

PUT DOWN THE BRAKES.

No matter how well the track is laid,
No matter how strong the engine is made,
When you find it running on a downward grade,
Put down the brakes.

If the demon of drink has entered your soul
And his power is getting beyond your control,
And dragging you down to a terrible goal,
Put down the brakes.

Remember the adage, "Don't trifle with fire"
Temptation, you know, is always a liar;
If you want to crush out the burning desire,
Put down the brakes.

Are you running in debt, by living too fast?
Do you look back with shame on profitless past?
And feel that your ruin is coming at last?
Put down the brakes.

Whether for home, for knowledge or gain,
You are fast wearing out your body and brain
Till nature no longer can bear the strain.
Put down the brakes.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY GRANDFATHER.

A NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL MEETING.

The responsible position of "school committee-man" grandfather held for many years, and as he flattered himself with credit, however little he might have been flattered by others, especially when he was not present.

When the fall work was done and the winter's wood got home something must be done with the youngsters, and as a school was as good as any place to get them out of the way, to school they must go. A school meeting was called for the purpose of engaging, or as they said, of "hiring a master to keep the school."

A notice was posted on the schoolhouse door some days before the night of the meeting, and when the time arrived some ten or a dozen of the residents of the districts, men and boys, wended their way to the lonely "shanty" which was called the schoolhouse, with candlestick and candles ready for the grand illumination which was to take place with the six or eight slender dips that they brought. First the fire was to be made in the rusty old stove, and then the evening's entertainment began. Firstly the weather was discussed, and then the crops, and then the cattle of the different ones present. Here they sat and talked until seven, eight, nine o'clock had come and gone and nothing was done yet. Grandfather was listening. Two or three drew their coats around them ready for their departure, seemingly oblivious as to the purport of the convention, or else they believed that all had been accomplished for which they were called together. The movement caused a kind of ripple on the surface of the stream of their conversation almost as sudden as a whirlwind on a mill pond in summer, that preluded the storm that was to follow.

Deacon Singer opened by stating that he believed they had come there to see about hiring a schoolmaster for the winter, and he would be glad to hear what Squire Philmore had to say on the subject; upon which grandfather suggested that he would like to hear the opinion of those present—which was given at first individually, and then collectively, all talking at once, until it was found necessary to make a show of dignity and to assume a virtue though they had it not.

The meeting was called to order, and of course grandfather was chosen moderator, in deference to his age and office as chief trustee or committeeman.

Capt. Ordly arose and addressing Mr. Moderator said he would like to make a few remarks, but he would not occupy their time, especially as there were others that would like to be heard. He said a young man had been to see him about keeping the school, but he thought his price was too high, and inasmuch as he was but one in the district he advised him to attend the meeting to-night and get the

opinion of the others—which he had done and was here on hand for that purpose.

The question was asked how much he expected to get, when the captain replied that he asked \$11 a month and board—which immediately called forth such a murmur of surprise and dissatisfaction, that the prospects of the young man seemed to blight at once.

Tom Cropmum said he "never heered sich stravgenc; they woodn't be free money nuff to pay, and then they'd be taxin' the deestrick, and he for one didn't feel like shellin' out his muneey for sich an upstart!"

Mr. Squeezum expressed his astonishment at the audacity of the youngster, and proposed that they pass a vote at once upon it, but the objection was so unanimous that grandfather did not think it worth while to put the question.

The next candidate was a man, with one arm, who had been a kind of clerk in a county grocery. Having lost his position, he had submitted to an examination by the proper party (through which he could not pass, however), and having been rejected in three other districts, he now applied to the fourth. His price was \$10 and board around. There was three dollars saved, said one, and yet the price was too much, especially as Squeezum said he had but one arm, and some of the big boys might take it into their heads to put him out some day. His claims and qualifications were thoroughly canvassed, and some pretty hard questions put to him by Squire Ketchum in the "rule of three" and "fractions." Then he was asked how many times 12 could be taken from 144; he said 12 times, which Squire Ketchum told him was not correct, and that led to a long and stormy debate, the contestants being about equally divided. Then came that old settler of a question, as to which was the greater, one square mile or one mile square, upon which there was another division of forces, with some changes from one side to the other. Deacon Jones said there could not be any difference, but old Ben Matticks said he would wager his oxen against \$20 that there was a difference. Much loud talk ensued. Some of the more slender candles were already exhausted and the others were burning low. So the question was put as to whether the one-armed man should be engaged or not. Mr. Loosely said he had no doubt his "larnin'" was good enough to keep the schule, but he was afeared he could not get along with one arm, besides he asked more than there was free money to pay him.

The young man, thinking he had a chance, volunteered to knock off the dollar, and keep the school the three months for the \$29. But a new difficulty arose when it was asked if he could chop wood to keep up his fire.

By this time two more candles had burned out, and as but two short pieces remained, the meeting adjourned to meet the next Tuesday night.

When the time arrived there was a greater gathering than on a former occasion, besides two new candidates come to offer themselves. Both strangers, and strange enough they had passed a rigid examination by the committee appointed for that purpose, and found thoroughly competent, as far as education, for the responsible position. One had taught in a neighboring district the winter before, and had been considered a good teacher, but he was perfectly crazy as to salary, demanding \$13 a month and board, so that put the quietus upon his prospects.

The other was very young, thoroughly educated and accomplished, but the rudeness of the men (he being naturally timid and retiring) actually frightened him, and he refused to state his price.

The meeting was likely to be a failure, so after much gossip and some business pertaining to each individual, it was proposed to adjourn. At this juncture grandfather suggested that something ought to be done at once, as it was about time the school should commence, and if they did not get along faster than they had at the two last meetings, they might wait until spring and lose the "free money" altogether.

This was a startling piece of information, and created a sensation akin to an explosion in a sleeping camp.

Old Uncle Jonathan Sizzes, until now entirely taken up with Mr. Galtum's long stories, had forgotten that his neighbor Johnny Spotts had requested him to say a good word for him, and if possible get the school for him. Johnny was there and had all the time been hoping something might turn in his favor. So when the two strange gentlemen were discarded for their extortional prices, his stock seemed to rise in the market. Uncle Johnathan just at this time remembering his promise, immediately arose to his feet and said he was authorized to say, that if it was agreeable to all the trustees, Mr. John Spotts was willing to keep the school for three months for the free money that belonged to the district.

Now, Mr. Spotts was a young man but recently married, who had taken upon shares a small farm in the immediate neighborhood of the schoolhouse. So that his prospects seemed rather bright, especially as he would expect to board at home and thus relieve them of some little extra expense that would naturally accrue by having another in the family.

Mr. Squeezum said he liked the idea, and no doubt but the young man would be willing to keep the school a little longer for the same money, since it would be a comfortable place for him to stay during the cold weather and he could be near his wife, so that if anything should happen she could hang out a cloth and he could soon be at home, which was really worth considering.

The question was asked if he would not be willing to keep the school four months for the free money that belonged to the district. He said he could make double that by chopping wood by the cord, besides Mr. Cashman had asked him to help him do his threshing, which would amount to more than half as much.

It here occurred to grandfather to ask if he had been examined and if he was qualified. He said he had not been examined, but he felt pretty sure he could get a certificate, as Mr. Boggs had hinted to him as much, when he told him it was too bad to have those strangers carry off all the money as they did. And he asked him why he did not try and get a school. He had ciphered through Daboll's arithmetic twice and understood reading and spelling, besides he had studied "Morse's" geography one winter. On the whole, he said he thought himself entirely competent to teach any of the scholars in the "deestrick," unless it was Capt. Ordly's son Joe, and he might be a little too far advanced.

After much arguing pro and con, the question was at last put by grandfather, whether they should engage Mr. John Spotts to teach the district school No. 11 for three months for the sum of \$29, he agreeing to board himself and teach the school for the aforesaid sum, provided he could pass examination before Mr. Boggs, the chief of the examining committee. Mr. Spotts went home much elated, and told his wife of his good luck, and how he had satisfied them all by his equivocal answering to those profound questions, of how many times can 12 be taken from 144, and which was the most, a square mile or a mile square. The next day he waited upon Mr. Boggs, who was inclined to favor the young man, and granted him an especial certificate to teach the above school for the term of three months, beginning November 18th and closing on the 18th of February, which was accordingly done and the school duly opened. Some of the boys, and girls, too, were very much disappointed to think the master was not going to board around, and even Uncle Simon Jollet said he would not begrudge him his board for his company.—*Philmore, in Pacific Rural Press.*

AN exchange, ridiculing county fairs, says that the Clearfield fair consisted of a calf, a goose, and a pumpkin. It rained so hard the first night that the goose swam off, the calf broke loose and ate the pumpkin, and a thief prowling around, stole the calf, and that ended the fair.