

The School at Pleasant Hill

How happy I was when I started out one morning early in October to teach my first term of school! At a distance of a mile away I could see the little white school-house set half-way up on a sloping hill and almost surrounded by tall dark fir trees. I walked along the road slowly, that I might meditate on the future happiness that was in store for me as teacher of the dear little children, and of the good influence I should have on them; and of the wonderful results I should obtain by introducing city methods of teaching into this school which was so far away from what I called civilization! So deep was my reverie that I did not hear the songs of the birds or notice the dew-laden flowers along the roadside, till I was startled by the merry laughter of two little girls coming pell-mell down the road to meet me. Each carried a large bunch of white and purple Cosmos blossoms, which they presented without ceremony.

"You're the new teacher, ain't you?" I smiled and nodded "yes."

"I knew it was you and told Hannah so. My papa's the school-director that met you at the station. He said you was big and sad lookin'. My name's Delilah Almira Brown, but I don't know what grade I'm in, 'cause mama said you'd put us all back anyway. All new teachers put the scholars back."

After this burst of confidence, she took my hand and walked along at my side. Hannah was quieter than her little friend but managed to say: "My papa was school-director, too, when my big brother George went to school. He's graduated now."

"Yes," added Delilah, "Hannah's brother George used to go to see Miss Parker that teched last term. Mama said she hoped you wasn't the kind to have beaus running to see you."

Thus, amid conversation of this sort, we reached the gate where another surprise awaited me. About fifteen boys of all sizes had been anticipating my approach from their look-out on the top rail of the fence. Just as I was about to enter one lad of about fifteen years said entreatingly: "Kint I ring the bell? It was my job last year."

This seemed to arouse the courage of the rest, for they were off