

7
LAZY NED.



J. H. BUTLER—Northampton.

Sharon V. White

S. J. White

LAZY NED.



NORTHAMPTON.

John Metcalf...1839.

A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W X Y Z &.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z.



*A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W X Y Z &.*

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z.*

L A Z Y N E D.

NED SLOPER is one of those negligent, idle, loitering, lounging sort of boys, who are the greatest of trials to their teacher, and the objects of contempt with the diligent and enterprising among the scholars. Let me give a description of his manners for a single half day, which will answer as a pretty fair specimen of all the half days in the week. I can think, just now, of but one exception to this same every day story, which is, that it really did occur that Ned made his appearance at school, one morning, before the exercises had commenced. It

was indeed an extraordinary occurrence, for never before, within the memory of teachers or scholars, had he been known to have been seated at his desk, until some two or three, or ten or twenty minutes after the boys were at theirs. "*Holloa!*" shouted the boy who first espied him at the door; "what is going to happen now?"

The "*holloas*" and the "*hur-ras*" were reiterated throughout the room to the no small dismay of poor Ned, who stood staring wildly round the room, scarcely knowing what to think or how to act, until he happened to recollect that the time for commencing school in the morning, had been changed from eight o'clock to nine. By this lucky mistake,



Ned was, for once in his life, punctual at school. Never before or since, has the same thing happened. But, regularly as the morning comes, the exercises of the school are interrupted by the entrance of tardy Ned. Some time in the course of the first hour, when the room is still, and the boys all at work, the door slowly opens, and in stalks Ned Sloper. Having closed the door behind him, by several pushes of his shoulder against it, he lounges across the floor to his seat. For Ned to enter the room, and proceed to his place, like the other boys, with a lively, off-hand air, would indeed be a surprising spectacle. He must go loitering and scuffing along, as if quite worn out with the fatigues of a

long journey. It is enough to put one in pain to observe his stupid, awkward, heedless movements. If a chair or a bench happens to stand a little out of place, Ned is sure, in his progress to stumble against it, or to clamber over it, rather than to walk round it or remove it out of his way. Whenever he has occasion to pass between two forms of desks, the boys on either side will be seen involuntarily, as it were, to place their hands over their work, or their implements,—or in some other way to protect them from Ned's obtrusive elbows—without which precautions, it might be, the contents of many an inkstand would come streaming down upon their papers or books ; or, here and there,

a slate, or ruler, or other noisy instrument, would be sent rattling and clattering to the floor.

His lazy, heedless, inefficient manners are a constant annoyance or hindrance to his classmates. Nothing is taken hold of with energy or vigor. When called to a recitation, he makes his way to the class in the same loitering, lounging, stumbling style we have described, keeping the whole class waiting, oftentimes, till the patience of both the teacher and the boys is well nigh exhausted,—and when fairly upon the spot, he stands lolling and twisting and turning about, or leaning against the boy next him, or in some way or other, interrupting the exercise, or

diverting the attention of the boys.

The other boys come to their classes to recite their lessons: Ned comes because he is called for, as for reciting a lesson, nobody who ever observed him for a single hour would believe that Ned Sloper knew what study means. Study! Unless holding a book in his hands, or wearing it out with his elbows, or curling up the leaves, or scribbling upon the margin or covers, may be called study, Ned has never in his life applied himself to study.

His excuses for being unprepared with the exercises of his classes, used to make the boys laugh, at first; but the same old, dull stories have been so often repeated, that, by this time, it is



generally known what is forthcoming, in answer to the teacher's inquiry, "Well, Edward, how is it to-day? Have you learned any part of this lesson?"—"No, Sir; I forgot to carry my book home," or, "I didn't know where the lesson was, Sir," or "the leaves were torn out of my book," or something of that sort is sure to be the excuse.

Ned's books by the way. Their appearance has already been hinted at; but it would require a long description to portray correctly their appearance. Drawings in every possible style of execution, and endless variety of design,—men, dogs and horses, landscapes, ships and bridges,—some in red ink, some in black, and others in crayon, adorn eve-

ry inch of the blank paper, in every volume, if we except what is occupied, in a hundred different places, with the proprietor's name, place of residence, date of purchase, and statement of title to ownership, accompanied with warnings to the thief who might be tempted to seize upon so valuable a property; as thus —“ Edward Sloper,” —“ Edward Sloper's book, Acton, Massachusetts, December, 1834. Steal not this book, &c.” Whoever should steal one of Ned Sloper's books, would, indeed, be in possession of a curiosity.

I should not be thus particular in my description of Ned's books, if it were not that their appearance affords such a specimen of the boy. A scholar's books



furnish generally a tolerably correct criterion of his character. It is true that diligent, industrious boys are not always careful enough of their books ; but a dull, indolent boy, is sure to abuse them. Not content with throwing them about, or leaving them in improper places, Ned must go regularly to work to deface his, by every possible means.

The worst of lazy people is, that their idle hands are never out of mischief. One would suppose to look at the outside of Ned's desk, that he had been industriously at work upon it, perhaps for weeks together. Carvings of the initials of his name, with every sort of scratch or scrawl, that ingenuity could devise, or a jack-knife execute, are

there presented in endless multiplicity. It were vain to attempt a description of the view which would present itself, should curiosity prompt us to raise the lid of said desk. Hurly-burly, topsyturvy are terms which might describe the order of arrangement, and the commodities making up the motley mess are as ill-conditioned, as they are ill-arranged.

Somehow or other, it is the case that a lazy boy is sure to be a sloven. If you meet with a boy who is neat and careful about his dress, his books, and his tools, you may be sure he is not a lazy boy. No wonder, you perhaps may say, that a lazy boy does not keep his things in order—he does not like the trouble. Trouble? Why surely he saves

himself no trouble by scribbling over his books, or in cutting his desk to pieces. It would be easy enough to let them alone. But, as we have said before, idle hands cannot be kept from mischief. Ned cannot bring his mind actively up to the business which ought to engage his whole attention in school, but he must contrive in some way or other to while away the time.

Ned hates study, and he hates work, and such a character is the last one really to enjoy play. Poor Ned! with nothing in the world but his laziness to make him so, he is a most miserable boy.



