

# **A DOMINIE DISMISSED**

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A dominie dismissed by A. S. Neill

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**A. S. NEILL**

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### WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT.

In consequence of the Dominie's go-as-you-please methods of educating village children, the inevitable happens—he is dismissed, giving place to an approved disciplinarian.

The unhappy Dominie, forced to leave his bairns, seeks to enlist—but the doctor discovers that his lungs are affected, and he is ordered an open-air life.

He returns as a cattleman to the village where he has previously been a school-master. Incidentally, he watches the effect of his successor's teaching, the triumph of his own methods and the discomfiture of his rival at the hands of the children, in whom the Dominie cultivated personality and the rights of bairns.

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A  
DOMINIE  
DISMISSED

BY  
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TO THE  
ORIGINAL  
OF  
MARGARET



# A DOMINIE DISMISSED

## I.

**I** HAVE packed all my belongings. My trunk and two big boxes of books stand in the middle of a floor littered with papers and straw. I had my typewriter carefully packed too, but I took it from out its wrappings, and I sit amidst the ruins of my room with my wee machine before me. It is one of those little folding ones weighing about six pounds.

The London train goes at seven, and it is half-past five now. It was just ten minutes ago that I suddenly resolved to keep a diary . . . only a dominie can keep a Log, and I am a dominie no longer.

I hear Janet Brown's voice outside. She is singing "Keep the Home Fires Burning" . . . and she was in tears this afternoon. The limmer ought to be at home weeping her dominie's departure.

Yet . . . what is Janet doing at my window? Her home is a good two miles along the road. I wonder if she has come to see me off. Yes, she has; I hear her cry to Ellen Smith: "He's packit, Ellen, and Aw hear him addressin' the labels on his typewriter." The besom!

Well, well, children have short memories. When Macdonald enters the room on Monday morning they will forget all about me.

I know Macdonald. He is a decent sort to meet in a house, but in school he is a stern

one. His chief drawback is his lack of humour. I could swear that he will whack Jim Jackson for impudence before he is half an hour in the school.

I met Jim one night last week wheeling a box up from the station.

"I say, boy," I called with a pronounced Piccadilly Johnny accent, "heah, boy! Can you direct me to the—er—village post-office?"

He scratched his head and looked round him dubiously.

"Blowed if Aw ken," he said at last. "Aw'm a stranger here."

Yes, Macdonald will whack him.

I sent Jim out yesterday to measure the rainfall (there had been a fortnight's drought) and he went out to the playground. In ten minutes he returned looking puzzled. He came to my desk and lifted an Algebra book, then he went to his seat and seemed to sweat over some huge calculation. At length he came to me and announced that the rainfall was  $\cdot 3578994$  of an inch. I went out to the playground . . . he had watered it with the watering-can.

"There are no flies on you, my lad," I said.

"No, sir," he smiled, "the flies don't come out in the rain."

Yes, Macdonald is sure to whack him.

I shall miss Jim. I shall miss them all . . . but Jim most of all. What about Janet? And Gladys? And Ellen? And Jean? . . . Well, then, I'll miss Jim most of all the boys.

I tried to avoid being melodramatic to-day. It has been a queer day, an expectant day. They followed me with their eyes all day; if an inspector had arrived I swear that he would have put me down as a good disciplinarian. I never got so much attention from my bairns in my life.

I blew the "Fall in!" for the last time at the three o'clock interval. Janet and Ellen were late. When they arrived they carried a wee parcel each. They came forward to my desk and laid their parcels before me.

"A present from your scholars," said Janet awkwardly. I slowly took off the tissue paper and held up a bonny pipe and a crocodile tobacco-pouch. I didn't feel like speaking, so I took out my old pouch and emptied its contents into the new one; then I filled the new pipe and placed it between my teeth. A wee lassie giggled, but the others looked on in painful silence.

I cleared my throat to speak, but the words refused to come . . . so I lit the pipe.

"That's better," I said with forced cheerfulness, and I puffed away for a little.

"Well, bairns," I began, "I am——" Then Barbara Watson began to weep. I frowned at Barbara; then I blew my nose. Confound Barbara!

"Bairns," I began again, "I am going away now." Janet's eyes began to look dim, and I had to frown at her very hard; then I had to turn my frown on Jean . . . and