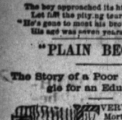
A PARODY.

The boy stood by the auction-door,
And watched the passive mule;
A thoughtful attitude it wore—
As air-screwed soon.

The boy approached its kinder end—
Let 'Gift the pig-ay tears!
"He's great to meet his treacles, and
His ears was screwed years."

"PLAIN BECKIE."

The Story of a Poor Girl's Struggle for an Education.



EVERY one at Miss Morton's school knew plain Beckie. She was the seamstress woman's daughter, and wore cheap prints and gingham aprons instead of soft merinos and bright plaids like the other girls. And a ruffle of the same material as the dress about the throat, did service as a collar, for Beckie simply despised to pretty lace and ribbons.

Then, too, she generally had her flaxen hair with a faded ribbon, at the nape of her neck in an ungainly whisp, which the girls called "Beckie's Laughing Scarfs;" and even the most innocent little "bang" or "frix" never fringed the high, full forehead. No people called her "plain," and it really did seem belittling.

But I suspect the better reason for this aversion was that Rebecca Brander was so very plain and commonplace in speech and manner, and not versed in the little social amenities which sensible people term flattery and affectation. She rarely went into raptures over a new piece of ornament, as school-girls usually seem it their duty to do. The girls said it was because she never afford fine clothes for herself, and that it "made her envious and sullen."

So that as it may have been, Beckie's plain, calm countenance never revealed the least bit of such a disposition.

Miss Morton's pupils one day, when the girls were discussing their schoolmate in her absence, and after that she fell constitutionally ill, were estimated in the vividly dressed coterie of pupils addressed.

"She was real mean," they said to one another, "to be plain Beckie, and not try in that way, when every one knew she was a moneyless, and that she could never appear her stylish to see her in her shabby clothes.

One thing, however, they never said of Beckie, and that was that she had imperfect lessons. In this they were obliged to confess, though most reluctantly, that she was hearing for quite a little race often on examination day to suit all parties.

Miss Morton watched her pupil it this one point with pleasure, knowing that she could not be the result of studying "after hours." There was too much else claiming the girl's attention in the family circle, where every she dishes to wash, the room to tidy up and Bobbie to mind, while her mother finished an ironing or did a little over the fire. Blaney had been a widow for two years, and had supported her little family by laundry work. And it was necessary that they consantly in order to meet the demands for rent, fuel, food and clothes; even the plain gingham dress cost considerably more than the fashionable young critics at Miss Norton's deemed imagined.

So, under these adverse circumstances, it was pretty certain that Beckie had no leisure hours to study in school.

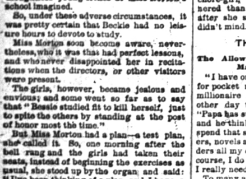
Miss Morton soon became aware, nevertheless, who it was that had perfect lessons, and who stood the appointed tests of the examinations when the directors, or other visitors were present.

The girls, however, became jealous and envious; and some went so far as to say that "Beasie studied fit to kill herself, just to spite Beckie, and to stand at the post of honor most the time."

But Miss Norton had a plan—a test plan, she called it. So, one morning after the bell rang and the girls had taken their seats, instead of beginning the exercises as usual, she stood up by the organ and said:

"I've been thinking of a plan, and I have a proposition to make to some one of you, which I believe will be a benefit to the one seeing fit to accept."

All eyes were turned attentively on the teacher, and grew bright with expectation.



ALL EYES WERE TURNED ON THE TEACHER.

Even "plain Beckie's" blue-gray orbs sparkled with interest.

"Which one of you would be willing to come an hour before schooltime, and sweep and dust the recitation room for a day for the coming month?" asked Miss Norton.

Twenty girls looked at each other; and a goodly share of the pupils manifested interest was fast disappearing, Miss Norton thought, by the way a dozen pairs of shoulders shrugged the air of disdain their owners had for work.

Jenny Hamilton, halfway down the aisle, thought that perhaps the teacher might give the industrious one accepting the proposal a gold ring, a gold chain, or may be money; so she asked hopefully, and sitting herself: "What would you give as a reward, ma'am?" she asked.

"I was waiting for some one to ask that question," laughed Miss Norton; then she continued: "I'm very handsome—as high as fifty cents for the one who sweeps and dusts neatly for me every morning for a month and is tardy in nothing, such as not to be in the high school at D——, and will pay their tuition there for the fall term of school, if they desire to attend."

Jennie fastened down in her seat; it wasn't a gold ring after all. Alice Everett turned up her golden little curls with a toss of "lot of stuffy old school-books," and Minnie Dresser looked outright at "such an old fogy proposition."

"I don't see a chance for anyone to go!" cried Rose Anthony, aghast.

"Oh! Miss Norton, I will sweep and dust, she very best I can, if you will try me!" exclaimed "plain Beckie" from down in a corner by the chimney; and her excitement as the prospect glowed in her very plain face.

"I shall be glad to try you, Beckie," answered Miss Norton, with a pleasant smile. "I will give to