

A CODE OF HONOR

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A Code of Honor by Mary Hall Leonard

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1897.

Theo. Auerhahn

A Code of Honor.

CHAPTER I.

"Our boys are young gentlemen. You will find that good discipline is best secured by putting them squarely on their honor. We have always used corporal punishment to some extent in the preparatory department, but in some things a teacher can exercise a wise and salutary neglect. I trust that you will have tact enough to manage the school well from the first, for a good beginning is half the battle."

President Rexford, of the Kingston Collegiate Institute, addressed these words to Alfred Dennison, the new tutor.

It was the afternoon before the opening of the fall session. The

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campus and dormitories presented a scene of much confusion. All day express wagons and trucks had been going in and out of the college grounds, and the noise of moving trunks and opening boxes had echoed through the bare halls. There were "new boys," gazing around with uncertain air; and fathers from the country, who had accompanied the smaller ones—shy, awkward, little fellows, homesick at the thought of being left alone in strange surroundings. Here and there was a group of the "old boys," greeting each other vociferously after the holiday separation.

The chief factor in bringing order out of this chaos was the President, who seemed to be everywhere, issuing directions, giving welcome to newcomers, and listening to the suggestions of anxious parents.

The figure next in prominence was Prince, the negro janitor, whose presence was wanted in a hundred places, to help the porters with the heaviest

boxes, to remove packing material, and to do the thousand errands that belong to the day before the opening of a school.

Prince was fully conscious of his own importance. At the close of the last session he had accepted the position of janitor in a large building in a neighboring town, saying to the boys, in strict privacy: "I'se mighty sorry fur de Pres'dunt. He ain' gwine ter hab any 'sponsible pussons lef' to holp'im nex' year. Yo' see, I'se gwine to de city, an' Tutor Leapham he done leab too. I cyan't see how de Pres'dunt gwine ter get 'long nohow."

But the new position failed to satisfy Prince's expectations, and when the time for the re-opening of school drew near, he was easily persuaded to return to his old duties. He liked the stir of school life. He liked the boys, who also liked him, and made him by turns their pet and the butt of their merry jokes. On this day of bustle his enjoyment was increased by the

surprised greetings of the boys, who gave shouts of welcome at the familiar sight of the rolling black eyes.

The new tutor arrived about three o'clock. After a period of waiting, during which his self-possession rapidly diminished, he was summoned to the President's office. They had not before met. Alfred had been engaged upon high recommendations from the faculty of the Vallambrosa College, where he had graduated after a short period of study. His chief education, however, had been gained in the quiet home in Tennessee, where he grew to manhood as the only son of a country minister. He had received little of the robust training that comes from mingling with equals in school life, but had enjoyed two rare advantages in the use of his father's well-selected though somewhat antiquated private library, and the constant companionship of his invalid mother, who had been educated in one of the best schools of the South before the War.

President Rexford looked kindly at the youth who stood before him, his natural timidity and boyish appearance heightened by the embarrassment of feeling himself under the searching glance of his superior. The President felt a slight sense of disappointment. He wished that the new teacher could have had a little more of personal presence. It was worth more, perhaps, than some mental attributes in making one's way with schoolboys. He spoke to Alfred pleasantly, however; gave him some books and a few directions about the morrow's work; and then, handing him the key of the room reserved for the tutor in one of the dormitories, he said: "I will excuse you now, Mr. Dennison. You will wish to get settled in your room and rested after your journey, as well as to prepare for to-morrow's work. The bell will ring for school exercises at half-past eight."

Alfred took the books and walked