board, to gain the consent of the council, had the members visit the school office. After being shown how much clerical work had to be done, and being told that the inspector strongly recommended the appointment, the members agreed to the proposal.

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Up to 1950, the board granted very little money for athletics. For the most part, the players bought their uniforms and at times even some of the basketballs. And all of the equipment used apart from the regular classes, such as bats and balls, were bought by the pupils through their athletic associations, to which they paid a fee of 25¢.

Furthermore, the board almost never made grants for the transportation of teams to other schools. Mr. Butcher, together with one or two of the teachers, and occasionally a parent or a pupil -- all at their own expense -- transported them. This was a foolish and dangerous practice; for pupils might have been hurt or even killed in an accident, and the drivers might have been held morally and financially responsible. In my younger days as a teacher, like some of the pupil-drivers, I had a tendency to drive with too much speed and dash, probably trying to suggest that I wasn't a fuddy-duddy pedagogue. Mr. Butcher buzzed along at a moderate speed, but occasionally his course was erratic and his decisions wrong. Once, while he was driving some girls to another school and had turned his head to make a comment to those in the rear seat, the car ran off the pavement, bounced along a ditch, and then, after a violent jolt, careened back to the road. Another time, while driving some boys to Simcoe after a snow-storm, he came even closer to disaster. A plough had cut a narrow channel through a huge drift, piling snow well up towards the telephone lines. At the moment that Mr. Butcher reached one end of this canyon, a truck appeared at the other. Instead of waiting, he plunged in without slowing down, and while his passengers held their breath, squeezed past this fast-moving opponent. As the truck thundered by, there was a sharp click. What had caused it? When the curious pupils got out at Simcoe, they discovered that the truck-box had sheared off a door-handle.

It was a good day for all concerned when the board began to provide transportation by bus.

In my opinion, one of the greatest improvements since 1949 has been the building up and extended use of the school-library. Before 1949, its main purpose was to supply books for supplementary-reading.

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Between 1929 and 1950, our library, numbering about 250 books, was kept in three cases at the back of a large classroom. About half of the books were dusty, fine-print volumes from by-gone days that hadn't been read for at least 30 years. About a quarter were comparatively new, but were of so little interest to the pupils that they almost never left the shelves. The majority of the rest, especially the short and easy to read, were worn and tattered from use and misuse. Because of a lack of money, each year only a few books were bought.

Twice a week after four o'clock, the teachers of English took a turn at handing out books. In a scribbler they wrote the date, the name of the borrower, and the title of the book. If a book wasn't returned after two weeks, it was the teacher's responsibility to get it and exact a fine.

Incidentally, the supplementary-reading requirement probably had an effect the opposite of that intended. It was supposed to develop a love for good literature and a habit of reading. Instead (maybe excepting pupils who from childhood had enjoyed reading) it seemed to make many pupils hate books and resort to trickery.

When a teacher announced the date on which a report was due, the classroom would be full of groans, mutterings, the squeaking of desks, and the shuffling of feet, as though the pupils were faced by a hideous ordeal.

Again excepting the few who enjoyed reading and got their books from the public library or from a home collection, the conscientious pupils would go to the school library, select a very short and simple book, skim most of it, and write a passable report. The less scrupulous (often the majority) would do one or more of the following:

1. Hand in a report made in a previous year, especially if another teacher was in charge of the class;
2. Read a few lines from a book, glance at the rest, and then borrow a report already given by a fellow pupil, particularly one from a higher class. Probably some reports were passed along for ten years;
3. Make a report after seeing a movie based on a book, or after reading a summary in a comic book.

If nothing else, the supplementary-reading requirements provided an effective training in the art of deceit.

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One of the advantages of the increase in enrolment after 1951 and the adding of new courses was that pupils in the same grade could be divided into classes on the basis of their marks. Formerly, particularly in the lower grades, those who made an I.Q. score of 130 and above were grouped with those who made much lower scores; and those who read at a grade 12 level with those whose level was as low as grade 5. This disparity, in my opinion, was harmful to both groups. The fast-learners became bored and restless while the teacher was trying to explain a point to a slow-learner, and the slow-learners became frustrated and discouraged when they saw how easily some of their classmates learned what they couldn't begin to understand -- as indicated by the former getting between 90 and 100 on an examination, and the latter, between 10 and 30.

One year I had in my 9B composition class a boy who had returned to school at the age of eighteen because an injury had prevented his continuing to work as a laborer. Poor fellow! the majority of his classmates were unusually good in grammar, but he, partly because he had forgotten much of the little he once knew, found difficulty in distinguishing between even an adjective and an adverb, and was quite unable to understand the difference between a transitive and an intransitive verb.

At first, eager and determined to succeed, with a puzzled expression, he asked many questions. But when the other pupils smiled and giggled, or groaned to indicate that they resented the interruptions, he became silent, and sat through the lessons with eyes downcast.

After a month or so of brooding, one day at four o'clock, scribbler and pencil in hand, he came to see me. Somehow he made me think of a drowning man grasping at a straw.

"Mr. Smith," he said, "I've got a problem in grammar I'd like some help with."

"Tell me what it is, and we'll see what we can do."

"It's this: I can't get straight when to use 'a' before a word, and when to use 'an'."

"Well," I said, "it's not easy if you can't recognize vowels, consonants and diphthongs. Sit down and we'll see whether we can find the cause of your trouble."

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Once a week for two months I gave him a short lesson. Finally a happy day came when he said in triumph, "I don't need any more help. I understand now. He was elated by success.

A month or so later, disheartened by failure in almost all of his subjects, he left the school. Before going, he said to me with a smile, "Well, at least I learned something. I know enough not to say 'a honest man'."

If it had been possible to enrol this boy in a class of pupils with similar ability and knowledge, and in which the course of studies was suitable, he would probably have remained in school for two or three years and left with useful skills and information.

Yes, if Mr. Butcher could return to inspect the modern school, he would be astonished; and, for the most part, would approve of what he saw.

N. S. Calvert, B.A. E. R. Craig, B.A. R. E. Rawlings, B.A.
C. W. Butcher, B.A., Principal D. A. Smith, B.A.
H. E. Riedel, M.A. M. E. Williams, B.A. H. E. Taber, B.Com.

1945

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# CENSORSHIP

All teachers are expected to refrain from the
discussion in the schools of political or
ecclesiastical questions....

Paris Board of Education, 1901

you take away my life
When you do take away the means by which I live.

Wm. Shakespeare

Nothing on earth consumes a man more quickly than
the passion of resentment.

Frederick Nietzche

One afternoon, after I had been in Paris for about three months, I decided to enter a local store to buy some stationery. But blocking the doorway while crouching low over a pile of newspapers, was a well-known citizen. As he read, he continually grumbled and growled, as though infuriated.

When he straightened up and saw me, he exploded into wrath: "Those bloody Irish nationalists!" he exclaimed. "The whole lot of them should be stood against a wall and shot. No! not shot; hanged by the neck. Shooting is too good for the scoundrels. The British should never have given such people their independence."

Taken aback by his fury, for his manner was usually mild, I looked at him in surprise and disapproval, wondering at the cause of his slaughterous outburst, and wishing he would get out of the way.

Suddenly, perhaps sensing my disagreement, he demanded sharply, "Well, don't you think the British should have crushed the rebellion? Don't you think things would be better if the Irish were still under British rule?"

"No, I don't," I said quietly, shaking my head.

"What!" he sputtered, looking hard at me, "do you sympathize with those murderers? How can you say such a thing?"

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"My mother's name was O'Flynn. Her grandfather was an Irish Catholic who left Ireland because of English oppression. Besides, don't you think all people should be free to rule themselves?"

"Are you against the British Empire?" he asked menacingly, as though he suspected me of also being against chastisty, maternity and the Orange Order.

"When it deprives people of their liberty, yes."

"Well, I'll be --- he growled. Then, perhaps fearing that he was on the verge of using improper language, he brushed past me to the street and left, muttering angrily to himself. For an hour or so, every time I chanced to think of his wrath, I had to laugh.

Three or four days later, Mr. Butcher said to me, "Yesterday, I was told that you are disloyal to the British Empire."

"Oh," I said in surprise, "Why?"

"Something you said downtown about sympathizing with the Irish rebels."

"I know what you're talking about.Mr. --- asked me how I felt about the Irish getting their independence, and I told him. What's wrong with that?"

"In theory, nothing. But in practice, it was indiscreet. As a teacher of history, you shouldn't express your personal opinions on controversial issues."

"Even outside of the school?"

"Even outside of the school," he said firmly. "You must never give the impression that you are teaching things that important people may not approve of."

At this point, since another teacher had come into the office, we ended our talk. For a few minutes, I thought of what he had said; then unwilling to believe that I was not free to speak my mind, I more or less forgot about the matter.

Towards the end of March, I was again in trouble. During a lesson on the results of the Indian Mutiny, a boy said, "At home we have a book with a picture of mutineers tied to the muzzle of cannons. The British soldiers are going to blow a hole through them.

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"I've seen that picture," I said. "It was in a book we had in a high school I attended."

Another boy piped up, "I never heard of that before. I didn't think the British would do such a thing."

"My boy," I replied, "there are a lot of things the British soldiers have done that you'll never hear of."

On the following day, Mr. Butcher called me into his office: "Last night, the Reverend ---- phoned me. He was boiling mad. He accused you of being anti-British -- of teaching lies about the British Empire."

"What gave him that idea? I can't recall saying anything that should upset him."

"It was something about the British committing atrocities -- blowing Indian mutineers from guns, and about you saying the British had done things the pupils will never hear about.

"Oh, that! A pupil brought up the subject by telling about a picture he'd seen and I made a passing comment. I can't see why he's so upset. I've made clear to my classes that in general I admire the British people."

"Mr. Smith, you've got to be more careful. When you make a critical comment like that, you make trouble both for yourself and me. Teach only what's in the textbook. Don't bring controversial ideas. I've told you that before."

"You almost make me wish I taught something like geometry. What's the use of taking courses at university if you can't make use of what you learn?"

"That's neither here nor there," he replied. "You're paid to teach what the public wants. My advice is: stick to the textbook."

For an hour or so, I was angry and a bit worried. Finally, however, I decided to ignore the charge, though probably I was careful to avoid making further derogatory remarks about what one Parisian clergyman had called "the dear old Empire."

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Before the end of the school-term, I was once more under attack -- this time because while teaching the causes and events of World War I, I suggested that some of the statements in the textbook and in newspapers were not altogether true; for example, that Germany was solely responsible for the out-break of the war; that the German government, in preparing for war, had spent more money than the British, the French, and the Russians; that German soldiers in all battles far outnumbered those of the Allies; and that an angelic host with bows and arrows had fought alongside the British at Mons and shared the defeat.

Shortly after I had completed the topic, Mr. Butcher, his voice charged with annoyance, asked, "When are you going to learn to watch your step while teaching History?"

"What's wrong now?"

"Earlier this afternoon, a member of the Legion phoned. He complains that you are anti-British and pro-German, and are telling lies about the war. He ended by saying that you are disloyal and probably a communist."

"For heaven's sake!" I exclaimed. "All I did was give the pupils a few facts I learned from reading history books."

"I've told you before, and I tell you again - stick to the text-book. Surely that's not too much to ask."

"I hate the thought of being nothing but a textbook teacher."

"If you want to stay out of trouble, you'll have to be. Bear in mind that every complaint hurts the whole school. How many times must I tell you that?"

Later, after having considered what he had said, I thought he was being too fussy. However, I tried more than ever not to stray from the textbook.

One afternoon in January, 1931, when I happened to meet Mr. Butcher in the upstairs hallway, he said, "I've been looking for you. I've got to tell you that you've done it again."

"Done what?"

"Got yourself into trouble.

"What's the matter this time?" I asked, beginning to feel apprehensive

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"I've had two complaints, both from clergymen."

"Good gosh! it never rains but it pours. The purveyors of brotherly love seem to have it in for me. What's eating them now?"

"The Reverend ---- says you told a class that the Anglican Church is just like the Catholic Church.

"That's a big lie," I replied. "What I said was that many early Puritans broke away from the Anglican Church because they thought it was too much like the Roman Catholic. I was teaching straight from the textbook. Look for yourself."

"Oh," said Mr. Butcher with a smile. "So that's it. I'll soon put the reverend gentleman straight."

"What's the second charge?"

"It's more serious. The Reverend ----- says you are teaching atheism."

"That's an even bigger lie. In school I've always avoided expressing an opinion on religious matters."

"He says," continued Mr. Butcher, "that his Sunday school class has lately been continually disrupted by [here he named a senior high school boy] who challenges almost everything he says. He is telling around that you are responsible because you are teaching him atheistic ideas in the classroom."

"But I don't teach that boy, and I've never taught him. I've never even had a conversation with him."

"You're right! you don't teach him anything except P.T.," Mr. Butcher exclaimed, as though the object of a sudden revelation. "Why didn't I think of that? I'm afraid the Reverend ----- for reasons best known to himself has it in for you. But don't worry. I'll set things straight."

"If I'm going to be blamed for teaching things I don't teach," I said half-jokingly, "I might as well teach what I want to. I sure don't think I'm accomplishing much by sticking to a dry textbook."

"You'd better be careful," said Mr. Butcher seriously. "Let me tell you a few simple truths, Mr. Smith. The board knows only too well that dozens of unemployed teachers would be glad to have your job at a much lower salary, and that some of them can teach and maintain discipline better than you. In fact, not long ago a member suggested that you be

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replaced by a man who knows more about coaching teams. And let me tell you something else; If the pupils didn't like your classes, and if you didn't have two or three strong supporters on the board, and if I didn't strongly support you, you wouldn't be here next year. I'll continue to support you; but if you go on upsetting important people by introducing controversial ideas into your lessons, the time may come when I can do nothing for you. Bear in mind this fact: if you lose your job, you'll have a hard time getting another. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," I murmured, with inward shivers of anxiety.

Back in the classroom, I was almost overwhelmed by fear. If I lost my job, I'd be thrown into the hopeless ranks of unemployed teachers, who, because of the depression, could get no kind of work. And I'd have to give up my plan for being married during the summer, perhaps be unable to marry for years. Obviously there was only one decision I could make: be an abject slave to the textbook; teach history as though the book contained all of the facts and the whole truth. This I tried hard to do during three years much to the satisfaction of Mr. Butcher, who was pleased because he was receiving no further complaints.

During those years I felt as though my mind were squeezed in a straight-jacket, and I understood why in a totalitarian-state men who like to express their opinions are unhappy. The urge to express mine was almost a compulsion, perhaps because of the following influences:

My father, having been born in Brooklyn, N.Y., felt that he was a citizen of two countries, even though he was brought to Canada before he was two years old. Thus, although his first allegiance was to Canada, he was sympathetic towards the United States, and read American history as well as Canadian.

When I was a boy in Shelburne, most of the villagers were fiercely anti-American. Our preachers in their sermons often made derogatory remarks about the ideals and morals of "our neighbours to the south" and our teachers regularly led us, while our chests heaved and our eyes flashed fire, in the lusty bawling of patriotic songs like "The Maple Leaf Forever" and "Come If You Dare to the Northman's Lair"; and thrilled us with tales of British and Canadian heroes who in the War of 1812 had easily driven the "cowardly Yankees" helter-skelter back across the border. Like the other children, I was a red-hot patriot.

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However, even before my eleventh birthday, when at home I'd make insulting remarks about the Americans, Father would smile and say, "Donald, you shouldn't say that until you know both sides of the story." Then he would outline the American point of view; also, he gave me three illustrated books on American history, all printed in the United States.

One result of all this was that I acquired the habit of wanting to see both sides of a question, together with the urge during a discussion to present the unorthodox side. Another was that when somebody challenged my opinions, I seldom felt anxiety or anger, and so grossly underestimated how many other people felt. Thus, when I began to teach history and came across a biased account in a textbook, my urge to present the facts and opinions on the other side was overwhelming, and its suppression disturbing; and I couldn't understand why some of my remarks evoked hostility and aggression.

When in the classroom I began to confine myself to one point of view, I stirred up within myself an exhausting civil war, and my enthusiasm for teaching history gave way to boredom, apathy, and anxiety. How often I wished I could escape from teaching, and that I had decided to enter a school of medicine or law! How often, too, I wished I'd been endowed with superior intelligence, drive and talents, so that I could be somebody like Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russel, or even Clarence Darrow -- gifted with inner resources that enable one to be bold and independent! Often I thought, "How painful to have just enough intelligence to realize how little you really have!"

Fortunately, after a year or so, I learned that I could partly escape from my straight-jacket by emphasizing the comic aspects of historical events and figures, and by illustrating ideas with absurd anecdotes and comments. When the pupils laughed (they were easily amused), I felt much better. Also, when in 1933 I obtained specialist standing in history and English, and as a result was asked to take over Form 3 English and upper-school English and history, I found teaching to be much more interesting. Indeed, except when I had to censor myself, I was enjoying my classes.

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During the late fall of 1934, or perhaps early in 1935, an inspector visited the school. At four o'clock on the second day, he summoned me to the office for a talk.

"Mr. Smith," he asked in a sympathetic voice, "why don't you attend church?"

After I'd recovered from surprise, I answered, "I really don't know, except nothing there seems to satisfy my needs, and I don't like the minister because he doesn't like me."

"Don't you find the sermons interesting?"

"Hardly ever. I don't appreciate theological concepts, maybe because I can't understand them. I'm more interested in worldly matters than heavenly."

After considering my answer, he continued, "I don't like to tell you this, but I must for your own good. During my meeting with the board, a member attacked you for not attending church. He said you are setting a bad example to your pupils, and said in effect that you should be given a choice between attending and resigning. I don't think the majority of members were agreeing with him, but one never knows. How do you feel about this?"

I was so dumbfounded that I could only sit and stare at the floor. Finally, he went on, "My advice is this: to avoid trouble, you and your wife must attend church.

"I loathe the thought of being forced to go," I said bitterly.

"I understand how you feel," he said; "but considering the circumstances, I think you have no choice. If you don't, you'll become the subject of a harmful controversy that might well lead to your having to resign." Then, in dismissing me, he concluded, "Think over carefully what I have said and make a decision. I hope things turn out well for you."

When I arrived home, I was sick with anger and fear. At first, I raged about the house, exclaiming to my pregnant wife, "I'll be damned if I'll let anybody force me to attend church! I'll resign first, or at least risk being fired. If I give in to the bigots, I'll be a worse hypocrite than they."

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But when I looked into her troubled face, my anxiety became so intense that I could hardly endure it. I knew I had to yield.

Two days later, feeling that I should be walking barefoot through ice and snow and scratching an itching hide through a horse-hair shirt, I noisily knocked on the manse door to make my submission. When I told the minister that I had decided to begin again to attend his church, he said in a triumphant tone, "Ah! I thought you'd finally see the light."

"I've seen it," I replied, "but it hasn't blinded me."

"What do you mean?" he asked suspiciously.

"Probably that it's helped me to see the truth about a lot of things."

After vainly urging me to surpervize a boys' group, sing in the choir, and teach a Sunday school class (the last an odd request of one charged with teaching aetheism), he said he would see to my receiving church envelopes, and then intoned, "Come, let us give thanks together to the Lord for your change of heart."

The prayer, rolled out sonorously and with seeming interminability, made pious references to charity, brotherly love, and Christian fellowship, and expressed joy at my conversion.

Towards the end of this performance, I thought, "Why the hell, instead of praying, doesn't he preach a dainty little homily entitled 'Is There a Correlation between Piety and Bigotry?' That I could appreciate."

Finally I was dismissed into the frosty night with a "God Be With You." Under the twinkling stars, I trailed a nauseating odor of sanctity, while doing my best to banish homocidal fantasies.

On the following day, Mr. Butcher said to me, "I hear you made a visit to the manse and came to an understanding. Let me say I admire your courage."

"Courage!" I exclaimed. "I went because I was afraid."

"I still think it takes courage to do what you did. From what I hear, you did it well."

"I'm glad you think so. It makes me feel a little better. You know, Mr. Butcher, I wish everybody were as tolerant as you. You've been very understanding. I hope I can repay you."

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"Every day you repay me. Never think I don't notice how you go out of your way to help with extra-curricular activities and with discipline in the halls and the basement. I look on you as my right-hand man.

"I'll try to do even more."

"Good!" and then added as he turned away, "I don't understand why you have to continually say and do things that make you worry."

"Neither do I. Sometimes I wish I were more like you."

My yielding to pressure, though to many it may seem trivial -- especially to those who didn't suffer from the economic depression -- was for me close to being traumatic. It scarred my sense of integrity, made me despise myself, filled me with conflicts and resentments, and aggravated my sense of insecurity. Worst of all, it formed in me a sort of conditioned-reflex. For a long time, whenever intentionally or unintentionally I said something in school that might lead to criticism, I became unduly anxious and feared intolerable consequences.

My enforced submission had other results. First, I displaced the hostility I felt towards my immediate oppressors onto oppressors in general, and more than ever identified with people everywhere who were suffering from subjugation and exploitation. Secondly, I became intensely interested in reading about possible solutions to our social, economic and political problems. At university, I had for the most part studied history, politics, and economics in a vacuum -- in the sense that I related little of what I heard and read to life around me. Now I began to think I saw some relevancy, especially in ideas that seemed to throw light upon the causes of the Great Depression (1929-1940) with its mass unemployment, misery, despair and starvation in the midst of plenty. To me it seemed that millions of men, women, and children were the victims of a gross and cruel injustice. Especially I sympathized with a group of big boys at P.H.S. who had returned to school because they couldn't get a job. These slouched in the back seats of the first forms or, when a class numbered more than 45, lounged on a row of creaking chairs against the back wall. They were a hopeless lot, suffering from melancholy and a sense of being useless failures. How they must have ground their teeth when certain smug personages with a secure income said something like, "Those lazy bums could get work if they really had the guts to try. They just don't want to work."

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For about ten years I continued to read books on history, sociology, and anthropology, and when a lesson led itself to doing so, tried to subtly suggest some of the ideas that to me were significant and relevant. The main ones were as follows:

1. Status: Most men as individuals and as a group strive continually to increase their status, together with their power over others and their share of consumer goods;
2. Exploitation: In their drive to increase status, power and wealth, predatory men ruthlessly exploit those who are unable to offer effective resistance. This exploitation has been a major cause of human misery. For centuries, together with related causes, it has lead to:
   - (a) Power, luxury and leisure for a few, as opposed to subservience, poverty, and toil for the majority; and also, in our society, to unemployment and starvation in the midst of plenty;
   - (b) Slavery, serfdom, and wage slavery -- all devices used by the exploiters to increase their power and wealth by openly or subtly robbing others;
   - (c) Despotic governments, censorship, terror, concentration camps, the torture of political prisoners, and the massacre of dissidents -- all means by which the exploiters subjugate their victims;
   - (d) Rebellions and revolutions by means of which the exploited try to or succeed in overthrowing the exploiters.
3. Imperialism: History indicates that almost always when a state feels itself to be relatively powerful, it has tried by violence or the threat of violence to:
   - (a) Increase its power and status to the point where it is pre-eminent;
   - (b) Lessen or destroy the power of its rivals;
   - (c) Gain control of territory and peoples beyond its borders, and to exploit them.

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History also indicates that nearly every major war has been a struggle between rival imperialistic states for power, status and territory; and that there will be such wars as long as states are imperialistic.

4. Tolerance: In studying history, we should read about and try to understand as many points of view as possible; and while doing so, should always bear in mind that most historical "truths" are relative, and should try to understand and control the anxiety, fear, and aggressiveness that strange and contrary ideas often evoke in us.

5. Fundamental Causes: The causes that are usually given for an important historical happening are often only the events leading up to it, and thus are essentially part of it. The fundamental causes, for the most part, lie hidden in the unconscious mind. We seldom understand the reasons for what we do; the reasons we give are usually rationalizations. Until we can use reason to understand our underlying motives, we can do little towards creating a better world.

6. Moral Judgements: It is difficult to find a satisfactory standard for deciding whether an act is good or bad. However, in general, a political act may be judged by motives and consequences -- good if the act is intended to increase the sum total of human happiness and does; and bad if it is intended to benefit a minority at the expense of the majority and thus decreases the sum total of happiness.

   Moreover, one moral principle should be used to judge all similar acts. For example, if we decide that the Japanese aggression against China was wrong because military aggression is always wrong, then we must also decide that other aggressive acts such as the French invasion of Indo-China, the American conquest of the Phillipines, and the Russian invasion of Finland were equally wrong.

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7. Similarities: Because when making moral judgements we have a strong tendency to note irrelevant differences in opposing situations and actions, we should try to understand that in similar circumstances the behaviour of most individuals and of most groups is essentially the same. When we note irrelevant differences, we are likely to end up by approving in ourselves what we condemn in others. For example, the people of one nation will condemn those of another for an aggressive act while lauding themselves for committing a similar act. History is full of examples of the pot calling the kettle black.
8. Perfectibility: Despite the fact that man is the only mammal that tortures and kills large numbers of his own kind, he is capable of changing to the point where he can build a world in which all have an equal opportunity for happiness -- in which all do unto others as they would have others do unto them. The basic means for creating such a world are psychological research and the spread of knowledge.
9. Democracy: When there is universal suffrage, rule by the majority is the best means for ending exploitation and thus of creating a happier society. Democracy should involve:
   (a) Equality of opportunity to discuss in public all political problems;
   (b) The right of the majority to re-fashion things political, economic, social and religious for the purpose of ending exploitation and thereby creating a society devoted to "the greatest good of the greatest number."
10. Canadian Nationalism: As soon as possible, Canada should become independent of Great Britain -- should become a republic with its own flag, anthem, and heroes. A divided loyalty is confusing and tends towards making up apathetic towards both Great Britain and Canada. To be strong and free, Canada must have young people who are proud to be Canadians.

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Today the expression of most ideas like the above would meet with little opposition. But when I was teaching history, they were likely to be branded with words such as "subversive", "anti-democratic", and "crazy". Thus in presenting them, I was careful when the topic was particularly "dangerous" to avoid making specific statements. After teaching without comment the ideas and opinions of the textbook, I tried to suggest other points of view by reading excerpts from a book, asking thought-provoking questions, and using syllogisms. I left the pupils to draw their own conclusions, if any.

Some people may have felt that it was improper for me to suggest my own attitudes and ideas -- though of course they would have approved as being eminently proper an attempt to inculcate theirs. In fact, various pressure-groups continually agitated to have the schools teach their pet ideas and attitudes -- such as respect for property and the establishment, kindness to dumb animals, adoration of the British Empire, the veneration of religion, the practise of good manners, respect for authority, total abstinence, the eschewing of tobacco, the perils of socialism, and the delights of sexual continence.

No! I didn't feel that I was wrong in suggesting different points of view, although doing so sometimes made me anxious. Rather, I felt I was wrong in failing to carry out to the full my duty as outlined by the department of education:

the teacher must preserve a judicial spirit and cultivate broad sympathies in order to interpret the peoples whose history he is teaching. He must be willing to consider as many facts as possible --- and to seek the truth patiently and impartially.

his personal opinions should not be forced upon the pupils, but controversial issues have to be faced. These should be discussed fairly, although in most cases it may not be possible to reach a final decision."

It was easy for departmental officials far from the classroom to say that "controversial issues have to be faced" and "discussed fairly". But it was hard for a teacher to lead a discussion on issues such as relations with the U.S.S.R. and China, socialism, labor unions, taxation and the underlying causes of war when he knew that even if he himself merely acted as chairman he laid himself open to the charge of "permitting the expression of subversive ideas."

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Between 1938 and 1947, as far as I can recall, I received only two complaints. The first came from the father of a boy to whom I lent "National Defence" by Kirby Page -- a book that discusses some of the immediate causes of war from the point of view of a liberal. The father, after skimming a few pages, refused to let his son read it, and by telephone berated me for owning "a pile of trash full of communistic rubbish."

The second arose from a lesson in civics, during which a pupil said in effect that there was absolute censorship of speech and writing in the U.S.S.R. and absolute freedom in Canada. "How often," I asked him, "have you heard a communist freely expressing his ideas on a radio-program, or read a letter in a newspaper from an aetheist in which he presents his ideas?'

"But that's different," the boy replied. "Nobody should be allowed to use the radio or the paper to spread wrong ideas."

"Well, if you were a Russian loyal to the communist party and thought the ideas of capitalists and religious people were subversive, would you be in favor of allowing them freedom of speech?"

When he made no comment, I concluded, "Isn't it perhaps true that there is a degree of censorship in both countries -- much less in Canada and much more in the U.S.S.R., and that if it's wrong in one country, it's wrong in the other?"

On the following day, a woman phoned me. Her voice quivering with indignation, she said, "My daughter told me you said the communists and aetheists should be given radio time to spout their lies. Is that true?"

"No, I only asked whether they are given time."

"You didn't say they should be?"

"No, I'm quite sure I didn't say that."

"Well, I guess there must have been a misunderstanding," she said. "Sorry to have troubled you."

By 1942, I had become keenly aware of the censorship that permeated the educational system. It was quite apparent in the selection of books for the library and for the courses in English literature, and in the omission from the history textbooks of "unsuitable" incidents and ideas.

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It was apparent, too, in the success the local thought-controllers had in preventing the discussion of ideas, especially if unconventional, that concerned religion, sex, economics, social problems, current politics, and foreign affairs. For example, the fear of being denounced would deter a teacher of biology from discussing the theory of evolution, or teacher of history from trying to indicate how Copernicus, Darwin, Marx, Freud and Einstein affected man's conception of himself.

Since it seemed obvious that nearly all of us have a strong impulse to control the thinking of our neighbors, I became resigned to accepting the inevitability of censorship. But I couldn't help feeling irritated when a censor charged us teachers with failing to teach pupils to think, and when the course of studies required us to assert that Canadians, unlike the benighted peoples of many other lands, enjoyed complete freedom of speech:

> The land, where girt with friend or foe
> A man may speak the thing he will.

Well, at least it was a consolation to know that although the censors could deprive defiant teachers of their daily bread, they couldn't order them to be transported to the gold-mines of the Yukon.

About 1947, I began to lose my enthusiams for teaching history. One reason was that I had become weary of endlessly drilling the same old facts. Often in the lower grades, the monotony became almost unbearable. At the same time, I was becoming increasingly interested in English and wanted to teach more of it. In particular, I liked composition because there I had a definite goal and could feel that the class was progressing towards it.

Another reason for wanting to rid myself of history was that my efforts seemed to be futile. The majority of pupils within a year or two forgot most of what they had learned, and I could see no evidence that any experienced a basic change in their attitudes and beliefs. As a result, I began to doubt that the spread of knowledge would inevitably bring about a fundamental change in ideas and behaviour and thereby lead to the creation of a better world. Indeed, I was beginning to feel pessimistic about the future of mankind, particularly, when I thought of the 1939-1945 war and its atrocities, the development and use of the atomic bomb, the continuation of imperialistic aggression and

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rivalries, the Red Scare, the Cold War, and the widening income-gulf between rich and poor. No longer did I feel that in teaching history I was playing a tiny part in the building of a world-wide utopia. I began to abandon some of my basic ideas and attitudes, including optimism. Thus I lost my main motive for trying to develop an understanding of historical events.

Finally, I wanted to desert the teaching of history because it was a source of anxiety. Periodically, after suggesting an unorthodox idea, I felt apprehensive. Years of this were beginning to exact a toll.

This apprehension was aggravated by the anti-communist crusade associated with the name of Senator Joseph McCarthy. When I heard intelligent Parisians assert that all communists were fiendish monsters deserving to be boiled in oil, and that everybody was a communist or a fellow-traveller who advocated any kind of political and social reform or a better understanding among the big nations, I knew the time had come to toss my history textbooks into a fiery furnace, retreat ingloriously from polemics, and take refuge in elucidating the ideas and feelings of poems such as "The Old Gray Mare, "Daffodils", and "Mary Had a Little Lamb".

On January 18, 1949, a small majority of Penman workers, after demanding a raise of 15¢ an hour, eight statutory holidays with pay, and union recognition, went on strike. Soon there was violence on the picket-line, and a provincial police-detachment arrived to help in crushing the strike. Soon, too, the majority of Parisians became hostile towards the strikers and wanted them "put in their place".

Unfortunately for the strikers, their chief leader was a member of the communist party, and as such was accused of being more interested in furthering the long-term aims of his faction than in promoting the immediate interest of the Paris workers. His presence was a godsend to the stike-breakers. It enabled them to distract attention from the real issues and to inflame and mobolize public opinion -- to transform their petty, private war against a feeble group of Paris workers into an epic struggle against (as quoted in the Paris Star) "the powerful and sinister forces of international communism and aetheistical totalitarianism."

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In March, with the blessing of the Board of Trade, the crusaders formed the Paris Citizens' League, an organization which, they solemnly asserted "is NOT a strike-breaking association...it's sole purpose is to make sure that law and order are kept...to defeat communism...thereby assuring all God-fearing and right-thinking citizens the right to go about their normal affairs without hindrance and intimidation by those who would destroy the dignity and free-will of the individual."

Emphatically they alleged that the league-members were "God-fearing Christians" battling not to maintain low wages, high profits and industrial serfdom, but to preserve the foundations of "Christian democracy" and the "Christian Faith" from destruction by socialists (i.e., the C.C.F.), aetheists, and communists. Incidentally, this assertion lead to a miraculous though transitory religious-revival. Some of the league's officers, none of whom for years had solemnly peregrinated down a church-aisle or dozed through an interminable sermon, paraded en masse to the front of one temple to the rhythms of an organ prelude that to some observers bore a distinct resemblance to "Onward Christian Soldiers" and to others, "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam".

These latter-day saints, according to report, strove to emphasize their new-found piety by booming out the hymns especially the one chosen for the children -- "Precious Jewels".

Like the stars of the morning
His bright crown adorning,
They shall shine in their beauty,
Bright gems for his crown.

It was also reported that they ostentatiously sent their ten-spot offerings fluttering to the collection-plate, and listened with rapt attention to the sermon, the text of which might well have been, "Slaves, Obey Your Masters."

Earlier in public statements to the press, these sudden converts had charged that the "strike-commissars" were receiving their orders by secret agents direct from the Kremlin. Now they were trying to indicate that they, on the other hand, were receiving theirs by angelic messengers direct from the Heavenly Throne.

I should add that once the strike was broken, these sudden converts, with indecent haste, became notable backsliders.

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About two weeks after the strike began, Mr. Butcher said to me, "You know, I think the stikers shouldn't have begun this thing when the majority of workers are against it. They are wrong in doing that. And they're wrong in letting communists lead them. Yet I can't help sympathizing with them, even though I don't approve of unions and strikes. Some of the strikers are men and women I liked when they were boys and girls here at school. They are good people. I can't believe they would risk their jobs and peace of mind if they didn't feel they had real grievances.

"Mostly I feel as you do," I said, "though I think they're right in wanting a union. How else can they raise their wages? We know what it is to be caught in the inflation-squeeze.

"Unions often abuse their power, and the leaders are likely to mislead their members to increase their own power."

"That's exactly what boards say when teachers threaten to unite to demand a raise and some control over their working conditions, and talk of resigning if their demands are not met."

"But our federation isn't a union. There's no comparison."

"I guess there isn't. We're too timid to put our jobs on the line."

After frowning to express his disapproval, Mr. Butcher said, "Let's return to the strike. Like the Paris Star, I'm going to be strictly neutral. As an employee of the whole town, I shouldn't take sides.

"I agree," I said, "I really don't understand some of the issues; and on top of that, like you, I like people on both sides. As a teacher, I don't want to become involved in any way. I'm going to say nothing about the strike outside my home."

"Well, I guess we see eye to eye on that," said Mr. Butcher, and then turned to other things.

A few weeks after this conversation, on a gloomy day towards the end of March, a senior girl waylaid me on a staircase. Producing a card, she smilingly said, "This is a membership application issued by the Citizens' League, which I'm sure you've heard about. Will you please sign it?"

For a moment or so, I was too startled to reply. Then I said, "I'd rather not. I teach pupils whose parents either support or oppose the strike, so I don't want to publicly take sides.

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"But," she replied, "the Citizens' League is not opposing the strike, It's only purpose is to oppose and destroy the influence of communism in Paris. Surely you're against communism?"

"I don't think I should take a public stand," I said firmly, and went on down the stairs, beginning to worry about the possible consequence of my refusal.

On the following day, during the noon-hour, a close friend (a reporter who, incidentally, was opposed to the strike) phoned me:

"Don," she said, "they are saying at the headquarters of the Citizens' League that you refused to sign a card."

"That's right. I don't think I should publicly come down on either side."

"As a friend, I advise you to sign. As you know, some of the leaders have become fanatical and are influential. They could do you a lot of harm."

"I'd feel like a coward and a traitor to my beliefs if I signed."

"You'd be a bigger traitor to your family if you don't. Everybody now and then has to bow to public pressure. After all, you lead your class in singing God Save the King when you think it should be O Canada! What's the difference between that and signing a card?"

"Probably there isn't much, except that the singing doesn't hurt anybody, and my feelings about them are different.

"Just remember this, Don. If you appear to support the strike you'll probably get into a lot of trouble and you'll be worried sick. Maybe you'll lose your chance of becoming principal. I advice you to sign."

"Well, thanks for your warning. I'll think over what you've said."

During the long afternoon at school, I was so deeply disturbed that I could teach hardly anything. About all I did was walk up and down the aisles, and stare out of the windows. Finally, at four o'clock, I went to see Mr. Butcher.

"Are you," I asked, "going to sign a card of the Citizens' League?"

"I've already signed one."

"But I thought you weren't going to take sides!"

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"I said I wasn't going to say anything in public for or against the strike, and I haven't. At first I thought I shouldn't sign, but I changed my mind. After all, I don't care two hoots about the league. I'm through here in June. But I thought I'd better sign to keep the school from being criticised."

"Do you think I should sign?"

"That's entirely up to you. I won't presume to tell you what to do. Your position is different from mine. However, I will say that you'd probably save yourself a lot of needless worry. After all, it's only an empty gesture."

After this, I felt that I had to yield. Downtown, I loitered for a long time near the headquarters of the league, putting off the evil moment. Finally I went in, and after a brief conversation with a man whom I normally liked and respected, asked for a card.

"As a school teacher," I said, "I really think I should be completely neutral in this strike."

"The Citizens' League," he said emphatically, "has nothing to do with the strike. It's only purpose is to help in defeating the schemes of international communism. Here! read the aims on the card."

I read the first-three points:

1. I declare that I am loyal to the King and against any form of government that is contrary to our Canadian democracy;
2. I am in favor of the provincial police remaining in their present numbers;
3. I am against any organization...that is under the influence of communists;

"Well," I said, with what I hoped was a cynical smile, "now I know what sombody meant when he said that 'words are slippery and thought is viscous'."

"What are you trying to say?"

"That the words on this card seem to mean something quite different to you from what they mean to me."

"They mean exactly what they say."

"They seem to. --Well, here goes!" And I signed.

"Good," he said. "Again I assure you that the league is not out to break the strike."

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As soon as I could, I escaped into the fresh air, feeling as though I had been plastered with the fulsome contents of a manure-spreader.

On the street, at first I had a sense of relief; but soon felt that I was a brow-beaten coward. Thrusting my hand into my pocket, I savagely crushed the card, and under my breath, cursed both the league and myself.

As I dragged my feet homeward up the long hill, I began to think that my urge to see both sides of a question was a thorn in the flesh, especially since I was a history teacher without the moral courage to risk everything for what I thought was right. How pleasant, I thought, to be an insider! to run safe with the establishment; to hold opinions that meet with almost universal approval and so require no courage to express. In truth, I was not cut out to be an indomitable martyr. Unlike Daniel of the Lions' Den, I feared to stand alone. I couldn't:

Dare to have a purpose firm
Dare to make it known.

Now, more than ever, I wanted to give up the teaching of history.

A year or so later, about six months after I had become principal, a final incident led me to abandon my two remaining history classes. At the end of a school day, an important member of the board of education came into my office and said portentously that he wanted to see me alone.

After the secretary had left, my visitor said, "I'm not here to beat about the bush. I'll come straight to the point. You've been accused of being a communist and of teaching communism. What have you to say to that?"

"It's not true, at least according to my definition of the word. I'm a social democrat.

"Good," he said. "I'm glad you can deny it. I didn't believe the charge."

"Tell me," I said, "why has the accusation come at this time? I've been so afraid of being accused of teaching communism or seeming to favor it that for a year I've scarcely mentioned the word.

"That, my good man, is just the point! It's said that you must be a communist because you never say anything against it. Why don't you say anything against it?"

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"For a number of reasons, the most important being that the word 'communism' has been made into a bogey word. Men like Senator McCarthy use it to frighten people away from supporting or even considering social and political reforms, and to justify what I think are evil policies. I'm sick of hearing even liberals smeared with the word. And I'm sick of hearing democratic principles attacked as being communistic."

"Well, as I've already said, all that really matters is that you're not a communist. I'll take your word for that. I might add though that I've heard you lean towards the C.C.F.?"

"What if I do?"

"We'd better not discuss that, though I don't understand how a sensible person could. Then he went on, "I'm sorry you've decided you want to teach nothing but English. From what I understand, your pupils have got a lot out of your classes. However, perhaps it's for the best. There's not much point in teaching something you don't like."

I never regretted my decision to rid myself of history. But I do regret that it was my misfortune to have taught during the Depression, the Second World War, and the anti-communist crusade. I envy today's teachers of social studies who enjoy a freedom of expression that I could only dream of.

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