

THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

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I'VE BEEN THINKING.

The day has been beautiful one of those glorious Indian summer days which make us wish they could last forever. But

Now the day is done,
And the darkness falls from the wings of
night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight."

All this afternoon I have been sitting at my window,—thinking; my thoughts have been of the past. I have allowed my thoughts to turn backward—back to that spring morning so long ago, ah! thirty years ago, when I stood on the vine wreathed porch of my little farmhouse home, looking the sad good-byes to parents and sisters that I could not speak. Again, in memory, have my little sisters come and kissed me good-bye, whispering softly, "Oh! we shall miss you so;" and "Will you surely stay away the whole year?"

I feel again my father's earnest gaze, and hear the words in tones of deep emotion, "God help you, my daughter, to fight the battle of life, and don't forget to pray." Again I see my dear mother trying so hard to appear cheerful for my sake, feel her arms about my waist, hear her whisper, "Do right, and leave the rest to Him who doeth all things well." Then I go away, down the gravel walk out to the buggy, climb into it beside cousin Bert.

I remember distinctly that the tears would not longer be stayed. I leaned my head on my hands and cried bitterly, until I heard Bert say, "Why, sis, I did not know you could cry. Be brave, or you'll never do for a schoolma'am." Then I dried my tears, put sorrow away, and listened, or tried to listen, to Bert's sage advice, until we reached the station, where he purchased my ticket, and took me into the car. There I bade him good-bye, gaily telling him to keep close watch of a certain farmer boy for me, and to apprise

me of the first symptoms of waning affection. He promised compliance, said "Good-bye, don't forget to write, Sis," and was gone. Then I heard the train whistle, and, gazing from the car window, saw the depot with Bert standing on the steps gliding away faster and faster until I could bear the sight no longer, and boldly resolved to look my fate full in the face. I turned around, and looked straight in the face of an old man,—his head was monstrous, something the shape of an elephant, and the likeness was rendered almost perfect by a pair of huge ears, sleepy eyes, and such a nose. For a moment I looked to convince myself that I was not dreaming, then leaned resignedly back in my seat, and wondered if he were "my fate."

Presently I was greatly relieved by seeing a grand looking old lady turn to him and ask, "Husband, are we not nearly to M——?" After that I had a very pleasant chat with the two, and found them agreeable traveling companions, and that the elephantine head carried its own portion of good sense, and that the owner was a minister in our church.

After they left I bought a novel for company, and tried to be interested in the ups and downs of its heroine, until the conductor shouted "Helena;" then I snatched up my basket and hurried out on the platform, where I was met by the school director, a fine looking old gentleman who took me to his home where I was to board, "if we could agree," he said, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. I soon felt that there might be other places that were pleasant besides my home, for everything about the house of this old gentleman was so quaintly old-fashioned. My wants were all supplied as though I were some royal guest, instead of a girl of sixteen, who was to make her fortune by teaching the village school for a small pittance.