CHAPTER II
School and Church

About fifty years ago I entered school. We lived in one of the oldest settled portions of the Hoosier State, and schools in that section were far in advance of those in many sections of the state. Most of the school houses, however, were of the most primitive character. They were generally built of logs, with "chinking" and clay to stop the cracks, which, especially the clay, had to be renewed every fall. The seats were made of split logs, generally of bass wood and some other species that would split straight and make a smooth, flat surface, with pine stuck in each end for legs. I remember well my first day at school. I was allowed to occupy a seat by my older sister, and the bench was so high that my feet swung some eight or ten inches from the floor. This particular seat "bowed" up in the center, having been split out of a crooked sapling, and having been worn very smooth by use, I found it quite difficult to keep my position, and when one of the "big" boys on the opposite side began to play "peek-a-boo" with me from behind the big box stove, I carelessly lost my equilibrium and fell to the floor "cathrash." I was a great deal more scared than hurt, for I was sure that the "master" would use one of the great beech switches on me, a supply of which he had laid up to season on some pegs out of reach of the scholars. A "slab" some eighteen inches wide and ten or twelve feet long was fastened up against the side of the room on pegs driven into the wall at the proper angle for a writing desk, at which the children would take their turns in learning first to make "pot hooks" and then to follow the copy which read "Many Men of Many Minds, Many Birds of Many Kinds," or "Commandments Ten God gave to Men." In those days children did not use steel pens, and in fact few grown people used them. The pen was made by the teacher from a goose quill, and one of the most popular qualifications of a teacher was that he could make a good pen. In those days the programme in the school room was very different from what it is today. School was opened, or "books called," promptly at 8 o'clock, and the lessons of the day were begun by the primary scholars, the A., B., C., learners being called up one at a time to "say their lesson," that is, go over the letters of the alphabet forward and backward. Then came those who could spell. These were generally organized in classes according to their advancement. Then the four or five reading classes would in their turn stand up. Sometimes a fifteen minutes' recess would be given at 10 o'clock in the forenoon and at 3 in the afternoon. The geography and grammar classes would be called up, generally before noon and the rest afternoon. There were no arithmetic classes. Scholars usually commenced the study of arithmetic, or began "ciphering" as they called it, about the time they took up the third reader, and generally kept up the study as long as they were in school. We never heard of any one graduating from arithmetic in those days. Each scholar had a slate and text-book, and but very few of the text-books were alike. I think in some schools there must have been as many as six or eight different arithmetics in one school. Among those that I now call to mind were Pike's, Talbot's, Davies', and later Ray's and Stoddard's. There were no "primary" or "intermediate" arithmetics thought necessary. There may have been some published, but they had not been introduced out west. Each scholar proceeded to master this science on his own hook, and was expected to occupy all the time not required for his or hers other studies. They would first learn this rule and the table and then proceed to "work out" the "sums." They did not "solve problems" in those days. When they came to one they did not understand they would acknowledge themselves, "stalled" and carry it up to the "master," who would "work" it up for them and explain it, and then they would go back to their seats and continue as before. This kept the "master's" surplus time about all employed, and sometimes he was not equal to the demands made. The scholar who was the most industrious and most "apt" would lead all the rest and "cypher" through the book first, and at the "last day" would be "put forward" to demonstrate on the blackboard to the assembled patrons how the school had advanced. The study of arithmetic was considered the all important study after reading and writing, and grammar and geography were generally regarded as unimportant side issues. This probably gave rise to the legend of the three R's: "Reading, Riten and Rithmetic." Discipline in the school in those days was regarded as a very important matter. One of the first questions asked in regard to an applicant to teach was, "Does he keep good order?' and the next was, "does he whip much?" The "master" usually had his switch in his hand or kept it handy on his desk. This switch was generally a beech or birch limb, some four or five feet in length, and was dreaded by the most stoical. I had an experience with it once when I was quite small. I was engaged in looking at some pictures another boy was showing me in his new book, and of course not getting my lesson as I ought to have been. To see the pictures I was leaning forward and to the left, thus drawing my thin shirt tight over my back and shoulders. The first imitation I had that anything was wrong I heard that particular "swish," or more properly speaking, demonical "shriek," an elastic switch makes when it is forced rapidly through the air, and then the horrible sensation it produced by coming into contact with my back. I involuntarily yelled "ouch" and

made the entire school laugh. But it was no laughing matter with me. The small end of the switch had reached beyond my back and struck my finger, cutting quite a little gash in it near the root of the nail. As the pain on my back decreased the pain in my finger, which I had clasped in my other hand, increased so that I could not help crying. The teacher soon observed my tears and sobs, which I for the life of me could not suppress, and came to investigate, and when I opened my hand and exposed the wound my hand was covered with blood. When the impulsive but really tenderhearted teacher discovered the result of his hasty efforts at discipline I think he felt worse than I did, and could hardly keep his eyes dry. He tenderly washed and dressed my wound, which soon verified what I had frequently heard from my elders, but had never fully realized before, that it "felt mighty good after it quit hurting." But it was not the only use which he put his "gad" to wake little boys and remind them thus gently of their duty to spend their time in storing their minds with useful knowledge. He would occasionally lead a big boy or girl out on the floor and administer a flogging that would not only subdue the culprit, but for the time being terrorize the whole school. (The Holton Recorder, February 8, 1894.)

As to whipping school children by the schoolmaster, I recall that one of the best teachers, Thomas Rogers, an Irishman, always had a switch some five feet in length, in his hand, and he was not hesitant about using it when he thought it was required. The teacher was rather a large strong man with one short leg, pieced out with an iron foot. There was in school a well grown up boy by the name of Tom Dever. Tom was not only mischievous but mean, and bragged to the other boys what he would do if the master ever attempted to whip him. The test soon came. The teacher had given him one or two cuts with the switch when Dever grabbed him by his long leg. The teacher stooped over, caught him around the body and threw him with such force against the door as to break out a panel, after which he took a hard whipping with the switch. I remember that Dever, after damaging the door, got up and indulged in his favorite swear word, "Well I'll be Guinana burned." As well as I remember, no one ever suggested having the teacher arrested. (The Holton Recorder, April 26, 1928.)

Looking backward, as old heads will, you doubtless recall, how you looked joyously forward in the merry month of September, when school should begin again. One felt about as happy as a hearse as the three or four months of personal liberty rushed to a close and one realized that it would soon be time to go back and have the young ideas taught how to shot. Tough luck, it seemed to leave green fields and woods and swimming hole to pore again over miserable books, subject to the tyranny of the teacher. At times, at this time in particular, it seems to us too much fuss is made over the happy days of childhood. They told us then, as we tell youngsters now, that those school days were the happiest in life, but they couldn't remember, or flirted with the short and ugly. Time has brought toil in varied forms, but never a task since tackled has loomed so large as the one which used to be taken up on or about the first of September. - Atchison Globe.

As much as I regret to do so I must take issue with the Globe man. I presume my recollection of school days probably dates a quarter of a century prior to that of my Globe friend. One difference, possibly, in my school days and his was that in my time the three or four months vacation was six to eight months, and was employed by something, a good deal in fact, besides roaming through shady green woods and laving and sporting in the cool waters of the swimming hole.

Our vacation, as I recall to mind, commenced in the sugar camp and our recreation consisted of "tapping" the trees, gathering the sap, cutting wood, making fires and boiling down. This strenuous pastime was followed by cleaning up the corn ground, cutting the corn stalks off the wheat, etc. Next came the plowing, the planting and the cultivation of the corn crop. There were no picture shows to attend or baseball contests to witness in those days. The only real exciting contests were with the weeds in the corn field. The next on the program was the wheat, oats and hay harvest, where the implements we used in the game were the grain cradle, the mowing scythe, the rake and the pitch fork. After this came the wheat sowing and the corn harvest. Of course the "swimming hole" was there on the map and was a great substitute for the modern bath tub, but resort to the swimming hole was only possible after the days work was finished. Instead of picture shows nearly every night and ball games on Saturday, a circus or an animal show would wonder along our way about once on a average of two or three years, to which we might go provided work was not too pressing and further provided we could in some inscrutable way raise the necessary quarter or half dollar.

Is it much wonder that the boys and girls of that time looked forward to the opening of the three, four or five month's school with considerable joyous anticipation? It meant release from, in many cases, hard and more or less disagreeable farm work. It meant daily association with the boys and girls of the neighborhood. It meant, to some at least, a fulfillment of the ambition to acquire an education. It meant an hour at noon of games that were

games, at play that was play. It meant the spelling bee on Friday afternoon, and the friendly but earnest contests for head marks. It meant an occasional night spelling bee, which resulted not only in learning to spell, but in courtships which in some cases culminated in happy marriages and happy homes. It meant the glad and hilarious Christmas time, when a request couched in most polite but uncompromising terms, was made upon the teacher that he treat the school to apples, cider, cakes and candy. Of course the teacher, if he had any of the elements of humor in his make-up, and most of them had, would make a pretense of refusal, and then the boys would rally to the school house early in the morning and bar the teacher out and keep him out in the cold until he unconditionally agreed to the terms proposed in our ultimatum. It meant the exhibition practice towards the last of the school and the final exhibition in which small boys and girls would declare that "You would scarce expect one of my age to speak in public on the stage," accompanied by the earnest request, "And if by chance I fell below Demosthenes, or Cicero, don't view me with a critics' eye, but pass my imperfections by," and in which larger boys and girls imagined that they laid the foundations for a dramatic career that would eclipse Edwin Forest or Mrs. Siddons.

Perhaps young people feel different now but I am confident many of the youth of fifty or sixty years ago, not only looked forward to the three or four months of winter school with pleasurable anticipations, but that these anticipations were pretty generally realized. (The Holton Recorder, August 28, 1913.)

The last day of school was always looked forward to with a great deal of interest and anticipation by the children, both large and small, not only because it freed them from the confinement of study, but because of the interesting programme generally arranged for that occasion. But little attention or time was usually given to examinations. Some times a few of the brightest scholars were put on parade as samples of the learning dealt out at that particular emporium of education. The main feature of this event was the "exposition" in which there were 'pieces' spoken by the children and dialogues and orations by the big boys and girls. Sometimes elaborate preparations were made, and neighboring large barn would be "seated" and "staged" with curtains and dressing rooms like a regular sure enough theater. When such arrangements were made the "exposition" was usually held in the evening, when a large crowd of people from that and adjoining districts would be present to applaud the "acting." I remember one of these affairs that I was connected with when I was quite small. Because I was the smallest boy in the school I was selected to represent the character of David in the tragedy of "David and Goliah." The largest man in the neighborhood, a man upward of six feet tall and weighing over two hundred pounds, was pressed into the service as Goliah, and I can well remember the exultation I felt when, with my sling, I "brought down" the giant and the house at the same time. We were in grave danger at one time while the entertainment was in the course of preparation, of being compelled to suspend. The community was strongly Methodist and most of the members of this church had children who were assigned parts. They had brought their children to rehearsals and fully approved of the business until some one started the fearful story that much of it was "just like a theater." This raised some commotion. If it partook of the character of the theater it must have the devil at the bottom of it, and that would not do in that neighborhood. The teacher was a leading Methodist, and my father a class leader, and both of them, with others who were Methodists, stood by the "exhibition" and defended it, and finally the opposition either quieted down or drew out of the business, and it went on to a final and successful termination.

One of the greatest curses of the school was the prevalence of the itch among the scholars. This gave our parents great concern, and every precaution was taken to shield children from the pestiferous epidemic. I remember that we usually wore a little bag under our clothing attached to a string around the neck in which was kept a small lump of asafetida. This was supposed to keep off not only the itch but other contagious diseases. Another pest were head lice. Every well regulated family kept on hand ready for instant use, a supply of fine tooth combs, and at least two or three evenings a week my mother would investigate the outside condition of my head with one of these "jerusalem overtakers" as they were sometimes called, and not by any means always without results. I have never yet met a boy or girl under ten years of age who enjoyed this process. To me it was one of the banes of my existence. Why the present generation of children are practically exempt from these twin juvenile calamities, the itch and lice, are beyond me. The only theory I have thought of is that they are indigenous to a new timbered country, such as Indiana was, comparatively, fifty years ago.

In all the years of my school life I remember but two women teachers, and they taught only a single summer term each. The winter schools generally continued from three to five months, and were always taught by men. I think no woman ever thought of applying for a winter school, probably because of the prevailing impression that a school consisting of big boys and girls could only be governed by well developed muscular power. One of the

(to the scholars) interesting episodes of the winter term was barring the teacher out of the school house on Christmas morning and keeping him out in the cold until he would agree to treat. No well regulated school would feel like it had done its whole duty until it had a barring out scrape. To prolong the fun the boys would frequently embody some absurd demand in their proposition, such as requiring him to furnish a gallon of whiskey, that they knew he would not consent to. And then sometimes they would, after having kept him out for awhile, make a sortie and catch him, take him down to the creek and duck him. This last named extremity was, however, seldom resorted to before a compromise was effected that was satisfactory to all parties. Usually the teachers enjoyed the fun as much as the scholars, bur now and then a surly, contrary teacher would be encountered and once in a while serious results followed. The interposition of school directors was seldom sought to settle difficulties in schools. The teacher and the scholars usually fought it out, and so far as my memory serves me now, the teacher nearly always came out the victor.

One of the most prolific sources of trouble in schools, and one of the hardest to control was the "courting" that would be carried on between the big boys and girls. I have known districts where the principal qualification sought in a teacher was an ability to prevent "courting," but while some of the teachers had the faculty to discourage and curb it, I do not believe that any one was able to suppress the nuisance. Notwithstanding the crusade against it, and the many slighting sarcastic allusions, such as "puppy love," "spoony infants," and the like, it is my deliberate opinion that some of the tender attachments formed between boys and girls at school would for purity of sentiment and unselfish adoration discount three-fourths of the courtship of adults which end in matrimony, and some of them finally in divorce. How many of the old men and women readers of The Recorder who do not sometimes recall scenes of their school days, and do not in imagination again hear the soft voice and see the beautiful eyes which "looked love to eyes that spoke again," while the cadences of sweet voices singing "Weavly Wheat" and "Ring around the Rosy," almost sets their feet to keeping time with music, and cause them involuntarily to wish they were boys and girls again? (The Holton Recorder, February 15, 1894.)

Twenty years ago most children hated to go to school. - Atchison Globe.

I cannot speak definitely from personal experience how children, twenty years ago felt about, but I very distinctly remember how they enjoyed going to school eighty years ago. The teachers of that day were not as well qualified to make lessons and school programs as interesting as they are now, but the students, we then called them "scholars," learned how to get the most fun out of unfavorable conditions. The noon hour, after disposing of our frugal lunch, was occupied with games of running base, town-ball, bull pen, 4 corner cat, antney-over, ring-marble, knucks and other games in which we all took great interest. Then there was the spelling school and the Christmas treat to which we looked forward with longing anticipation, and which we enjoyed to the limit. (The Holton Recorder, July 1, 1926.)

Things have changed in the past half century. At present about four-fifths of the country school teachers are women. When I studied and played and hookeyed my way from the age of five to fifteen years, through the country schools, I had thirteen different teachers, eleven of them being men and only two women, and the two women were thought only fit to teach summer schools, when the oldest pupils were not over ten and the highest grade the third reader.

My first teacher was Thomas Rodgers, an Irishman, but a very cultured gentleman and esteemed a most excellent teacher. He stood so well with the people they elected him county auditor, and transferred him from the school to the courthouse. My next teacher was Allen Leason, also a good and popular teacher. Then came my first woman teacher, when I was in my seventh year - Miss Sarah Evans. My recollection of her is that she was a very beautiful and attractive young woman. I know she was almost worshipped by her pupils. She taught a three months summer school. Next on the list was John Hutchinson, who nearly in every respect was the opposite of Mrs. Evans. Hutchinson was a great, tall, overgrown, husky young man, who had outgrown his clothes to the extent that his coat sleeves did not reach down to his hands by six inches, and his pantaloons and the tops of his cowhide shoes failed of connection by about the same space. He was considered quite a joke among the larger boys, until they had reached what the teacher considered the limit with their pranks, when the joke was turned and ceased to be funny to three or four of the ring leaders.

My next teacher was a young woman of the neighborhood, by the name of Hannah Ann Stratton. Most people called her "Hanner." "Hanner" was not a success either as a teacher or disciplinarian, and after a few weeks the attendance had dwindled so that she gave it up. Next on the program was John Doddridge. John was a member of one of the wealthy and prominent families of the neighborhood and was distinguished by reason of having

spent a year at Asbury University, the largest college in the state. Notwithstanding these advantages he was even more of a joke than was Hutchinson. Physically he was regulation size, but mentally he was somewhat dwarfed. He had been smitten with and had tried to pay his address to nearly every young woman in the neighborhood, but without success. They all, that is the said young women, including some of the big girls in the school, had considerable fun at his expense. As a result the larger boys and girls made more progress in courting and love making than they did in the three R.'s and other studies.

The next school I attended was taught by David Dunbar, who owned a fine farm and ran a country store. Dunbar was a fine teacher and an excellent disciplinarian. He was the only teacher in the country who was able to maintain discipline without the use of a gad. He kept a big beech switch laid up across a couple of nails in the wall, in full view of the school, but he never used it but once, and then with but one stroke, but as the smart alecky young man's legs were not protected by very much clothing, he carried the marks of that application of the gad wielded by the powerful athletic teacher for a number of days.

The next teacher was Wm. Hurst. "Bill," as he was called, was the son of the wealthiest farmer and stock drover in that part of the county and was another of the three young men who had spent a year at college. Hurst was a dandy. A young fellow was called a dandy in those times who dressed in the latest style and who would pose and strut on every occasion possible. He was not only a dandy in his dress and action, but in his talk. It was said of him, "He talked just like he walked." It may well be imagined that such a man would not have very smooth sailing, with a school composed of many pretty well grown up country boys and girls. He was not employed a second time. Once was enough for the community, as it thoroughly satisfied his ambitions in that line.

My next teacher was my brother, Samuel Beck. He was a well qualified and a conscientious teacher, as was proven by the fact that he was employed in the neighborhood where he lived every fall and winter for thirteen years.

My next four teachers, all men, were in the town school where I attended intermittingly in the endeavor to get some education a shade more advanced than was obtainable in the common country schools, and where I obtained a sort of speaking acquaintance with algebra, geometry and surveying, seasoned with ancient and modern history. With only one or two exceptions the schools I attended were built of logs; some of them with huge fireplaces and some with big box stoves. The seats in most of them were the flat sides of split logs, with pins driven in auger holes for legs and without backs. Our writing desks were slabs or puncheons, fastened against the wall with proper slant downward. In studying arithmetic we used slates, and would start in at simple addition and each fellow for himself "cypher" on through simple and compound numbers, the rule of three, the double rule of three, fractions, vulgar and decimal, the square and cube root, arithmetical progression, miscellaneous examples and so on to the end and the fellow who was the most apt and struck closest to his job would beat the others through, and be rewarded by a few public remarks by the teacher. (The Holton Recorder, February 11, 1915.)

As to school houses in an early day in Indiana, I remember when there was no school house, consequently no school within reach of the neighborhood where we lived, that the neighbors got together and decided to build one. One well-to-do farmer agreed to furnish the logs, and the others agreed to cut and haul them and put up the building. Its chinks were daubed with mud, the shack covered with clapboards. The seats were saplings split with the flat side up and pegs in the round side for bench legs. The writing desks were slabs donated by the sawmill man. I doubt if the cash expense of the building when finished was a much as $10. As I remember the people were as proud of that building as were the people of Holton of Campbell University forty years ago.

A few years later in a nearby neighborhood a church was built by the same method. The church seated about 100, and I overheard a leading member say that the church did not cost in actual money expended over $100. Hundreds of churches and school houses were, in an early day, built by the same method. (The Holton Recorder, March 29, 1923.)

I was born and partly raised and educated, what little education I received, in one of the best and richest counties in Indiana. It had been settled for about a generation when I made my advent. I cannot state the exact figures, but I am sure that more money was spent for educational purposes in Jackson county in one year than was spent for the same purpose in Wayne county in ten years. The common or district schools were few in number and far apart, and from $20 to $40 per month was the pay for teachers. I attended one three months session of school where there were an average attendance of sixty-five pupils, ranging from a-b-c beginners all

the way up to advanced arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history. The school or "books" commenced promptly at 8:00 a. m., and ceased at 5 p. m. I remember hearing the people grumble that the teacher was paid $40 per month. (The Holton Recorder, April 24, 1924.)

The term pen as applied to a utensil used for writing had its derivation from the Latin word "penna," meaning feather, and it was not until man began writing on paper that he adopted quills to his needs. The points of quill pens wore of quickly and had to be sharpened and the knife used for this purpose became known as the "pen-knife." The first steel pens, made separate from their handles, appeared in about 1820. These first separate pen-points, however, were so hard to make that their cost was prohibited, but when machinery was invented for making them, steel pen-points came into general use. - Exchange.

I was well grown up before I ever saw a "steel pen." Farmers all had flocks of geese and when they shed their "quills," which, if I remember correctly, was the spring of the year, we would gather the same and use them for writing during the school session. One of the qualifications of a good school teacher was his ability to make a good pen out of a goose quill. (The Holton Recorder, September 26, 1926.)

In looking back over my school days I recall the different characteristics if my schoolmates. In those days fighting among the boys was much more common than it is now, about two generations later. As a rule, the boys that bragged the loudest about their fighting prowess, did the least fighting. When they found they couldn't bluff or scare an opponent they found some excuse to quit. This was where the term "quitter" originated. Once in a while a quiet, modest sort of boy, after putting up with all the abuse and threatening from a bully he could stand, would take off his coat and roll up his sleeves and lit into a would-be rough-neck and give him a deserved and most complete dressing down, that is he would do it when the rough-neck didn't run.

Another characteristic of some were to be most enthusiastic and aggressive in proposing or starting something, but as soon as danger threatened were the first to flunk and abandon the enterprise. For instance when the teacher was to be barred out on Christmas until he promised to treat, some of the fellows who proposed the escapade, would get scared or discouraged on the slightest provocation, and desert their comrades, it they did not go over to the enemy. Bribery was some times as effective in those days as it has been later.

Well, those boys grew up to man's estate, some went into business and some stayed on the farm, and the same characteristics that distinguished them in boyhood stuck to them throughout their careers. Some of them and their descendants drifted into politics, and still the characteristics and foibles mentioned above clung to them. There seemed to be no way to escape from the weakness and cowardice and habit had saddled upon them. Once and a while, even in this generation, we see a man start out very enthusiastic and zealous in the cause of some reform, but for some reason his zeal soon peters out and his enthusiasm wanes and the first thing anyone knows, he is back seeking the flesh pots, trying to elbow his way up to the political counter. (The Holton Recorder, October 9, 1913.)

Read of another fellow with a broken neck still living and likely to live for a good while. I remember a big school boy who threatened to break the neck of a boy of less size and undertook the job. The self-constituted neck breaker came out of the scrimmage with two black eyes, a broken nose, and a face so scratched up that his mother would hardly recognize him. (The Holton Recorder, September 6, 1928.)

We all love Christmas and enjoy it, grown folks, old folks and children. To us old'uns, Christmas brings to our memory the good times we enjoyed when we were kids. One of those joyful occasions was when the master treated the scholars. Sometimes those treats consisted of stick candy, at other times ginger snaps and apples. School kids of today would not display much enthusiasm over a treat of stick candy or of ginger snaps and apples. When a teacher declined to treat his school, the big boys would go to the school house early and bar the teacher out and keep him out until he promised the usual treat. It was considered lots of fun to bar the teacher out and I remember many of us enjoyed the barring out process more than we did the subsequent treat. (The Holton Recorder, December 30, 1926.)

One day two boys, sons of prominent citizens of the district, and owning adjoining farms, had a scrap over a dispute in a game of town ball. Town ball and bullpen were the forerunners of baseball and football.

The teacher was something of a pacifist and undertook to deal with the matter as so not to offend his influential patrons.

He failed, as all extreme pacifists have in times past, are failing now, and always will, until that blessed day

called the millennium comes, when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and nations shall learn war against nations no more.

It was the beginning of a feud, which lasted as long as we lived in the neighborhood.

One of the fathers sued the other for damages in torn clothes, and got judgment for $1.00 and costs; the costs amounting to nearly $50.

Then the other farmer sued his neighbor about a line fence adjustment, which cost them both a good deal.

And so it went from bad to worse.

If the school master had taken the matter in hand and given both of them a good trouncing, which I have no doubt they both deserved, it might have settled the matter and saved lots of future trouble and expense. History has a knack of repeating itself and human nature is about the same complicated problem it always was and pretty much the same in Kansas as it is, or was, in Indiana. (The Holton Recorder, December 21, 1916.)

When I was a boy going to school, I remember a boy by the name of John Henry. John Henry was a very peculiar boy. While he learned his lessons about just as well as the average, he hadn't a lick of common sense. He had another strange peculiarly. When anybody said anything or told anything that did not exactly agree with John Henry's ideas of the way things should be, he invariably denounced it as a lie, and the fellow who told it as a base and unregenerate falsifier.

On one occasion, I remember, the teacher got up a a contest by offering the members of John Henry's class a big red apple for each head mark won during six days. John Henry got one and the other boy we called Billy, got five. The next day when Billy was telling now he had beaten John Henry five to one, John Henry flew into a rage and called Billy three or four kinds of liar. Some may wonder why John Henry did not get numerous wallopings. Well, I think the reason was that we all found that this weakness was more John Henry's misfortune than his fault. He just couldn't help it. (The Holton Recorder, April 14, 1904.)

In the times of which I am writing, the "spelling school" was a great institution. Allow me to remark that a half century or more ago, boys were boys and girls were girls, just as they are now. That was the reason the spelling school was so popular. At an old fashioned spelling school the company would divide into two contending factions by two leaders "choosing up." This was done by using the master's beech gad. One would toss it and the other catch it, and then hand over hand they would grasp it, and the one who finally grasped the top of the stick had first choice. Generally he would choose the best speller, if he was not in love with some girl; if so, he would invariably choose her, regardless of whether she could or could not spell baker. He was willing to run the chance of being beaten and to have his side beaten, just for the pleasure of getting to sit beside his sweetheart. Probably he would not have the courage, even if he got the opportunity, to speak a word to her the whole evening. But such was boy nature then, as it is now, only methinks modesty and diffidence is considered old fashioned and out of date, with the boys and also, I fear in some instances with the girls, as well.

I notice they are closing the schools because of the scarcity of fuel. They did not close the schools where I received my "larnin" for lack of fuel. When the woodpile began to get low, the teacher would order the big boys all to bring axes on a certain day. When the day rolled around, a score of big boys and young men would attack the dead timber in the woods nearby with axes. The smaller fry, of which I was one, would carry and pile it up under a lean to outside the schoolhouse. The big and little girls, having prepared for the occasion, would bunch the lunches together and with the added goodies they had brought, would serve lunch picnic fashion. Instead of it being a burden, it was a great frolic, which everyone enjoyed. This program would be repeated every three of four weeks, or when ever the fuel became scare. (The Holton Recorder, December 4, 1919.)

When I was about eleven years old, our family moved to a new location. I was rather advanced, for a boy at that age, in arithmetic, geography, history and some other studies, but deficient in spelling and grammar, a deficiency I have never been able to overcome. They had a spelling contest in a neighboring district, which I was thoughtless enough to attend. Two of the champion spellers "chose up" and as my fame as a somewhat precocious youth had somewhat got abroad, the one winning the first choice chose me as his first choice. That was the first and last time I ever posed as a champion speller, and on that occasion it did not last long, I went down on the third word. (The Holton Recorder, December 9, 1920.)

I do not think that in my adolescent days I was much of an expert judge of female beauty, but as I recall an incident, I find I must have had a somewhat decided opinion on the matter. The incident referred to was a spelling school in a country district, at which a brousy red-headed, freckled-faced girl spelled down the whole school. I

remember how disappointed and disgusted I was when this, as I thought, homely girl spelled down a girl I thought was pretty. I am sure now I was prejudged. And in thinking back over subsequent events, I find I have frequently been more of less governed and influenced by my prejudices. (The Holton Recorder, May 18, 1916.)

It was several years ago that the Recorder printed an editorial comparing, or rather contrasting, McGuffey's series of readers with the various series that have been in use in the public schools for the past half century, to the decided advantage, as I thought, of the old McGuffey's books. … I do not claim to know the year that the first McGuffey's books were first published, but I do know that in 1844, when I attended my first school, I was supplied with McGuffey's second reader, the first lesson in it being the sign post and the man who could not read. The last, or about the last, lesson was "Too Late For School." I remember this Too Late For School lesson, because it was my first declamation delivered on the occasion of the "last Day" exercises. I do not remember now that I was greeted by with applause or hisses. Possibly before this or soon after the series had been revised and changed somewhat. The last of the series I used was the Fourth reader about 1848. I do not think the Fifth reader had been complied up to this date. In our family, money was rather scarce, a school book was made to descend from the older to the younger members of the family, and my father's family, being one of the old fashioned kind, the books, much now to my regret were about used up before the youngest "graduated" from the "destrict" school.

I remember a few years ago while visiting in Chicago in a house where there was an old library, snooping around through the old books I came across a copy of McGuffey's Fourth reader, and hardly took time to eat the rest of the day, until I read every piece in it. (The Holton Recorder, November 8, 1922.)

Seeing Superintendent Palmer's report as to teachers employed in Jackson county and the wages paid, called to mind some of the schools I attended sixty-five or seventy years ago.

My older brother was teacher, and the schools were what were known in those days as subscription schools. That was before the time of the adoption of the splendid free school system of which Indiana has always been justly proud.

A subscription school was an educational enterprise wherein the teacher took his chances. He would first get the permission to use the old log school house, and if there was no school house, which was sometimes the case, he would fix up, at his own expense, an unoccupied log cabin; then he would get as many "scollars," guaranteed as possible at $3 per scholar, for the term of three months.

If he could succeed in getting twenty or twenty-five, he thought safe to launch the enterprise. Some of these schools I remember averaged an attendance of forty, which if it had all been collected, would have made the munificent sum of $120 for the three month's work. But it was seldom all collected. I remember we used to take, calves, pigs, chickens, eggs, in fact nearly everything but dogs in payment. We drew the line on dogs.

The way the accounts were kept, a list of the heads of families was made and these names were called each evening, and the oldest of the children of each family would respond by the number in attendance. Sometimes there would be as many as six from the same family. In this way the account was kept.

Some of the houses had big stoves and others had fireplaces. About once in two weeks would be fuel day, on which occasions the larger boys were requested to bring axes. Then instead of bull pen, town ball or three cornered cat, the whole school, girls and all, would put in the noon hour, the larger boys chopping the wood and the others carrying and piling it in a corner of the room. That was the way the boys and girls of some three generations ago got their education and equipment for life's duties. (The Holton Recorder, July 26, 1917.)

The pail with a tin dipper was stationed at an approachable spot and the school children passed in line at recess and each helped himself to a drink and replaced the dipper in the pail without even rinsing it? - Celia B. Braun in Chicago Tribune.

Yes, we remember it, and we also remember that the school children lived and enjoyed fairly good health and grew up into manhood and womanhood estate about the same as they now do. (The Holton Recorder, September 26, 1929.)

I read in the Emporia Gazette the other day, that about 2000 students attend annually the Kansas State Normal and that only about 2.75 per cent were men. I suppose the balance of them were women. How different this from when us old fellows were boys. Of the fourteen teachers who taught my young intellect to shoot straight, but two of them were women, and they were employed to teach summer schools where only the kids to small to help in the corn and harvest field, attended.

Sarah Evans was the first woman teacher employed in our neighborhood and I remember yet how many people thought the innovation would be a failure, that women were not qualified to teach and because deficient in muscle and physical strength were, of course not able to keep good order and enforce discipline. Miss Evans was a beautiful young woman with fine qualities as to disposition, and good level headed sense. I remember how we children almost worshiped her and what a phenomenal success her school was in the judgment of the parents as well as the children. And yet the success of Miss Evans did not convert the people of that district, as she was the last and only woman employed in the district before I moved away from that locality. (The Holton Recorder, August 12, 1920.)

Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Christian church, which for years was known as the "Campbellite church", was a great preacher. I heard him preach in Bainbridge, Indiana, some six or seven decades ago, his son-in-law, I forget his name, accompanied him. (The Holton Recorder, April 1, 1929.)

Speaking of violins, regionally called fiddles, recalls the time not many generations ago, when a good many straight laced church people believed that the fiddle was invented by the devil and that fiddlers were his emissaries. I remember when a school teacher, with progressive ideas, took charge of the music in our church and introduced the fiddle. Wherever the fiddle came from or who it was that invented it, it certainly raised Sheol in that church. The first time its strains were heard in sacred precincts, Brother F., one of the leading stewards and largest contributors of "quarterege." got up and stalked out of the church. When next week the presiding elder came and was holding quarterly conference, Brother F., was on hand to protest against "satanic music." He declared that if the fiddle was allowed to desecrate the church, they would not get any more quarterage from him. The presiding elder, who had previously served in a city church, where an organ and an orchestra helped out the song services, rather favored the fiddle crowd. The prospective loss of Brother F.'s, contributions was rather a serious matter until another member arose and ascertaining that the peeved brother's contributions were $20 a year, offered to be one of four to make it up. Instantly three others arose and agreed to be counted on that proposition. Then an outsider, who was not a member of the church, but a member of the congregation, agreed to add his contribution, $20. Brother F., being a man who knew when he had enough, arose and with tears in his eyes and emotion in his voice, said that if they were determined to have that fiddle in the church, he would double his contribution as an offset against its influence. The outsider grasped Brother F. by the hand and declared that he was now convinced that there was more in religion than he had ever believed there was, and asked to be enrolled as a member of the church.

The strange thing about it was not that this episode was a beginning of a revival in the church, but that as long as I remained in the neighborhood, there was never anymore "fiddle music" in that church. (The Holton Recorder, February 27, 1919.)

The neighborhood where my father lived, as I have incidentally mentioned, was strongly Methodist. There was a strong county church in sight of our house, and some five or six others within a radius of five or six miles, and, with the exception of the county seat, no other domination had a foothold in our part of the country. Under these conditions and surroundings I grew up somehow with the impression that the Methodist was the only religious denomination worth mentioning. I am very sure my father and mother never tried to make this impression and were not responsible for it, but I think it was the natural results of the surroundings. I had heard incidentally that there were Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics and United Brethren, but I had no idea that their religion amounted to much. My mother had a distant relative, living some four miles away, who was a Dunkard, and periodical meetings of this denomination were held at his house. He had a large barn, and in this the meetings were held, and owing to this relationship, we as a family, would attend. These people, and especially the ministers, were somewhat like Quakers in the peculiarity of their dress, but the most noticeable peculiarity was their long beards. In those days everybody shaved and went about with smooth faces, and to see and hear these solemn visaged, long whiskered ministers discourse produced a profound impression on my young mind. As I now write I can almost see Father Bowman with his shad bellied coat and patriarchal beard, with his arms spread as he uttered, "Yes, my beloved brethren." This is all of the sermon I can remember, but it is enough; more than I remember of many sermons I have heard since. With the exception of these Dunkards, I never heard other than a Methodist sermon until I was fourteen or fifteen years old.

When my father settled in the western part of the state there was a Baptist church only two miles from our house, and sometimes I attended their services. They were the old fashioned "regular" Baptists, sometimes called "hard shell," and by others "predestination" Baptists, and were as different from the Baptists in this county as

Dunkards differ from the Methodists. Theses people did not believe in paying preachers, neither did they believe in an educated ministry. I have often heard old Davy Wilson, one of their divines, who always took off his coat and tied up his head in a red bandana handkerchief before he commenced preaching, declare in stentorian tones that he "Thanked God he had no eddication." They, however, had a strong church and were good people, honest, industrious and frugal. They were strong against all secret societies and denounced them as "wiles of the devil." I knew of them "churching" two of their members and expelling them for joining the Sons of the Temperance. They did not take much stock in the temperance movement. Although few of them drank to excess, they all liked their dram and regarded whiskey as one of the necessities of life. I remember well of hearing one of the deacons telling about the preparations he had made to entertain the "association," which was about to meet, and one of the supplies laid in was a ten gallon keg of whiskey. In the earlier times I have been describing, while reckless drunkenness was condemned, drinking as fashionable, even among many church people. A 'log rolling" or a "house raising" always demanded a good supply of whiskey and on such occasions there were but a few sober men in the crowd when supper was called. Many, otherwise good people, did not think it possible to harvest their wheat, oats and hay without liquor in the field. At some point in nearly neighborhood someone kept a barrel of whiskey and sold it by the pint, quart or gallon to suit purchasers, as the price was only about twenty-five cents per gallon there was not many pints or quarts sold except for immediate consumption. Although as I have said, this was an exceptionally religious and moral neighborhood, I am very sure there were gallons of whiskey sold there to where there is now ounces sold in Jackson county. Everyone did not drink then. There were temperance cranks than as there is now. My father was one of the first to banish it from his place and refused to furnish it in the harvest field. I remember one year when harvest hands were somewhat scarce we came close to losing a portion of our wheat because of his persistence in this "cranky" notion. Those who were not so strict ran no risk of sacrificing any respect in the community or of lowering their standing in society or even in some of the churches, by following the general custom. While the preachers would occasionally refer to the sin of drunkenness, I have no recollection of ever hearing one denounce the sin of drinking in a moderate way, or advocate teetotalism, until I was about grown.

I can not help thinking that great advancement has been made in the temperance cause in the past fifty years. If my recollection is not generally at fault there was in those days, taking in the country over, in proportion to the population, at least ten times the drunkenness there is now, and the proportion of the liquor drank over what is now drank was still greater. I have no faith in or patience with the assertion of many that in the olden time the liquor was so pure that it did not effect people as injuriously as it does now. My recollection is that there were about as many profane oaths, as many quarrels and fights as much of the devil generally in a gallon of the pure (?) stuff made and sold then as there is in the same amount of the adulterated stuff that is sent out from Kansas City and St. Joseph now by the jug full. I do not believe that it is the "strychnine" or the "stramonium" or the "tobacco juice" or any other kind of the "drugs" that are popularly supposed to enter into the manufacture of modern whiskey of today that makes men who drink it demons. Science has demonstrated that all these drugs when taken separately in sufficient quantities will cause death to ensue, but I have never heard of the tendency of one of them to make a man whip his wife, abuse and starve his children and make him such a general and unqualified nuisance in his neighborhood as to make life a burden to everyone around him. I think nothing but alcohol will do this, and the whiskey of fifty years ago contained was much of this demonical principal as that of today.

Fighting in those days was much more common than it is today. An election, a log rolling, a house raising, or any gathering of almost any kind, including camp and other big religious meetings, were nearly always the occasions of numerous fistic encounters. Sometimes men would fight in a drunken quarrel, and sometimes just to test who was the best man. The bully of the neighborhood was always looked up to with more or less respect, even by men that did not believe in fighting themselves. In school, not withstanding the strict rules against fighting, there were frequent encounters between the larger and somewhat smaller boys, many of whom did not feel like they could lay claim to being manly until they had met and vanquished some boy as big, or bigger, than themselves. Even the teacher in a way respected this sentiment, and the whipping administered were noticeably lighter than those in punishment for other offenses.

I think in those times there was not the same respect and reverence felt by the younger element for religious meetings that is now accorded them by the same class. It was very common for religious meetings, even in churches, to be disturbed and even broken up by what were called the 'rowdies" who would organize and go for that express purpose. Especially on the occasion of "quarterly" or "big" meetings and great "revival" meetings would this trouble develop. It was generally the rule to select from among the brethren two or three of the most

stalwart to sit in the back part of the church to preserve order and, and may times those precautions did not keep down disturbances. In most instances the "rowdies" would bring with them a goodly supply of the pure (?) whiskey, and it was not uncommon to pass it around and drink during the services. (The Holton Recorder, February 22, 1894)

A half century or more every church, especially the Methodist church, had an Amen Corner where the devout ones would sit always ready to respond a more or less Amen when the preacher happened to say something they endorsed. The Amen Corner has about gone out of fashion, which may or may not be considered an improvement in religious worship. (The Holton Recorder, October 18, 1928.)

Wonder how many old timers can remember the custom at all public gatherings when the men sat on one side of the house and the ladies on the other side. The old Congregational church was so divided, with a low partition running through the center. - Muscotah Record.

I am one who remembers when all churches had a woman's side and a man's side. I also remember what a talk it made when on one occasion an adventurous fellow occupied a seat beside his lady friend on the woman's side in church. (The Holton Recorder, March 1, 1928.)

"As a child," says Charley Townsley, "we remember folks talking about ministers of different creeds engaging in warm debates over the proper method of baptism. In later years the practice was discontinued. Yesterday we read of a Meade, Kansas, minister challenging a Dodge City pastor to a public verbal duel on this subject. Sometimes one wonders if hoop skirts will return." - Topeka Capital Grass Roots.

I also remember how both ministers and laymen of the different churches used to scrap over baptisms. Some argued that sprinkling was ample, while others contended that only immersion was efficient. A goodly number of people otherwise fairly good Christians seemed to think that the method of baptism was more important than right living and daily conduct. I protest, however, that there is no relation between baptism and hooped skirts. (The Holton Recorder, September 13, 1928.)

Once upon a time in the good old days of yore, I remember, there happened to assemble in my uncle's store, where I was clerking, four mighty fine men and good citizens.

One was an old school Presbyterian, who zealously endorsed the old Westminster confession of faith in which the fore knowledge of God had decreed and predestinated the people who would be saved and lost so accurately that it could not be added to or subtracted from. He "indulged in hope" that he was one of the elect.

Another was an enthusiastic Methodist, who believed in free agency, free grace and free salvation. He also believed that a person could fall from grace, and if he did not sometimes practice his belief, he could point out to some of his church members who did. He was dead sure that he was on his happy way to heaven - hallelujah, praise the Lord! Amen!

Another was an old fashioned Baptist of the hardshell variety who was steadfast in his belief that the devil was the father of the wicked and that the only legitimate use we had for water was for lavatory and bathing purposes, in which to float ships and immerse sinners.

The fourth member was a Roman Catholic, who had the utmost faith in the infallibility of the Pope and that only through the intercessions of the priests could any sinner find mercy and pardon. He was confident that the Roman church was the only true church and that all the others were interlopers and frauds.

This worthy quartet indulged in more or less drastic, not to say caustic, argument, but did not get within a thousand miles of each other and finally separated, each feeling profoundly sorry for all the others. I was just thinking, when I recalled this incidence of the long ago, what if those four men could get together today, out here in Kansas, how they might feel and talk. I can imagine how quickly they would agree to disagree on non-essentials, and how they would probably, all concede that the main thing was the declaration of the savior, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." (The Holton Recorder, October 11, 1917.)

Minister's salaries varied from $100 to $300 or $400, much of which was paid in garden and field truck. The preacher on our circuit, lived at Green Castle, some ten miles away. My father was a class leader, one of the duties of the class leader was to collect "quarterage." One day my father started out in a two-horse wagon to collect. He was gone all day. The result of his day's work was about five dollar's worth of truck and sixty cents in money, which he had delivered at the preacher's home. If I remember correctly, the load consisted of corn

meal, potatoes, cabbage, pumpkins, spareribs, sausage and a shoulder of hog meat, and was enough to last the preacher's family a month. (The Holton Recorder, October 11, 1917.)

I remember when a carving or pocket knife or other edged tool would not hold an edge it was called "pot mettle." The conference sent to our circuit as our spiritual conductor Rev. Hayden Hayes, a man with a vociferous voice and a tendency to speak out what ever happened in his mind. One Sunday he preached on the subject of free grace and free salvation. After the preaching service, as was the custom there, class meeting was held, led by Brother Hayes, in which the members were called on to give their religious experience. On this occasion one old tightwad brother thanked God for free salvation and in his enthusiastic mood declared that he had been a Christian and on his happy way to heaven for thirty years and it had not cost him thirty dollars. The preacher blurted out so that every one in the house could hear him, "May the Lord have mercy on your pot metal soul."

After that, in that neighborhood at least, when anyone showed great inconsistency he was charged with being "pot metal." (The Holton Recorder, February 6, 1923.)