

1028/59/20

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May 12th

Write answer for letters

Humble

Southampton

Dear Mr. Cushing

Sir William used often to tell me stories of his boyhood as I sat on the floor at his knees by his library fire, but I am afraid they were all rather lacking in details of time & place. One was at one of the first schools he went to they had an old matron that all the boys hated & one day, after

she had upset a bucket of cold water down the stairs on one of the boys they decided to take revenge.

Her room was over the schoolroom & the schoolroom stovepipe went up through her floor; & one day, on his suggestion they barricaded the "old girl" in & then burnt a great mixture of mustard & other stuff in the stove & of course all the fumes went up into her room. Some how she placed her bed over the stove pipe, but it did no good

~~to James~~ she became almost
 suffocated & screamed loudly for
 help. The head master came & got
 her out & though the boys were well
 punished they effectually "shooked
 the old girl out" for she refused
 to stay at the school any longer. I am
 not quite sure but I think it was
 after this, she, being so furious took
 action against them in Toronto, &
 Sir William & three other boys had
 to go to court & were in prison four
 days. I know this happened once

& perhaps he? had Hillburn would know if it was his time or not.

Another of his favourite stories was, ~~about~~ another school where the boys had no respect for one of the masters & they decided they would not have one of his classes which came first on Monday morning. There was a big loft up over the school room & on Sunday afternoon, when left to themselves, again on Sir William's suggestion, the boys unscrewed

everyone of the desks & chairs &
pulled them up into the loft, so that
on Monday morning when the master
came in for the lesson the schoolroom
was absolutely bare. I think after
this he was expelled from this school.

I was in the garden with him one day
& I dared him to throw a stone
& hit something that was a long
way off & he hit it true with the
first stone & he told me that on
the way to school one day, with
three other small boys, Ned Milburn

dared him to hit a pig with a stone
that was a long way off, & with the
first stone he hit ~~to~~ the pig
directly behind the ear & killed
it instantly. He would always
laugh till the tears came into his
eyes at the thought of how "that
old pig looked as he just rolled
over on his back with his four legs
stiff in the air" & of how the farmer
came out & took Uncle Willie by
the scruff of his neck straight
back to his father who was made
to pay \$8 for the pig. But indeed

4.
He thoroughly enjoyed telling these stories & others which you must know & during those last years I never saw him laugh so heartily or look so happy as he did when he forgot the present & lived again his old pranks. I wish I could have remembered them more exactly in his own words but perhaps they may be of use to you. I have a lot of letters but they are only intimate personal ones & I don't think they would be of use to you in the biography. I did so love your piece

about him in the Boston Transcript,
It will be so lovely for Cousin
Trace to have you with her this
Summer. She is very well.

yours Very Sincerely
Harold Pennington

T. P. Cousin Trace says she thinks
the first story was about a school
in Dundas