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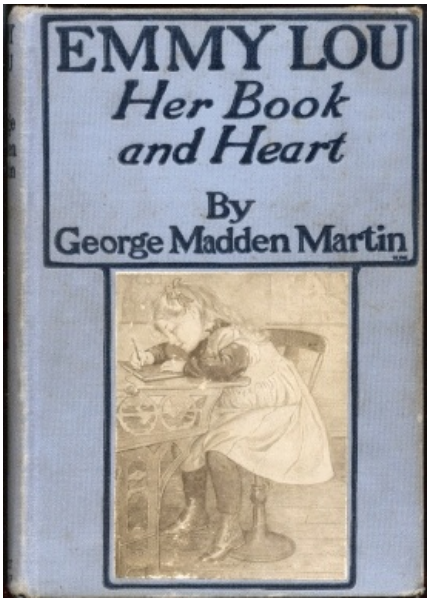


"She took up her verse where William had interrupted."

EMMY LOU

HER BOOK & HEART

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AND ILLUSTRATED BY

CHARLES LOUIS HINTON

"My Book and Heart
Must Never Part."
NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS — NEW YORK

Fifteenth Impression

To My Sister
THE AUNT CORDELIA
of these stories, this
book is
affectionately inscribed

CONTENTS

THE RIGHT PROMETHEAN FIRE

Emmy Lou, laboriously copying digits, looked up. The boy sitting in line in the next row of desks was making signs to her.

She had noticed the little boy before. He was a square little boy, with a sprinkling of freckles over the bridge of the nose and a cheerful breadth of nostril. His teeth were wide apart, and his smile was broad and constant. Not that Emmy Lou could have told all this. She only knew that to her the knowledge of the little boy concerning the things peculiar to the Primer World seemed limitless.

And now the little boy was beckoning Emmy Lou. She did not know him, but neither did she know any of the seventy other little boys and girls making the Primer Class.

Because of a popular prejudice against whooping-cough, Emmy Lou had not entered the Primer Class until late. When she arrived, the seventy little boys and girls were well along in Alphabetical lore, having long since passed the a, b, c of initiation, and become glibly eloquent to a point where the l, m, n, o, p slipped off their tongues with the liquid ease of repetition and familiarity.

"But Emmy Lou can catch up," said Emmy Lou's Aunt Cordelia, a plump and cheery lady, beaming with optimistic placidity upon the infant populace seated in parallel rows at desks before her.

Miss Clara, the teacher, lacked Aunt Cordelia's optimism, also her plumpness. "No doubt she can," agreed Miss Clara, politely, but without enthusiasm. Miss Clara had stepped from the graduating rostrum to the school-room platform, and she had been there some years. And when one has been there some years, and is already battling with seventy little boys and girls, one cannot greet the advent of a seventy-first with acclaim. Even the fact that one's hair is red is not an always sure indication that one's temperament is sanguine also.

So in answer to Aunt Cordelia, Miss Clara replied politely but without enthusiasm, "No doubt she can."

Then Aunt Cordelia went, and Miss Clara gave Emmy Lou a desk. And Miss Clara then rapping sharply, and calling some small delinquent to order, Emmy Lou's heart sank within her.

Now Miss Clara's tones were tart because she did not know what to do with this late comer. In a class of seventy, spare time is not offering for the bringing up of the backward. The way of the Primer teacher was not made easy in a public school of twenty-five years ago.

So Miss Clara told the new pupil to copy digits.

Now what digits were, Emmy Lou had no idea, but being shown them on the blackboard, she

copied them diligently. And as the time went on, Emmy Lou went on copying digits. And her one endeavor being to avoid the notice of Miss Clara, it happened the needs of Emmy Lou were frequently lost sight of in the more assertive claims of the seventy.

Emmy Lou was not catching up, and it was January.

But to-day was to be different. The little boy was nodding and beckoning. So far the seventy had left Emmy Lou alone. As a general thing the herd crowds toward the leaders, and the laggard brings up the rear alone.

But to-day the little boy was beckoning. Emmy Lou looked up. Emmy Lou was pink-cheeked and chubby and in her heart there was no guile. There was an ease and swagger about the little boy. And he always knew when to stand up, and what for. Emmy Lou more than once had failed to stand up, and Miss Clara's reminder had been sharp. It was when a bell rang one must stand up. But what for, Emmy Lou never knew, until after the others began to do it. 7

But the little boy always knew. Emmy Lou had heard him, too, out on the bench, glibly tell Miss Clara about the mat, and a bat, and a black rat. To-day he stood forth with confidence and told about a fat hen. Emmy Lou was glad to have the little boy beckon her.

And in her heart there was no guile. That the little boy should be holding out an end of a severed india-rubber band and inviting her to take it, was no stranger than other things happening in the Primer World every day.

The very manner of the infant classification breathed mystery, the sheep from the goats, so to speak, the little girls all one side the central aisle, the little boys all the other—and to overstep the line of demarcation a thing too dreadful to contemplate.

Many things were strange. That one must get up suddenly when a bell rang, was strange.

And to copy digits until one's chubby fingers, tightly gripping the pencil, ached, and then to be expected to take a sponge and wash those digits off, was strange.

And to be told crossly to sit down was bewildering, when in answer to c, a, t, one said "Pussy." 8
And yet there was Pussy washing her face, on the chart, and Miss Clara's pointer pointing to her.

So when the little boy held out the rubber band across the aisle, Emmy Lou took the proffered end.

At this the little boy slid back into his desk holding to his end. At the critical moment of elongation the little boy let go. And the property of elasticity is to rebound.

Emmy Lou's heart stood still. Then it swelled. But in her filling eyes there was no suspicion, only hurt. And even while a tear splashed down, and falling upon the laboriously copied digits, wrought havoc, she smiled bravely across at the little boy. It would have made the little boy feel bad to know how it hurt. So Emmy Lou winked bravely and smiled.

Whereupon the little boy wheeled about suddenly and fell to copying digits furiously. Nor did he look Emmy Lou's way, only drove his pencil into his slate with a fervor that made Miss Clara rap sharply on her desk.

"Emmy Lou winked bravely and smiled."

Emmy Lou wondered if the little boy was mad. One would think it had stung the little boy and 9
not her. But since he was not looking, she felt free to let her little fist seek her mouth for comfort.

Nor did Emmy Lou dream, that across the aisle, remorse was eating into a little boy's soul. Or 10
that, along with remorse, there went the image of one Emmy Lou, defenceless, pink-cheeked, and smiling bravely.

The next morning Emmy Lou was early. She was always early. Since entering the Primer Class,

breakfast had lost its savor to Emmy Lou in the terror of being late.

But this morning the little boy was there before her. Hitherto his tardy and clattering arrival had been a daily happening, provocative of accents sharp and energetic from Miss Clara.

But this morning he was at his desk copying from his Primer on to his slate. The easy, ostentatious way in which he glanced from slate to book was not lost upon Emmy Lou, who lost her place whenever her eyes left the rows of digits upon the blackboard.

Emmy Lou watched the performance. And the little boy's pencil drove with furious ease and its path was marked with flourishes. Emmy Lou never dreamed that it was because she was watching that the little boy was moved to this brilliant exhibition. Presently reaching the end of his page, he looked up, carelessly, incidentally. It seemed to be borne to him that Emmy Lou was there, whereupon he nodded. Then, as if moved by sudden impulse, he dived into his desk, and after ostentatious search in, on, under it, brought forth a pencil, and held it up for Emmy Lou to see. Nor did she dream that it was for this the little boy had been there since before Uncle Michael had unlocked the Primer door. 11

Emmy Lou looked across at the pencil. It was a slate-pencil. A fine, long, new slate-pencil grandly encased for half its length in gold paper. One bought them at the drug-store across from the school, and one paid for them the whole of five cents.

Just then a bell rang. Emmy Lou got up suddenly. But it was the bell for school to take up. So she sat down. She was glad Miss Clara was not yet in her place.

After the Primer Class had filed in, with panting and frosty entrance, the bell rang again. This time it was the right bell tapped by Miss Clara, now in her place. So again Emmy Lou got up suddenly and by following the little girl ahead learned that the bell meant, "go out to the bench." 12

The Primer Class according to the degree of its infant precocity was divided in three sections. Emmy Lou belonged to the third section. It was the last section and she was the last one in it though she had no idea what a section meant nor why she was in it.

Yesterday the third section had said, over and over, in chorus, "One and one are two, two and two are four," etc.—but to-day they said, "Two and one are three, two and two are four."

Emmy Lou wondered, four what? Which put her behind, so that when she began again they were saying, "two and four are six." So now she knew. Four is six. But what is six? Emmy Lou did not know.

When she came back to her desk the pencil was there. The fine, new, long slate-pencil encased in gold paper. And the little boy was gone. He belonged to the first section, and the first section was now on the bench. Emmy Lou leaned across and put the pencil back on the little boy's desk.

Then she prepared herself to copy digits with her stump of a pencil. Emmy Lou's were always stumps. Her pencil had a way of rolling off her desk while she was gone, and one pencil makes many stumps. The little boy had generally helped her pick them up on her return. But strangely, from this time, her pencils rolled off no more. 13

But when Emmy Lou took up her slate there was a whole side filled with digits in soldierly rows across, so her heart grew light and free from the weight of digits, and she gave her time to the washing of her desk, a thing in which her soul revelled, and for which, patterning after her little girl neighbors, she kept within that desk a bottle of soapy water and rags of a gray and unpleasant nature, that never dried, because of their frequent using. When Emmy Lou first came to school, her cleaning paraphernalia consisted of a sponge secured by a string to her slate, which was the badge of the new and the unsophisticated comer. Emmy Lou had quickly learned that, and no one now rejoiced in a fuller assortment of soap, bottle, and rags than she, nor did a sponge longer dangle from the frame of her slate. 14

On coming in from recess this same day, Emmy Lou found the pencil on her desk again, the beautiful new pencil in the gilded paper. She put it back.

But when she reached home, the pencil, the beautiful pencil that cost all of five cents, was in her companion box along with her stumps and her sponge and her grimy little slate rags. And about the pencil was wrapped a piece of paper. It had the look of the margin of a Primer page. The paper bore marks. They were not digits.

Emmy Lou took the paper to Aunt Cordelia. They were at dinner.

"Can't you read it, Emmy Lou?" asked Aunt Katie, the prettiest aunty.

Emmy Lou shook her head.

"I'll spell the letters," said Aunt Louise, the youngest aunty.

But that did not help Emmy Lou one bit.

Aunt Cordelia looked troubled. "She doesn't seem to be catching up," she said.

"No," said Aunt Katie.

"No," agreed Aunt Louise. 15

"Nor—on," said Uncle Charlie, the brother of the aunties, lighting his cigar to go downtown.

Aunt Cordelia spread the paper out. It bore the words:

"It is for you."

"Emmy Lou shook her head."

So Emmy Lou put the pencil away in the companion, and tucked it about with the grimy slate rags that no harm might befall it. And the next day she took it out and used it. But first she looked over at the little boy. The little boy was busy. But when she looked up again, he was looking. 16

The little boy grew red, and wheeling suddenly, fell to copying digits furiously. And from that moment on the little boy was moved to strange behavior.

Three times before recess did he, boldly ignoring the preface of upraised hand, swagger up to Miss Clara's desk. And going and coming, the little boy's boots with copper toes and run-down heels marked with thumping emphasis upon the echoing boards his processional and recessional. And reaching his desk, the little boy slammed down his slate with clattering reverberations.

Emmy Lou watched him uneasily. She was miserable for him. She did not know that there are times when the emotions are more potent than the subtlest wines. Nor did she know that the male of some species is moved thus to exhibition of prowess, courage, defiance, for the impressing of the chosen female of the species.

Emmy Lou merely knew that she was miserable and that she trembled for the little boy.

Having clattered his slate until Miss Clara rapped sharply, the little boy arose and went swaggering on an excursion around the room to where sat the bucket and dipper. And on his return he came up the centre aisle between the sheep and the goats. 17

Emmy Lou had no idea what happened. It took place behind her. But there was another little girl who did. A little girl who boasted curls, yellow curls in tiered rows about her head. A lachrymosal little girl, who affected great horror of the little boys.

And what Emmy Lou failed to see was this: the little boy, in passing, deftly lift a cherished curl between finger and thumb and proceed on his way.

The little girl did not fail the little boy. In the suddenness of the surprise she surprised even him by her outcry. Miss Clara jumped. Emmy Lou jumped. And the sixty-nine jumped. And, following this, the little girl lifted her voice in lachrymal lament.

Miss Clara sat erect. The Primer Class held its breath. It always held its breath when Miss Clara sat erect. Emmy Lou held tightly to her desk besides. She wondered what it was all about. 18

Then Miss Clara spoke. Her accents cut the silence.

"Billy Traver!"

Billy Traver stood forth. It was the little boy.

"Since you seem pleased to occupy yourself with the little girls, Billy, *go to the pegs*!"

Emmy Lou trembled. "Go to the pegs!" What unknown, inquisitorial terrors lay behind those dread, laconic words, Emmy Lou knew not.

She could only sit and watch the little boy turn and stump back down the aisle and around the room to where along the wall hung rows of feminine apparel.

Here he stopped and scanned the line. Then he paused before a hat. It was a round little hat with silky nap and a curling brim. It had rosettes to keep the ears warm and ribbon that tied beneath the chin. It was Emmy Lou's hat. Aunt Cordelia had cautioned her to care concerning it.

The little boy took it down. There seemed to be no doubt in his mind as to what Miss Clara meant. But then he had been in the Primer Class from the beginning. 19

"Emmy Lou did not laugh. She made room for Billy."

Having taken the hat down he proceeded to put it upon his own shock head. His face wore its broad and constant smile. One would have said the little boy was enjoying the affair. As he put the hat on, the sixty-nine laughed. The seventieth did not. It was her hat, and besides, she did not understand. 20

Miss Clara still erect spoke again: "And now, since you are a little girl, get your book, Billy, and move over with the girls."

Nor did Emmy Lou understand why, when Billy, having gathered his belongings together, moved across the aisle and sat down with her, the sixty-nine laughed again. Emmy Lou did not laugh. She made room for Billy.

Nor did she understand when Billy treated her to a slow and surreptitious wink, his freckled countenance grinning beneath the rosetted hat. It never could have occurred to Emmy Lou that Billy had laid his cunning plans to this very end. Emmy Lou understood nothing of all this. She only pitied Billy. And presently, when public attention had become diverted, she proffered him the hospitality of a grimy little slate rag. When Billy returned the rag there was something in it —something wrapped in a beautiful, glazed, shining bronze paper. It was a candy kiss. One paid five cents for six of them at the drug-store. 21

On the road home, Emmy Lou ate the candy. The beautiful, shiny paper she put in her Primer. The slip of paper that she found within she carried to Aunt Cordelia. It was sticky and it was smeared. But it had reading on it.

"But this is printing," said Aunt Cordelia; "can't you read it?"

Emmy Lou shook her head.

"Try," said Aunt Katie.

"The easy words," said Aunt Louise.

But Emmy Lou, remembering c-a-t, Pussy, shook her head.

Aunt Cordelia looked troubled. "She certainly isn't catching up," said Aunt Cordelia. Then she read from the slip of paper:

"Oh, woman, woman, thou wert made
The peace of Adam to invade."

The aunties laughed, but Emmy Lou put it away with the glazed paper in her Primer. It meant quite as much to her as did the reading in that Primer: Cat, a cat, the cat. The bat, the mat, a rat. It was the jingle to both that appealed to Emmy Lou. 22

About this time rumors began to reach Emmy Lou. She heard that it was February, and that wonderful things were peculiar to the Fourteenth. At recess the little girls locked arms and talked Valentines. The echoes reached Emmy Lou.

The valentines must come from a little boy, or it wasn't the real thing. And to get no valentine was a dreadful—dreadful thing. And even the timidest of the sheep began to cast eyes across at the goats.

Emmy Lou wondered if she would get a valentine. And if not, how was she to survive the contumely and shame?

You must never, never breathe to a living soul what was on your valentine. To tell even your best and truest little girl friend was to prove faithless to the little boy sending the valentine. These things reached Emmy Lou.

Not for the world would she tell. Emmy Lou was sure of that, so grateful did she feel she would be to anyone sending her a valentine. 23

And in doubt and wretchedness did she wend her way to school on the Fourteenth Day of February. The drug-store window was full of valentines. But Emmy Lou crossed the street. She did not want to see them. She knew the little girls would ask her if she had gotten a valentine. And she would have to say, No.

She was early. The big, empty room echoed back her footsteps as she went to her desk to lay down book and slate before taking off her wraps. Nor did Emmy Lou dream the eye of the little boy peeped through the crack of the door from Miss Clara's dressing-room.

Emmy Lou's hat and jacket were forgotten. On her desk lay something square and white. It was an envelope. It was a beautiful envelope, all over flowers and scrolls.

Emmy Lou knew it. It was a valentine. Her cheeks grew pink.

She took it out. It was blue. And it was gold. And it had reading on it.

Emmy Lou's heart sank. She could not read the reading. The door opened. Some little girls came in. Emmy Lou hid her valentine in her book, for since you must not—she would never show her valentine—never. 24

The little girls wanted to know if she had gotten a valentine, and Emmy Lou said, Yes, and her cheeks were pink with the joy of being able to say it.

Through the day, she took peeps between the covers of her Primer, but no one else might see it.

It rested heavy on Emmy Lou's heart, however, that there was reading on it. She studied it surreptitiously. The reading was made up of letters. It was the first time Emmy Lou had thought about that. She knew some of the letters. She would ask someone the letters she did not know by pointing them out on the chart at recess. Emmy Lou was learning. It was the first time since she came to school.

But what did the letters make? She wondered, after recess, studying the valentine again.

Then she went home. She followed Aunt Cordelia about. Aunt Cordelia was busy.

"She sought the house-boy." 25

"What does it read?" asked Emmy Lou. 26

Aunt Cordelia listened.

"B," said Emmy Lou, "and e?"

"Be," said Aunt Cordelia.

If B was Be, it was strange that B and e were Be. But many things were strange.

Emmy Lou accepted them all on faith.

After dinner she approached Aunt Katie.

"What does it read?" asked Emmy Lou, "m and y?"

"My," said Aunt Katie.

The rest was harder. She could not remember the letters, and had to copy them off on her slate. Then she sought Tom, the house-boy. Tom was out at the gate talking to another house-boy. She

waited until the other boy was gone.

“What does it read?” asked Emmy Lou, and she told the letters off the slate. It took Tom some time, but finally he told her.

Just then a little girl came along. She was a first-section little girl, and at school she never noticed Emmy Lou.

Now she was alone, so she stopped.

“Get any valentines?”

“Yes,” said Emmy Lou. Then moved to confidence by the little girl’s friendliness, she added, “It has reading on it.” 27

“Pooh,” said the little girl, “they all have that. My mamma’s been reading the long verses inside to me.”

“Can you show them—valentines?” asked Emmy Lou.

“Of course, to grown-up people,” said the little girl.

The gas was lit when Emmy Lou came in. Uncle Charlie was there, and the aunties, sitting around, reading.

“I got a valentine,” said Emmy Lou.

They all looked up. They had forgotten it was Valentine’s Day, and it came to them that if Emmy Lou’s mother had not gone away, never to come back, the year before, Valentine’s Day would not have been forgotten. Aunt Cordelia smoothed the black dress she was wearing because of the mother who would never come back, and looked troubled.

But Emmy Lou laid the blue and gold valentine on Aunt Cordelia’s knee. In the valentine’s centre were two hands clasping. Emmy Lou’s forefinger pointed to the words beneath the clasped hands. 28

“I can read it,” said Emmy Lou.

They listened. Uncle Charlie put down his paper. Aunt Louise looked over Aunt Cordelia’s shoulder.

“B,” said Emmy Lou, “e—Be.”

The aunties nodded.

“M,” said Emmy Lou, “y—my.”

Emmy Lou did not hesitate. “V,” said Emmy Lou, “a, l, e, n, t, i, n, e—Valentine. Be my Valentine.”

“There!” said Aunt Cordelia.

“Well!” said Aunt Katie.

“At last!” said Aunt Louise.

“H’m!” said Uncle Charlie.

A LITTLE FEMININE CASABIANCA

29

The close of the first week of Emmy Lou’s second year at a certain large public school found her round, chubby self, like a pink-cheeked period, ending the long line of intermingled little boys and girls making what was known, twenty-five years ago, as the First-Reader Class. Emmy Lou had spent her first year in the Primer Class, where the teacher, Miss Clara by name, had concealed the kindliest of hearts behind a brusque and energetic manner, and had possessed, 31 32

along with her red hair and a temper tinged with that color also, a sharp voice that, by its unexpected snap in attacking some small sinner, had caused Emmy Lou's little heart to jump many times a day. Here Emmy Lou had spent the year in strenuously guiding a squeaking pencil across a protesting slate, or singing in chorus, as Miss Clara's long wooden pointer went up and down the rows of words on the spelling-chart: "A-t, at; b-a-t, bat; c-a-t, cat," or "a-n, an; b-a-n, ban; c-a-n, can." Emmy Lou herself had so little idea of what it was all about, that she was dependent on her neighbor to give her the key to the proper starting-point heading the various columns—"a-t, at," or "a-n, an," or "e-t, et," or "o-n, on;" after that it was easy sailing. But one awful day, while the class stopped suddenly at Miss Clara's warning finger as visitors opened the door, Emmy Lou, her eyes squeezed tight shut, her little body rocking to and fro to the rhythm, went right on, "m-a-n, man," "p-a-n, pan"—until at the sound of her own sing-song little voice rising with appalling fervor upon the silence, she stopped to find that the page in the meantime had been turned, and that the pointer was directed to a column beginning "o-y, oy."

"Guiding a squeaking pencil across a protesting slate." 33

Among other things incident to that first year, too, had been Recess. At that time everybody was 34
turned out into a brick-paved yard, the boys on one side of a high fence, the girls on the other. And here, waiting without the wooden shed where stood a row of buckets each holding a shiny tin dipper, Emmy Lou would stop on the sloppy outskirts for the thirst of the larger girls to be assuaged, that the little girls' opportunity might come—together with the dregs in the buckets. And at Recess, too, along with the danger of being run into by the larger girls at play and having the breath knocked out of one's little body, which made it necessary to seek sequestered corners and peep out thence, there was The Man to be watched for and avoided—the low, square, black-browed, black-bearded Man who brandished a broom at the little girls who dropped their apple-cores and crusts on the pavements, and who shook his fist at the jeering little boys who dared to swarm to the forbidden top and sit straddling the dividing fence. That 35
Uncle Michael, the janitor, was getting old and had rheumatic twinges was indeed Uncle Michael's excuse, but Emmy Lou did not know this, and her fear of Uncle Michael was great accordingly.

But somehow the Primer year wore away; and one day, toward its close, in the presence of Miss Clara, two solemn-looking gentlemen requested certain little boys to cipher and several little girls to spell, and sent others to the blackboard or the chart, while to Emmy Lou was handed a Primer, open at Page 17, which she was told to read. Knowing Page 17 by heart, and identifying it by its picture, Emmy Lou arose, and her small voice droned forth in sing-song fashion:

How old are you, Sue?
I am as old as my cat.
And how old is your cat?
My cat is as old as my dog.
And how old is your dog?
My dog is as old as I am.

Having so delivered herself, Emmy Lou sat down, not at all disconcerted to find that she had 36
been holding her Primer upside down.

Following this, Emmy Lou was told that she had "passed;" and seeing from the jubilance of the other children that it was a matter to be joyful over, Emmy Lou went home and told the elders of her family that she had passed. And these elders, three aunties and an uncle, an uncle who was disposed to look at Emmy Lou's chubby self and her concerns in jocular fashion, laughed: and Emmy Lou went on wondering what it was all about, which never would have been the case

had there been a mother among the elders, for mothers have a way of understanding these things. But to Emmy Lou “mother” had come to mean but a memory which faded as it came, a vague consciousness of encircling arms, of a brooding, tender face, of yearning eyes; and it was only because they told her that Emmy Lou remembered how mother had gone away South, one winter, to get well. That they afterward told her it was Heaven, in no wise confused Emmy Lou, because, for aught she knew, South and Heaven and much else might be included in these points of the compass. Ever since then Emmy Lou had lived with the three aunties and the uncle; and papa had been coming a hundred miles once a month to see her.

When Emmy Lou went back to school for the second year, she was told that she was now in the First Reader. If her heart had jumped at the sharp accents of Miss Clara, it now grew still within her at the slow, awful enunciation of the Large Lady in black bombazine who reigned over the department of the First Reader, pointing her morals with a heavy forefinger, before which Emmy Lou’s eyes lowered with every aspect of conscious guilt. Nor did Emmy Lou dream that the Large Lady, whose black bombazine was the visible sign of a loss by death that had made it necessary for her to enter the school-room to earn a living, was finding the duties incident to the First Reader almost as strange and perplexing as Emmy Lou herself.

Emmy Lou from the first day found herself descending steadily to the foot of the class; and there she remained until the awful day, at the close of the first week, when the Large Lady, realizing perhaps that she could no longer ignore such adherence to that lowly position, made discovery that while to Emmy Lou “d-o-g” might *spell* “dog” and “f-r-o-g” might *spell* “frog,” Emmy Lou could not find either on a printed page, and, further, could not tell wherein they differed when found for her, that, also, Emmy Lou made her figure 8’s by adding one uncertain little o to the top of another uncertain little o; and that while Emmy Lou might copy, in smeary columns, certain cabalistic signs off the blackboard, she could not point them off in tens, hundreds, thousands, or read their numerical values, to save her little life. The Large Lady, sorely perplexed within herself as to the proper course to be pursued, in the sight of the fifty-nine other First-Readers pointed a condemning forefinger at the miserable little object standing in front of her platform: and said, “You will stay after school, Emma Louise, that I may examine further into your qualifications for this grade.”

“Sounds grew fewer, fainter, farther away ...
a door slammed somewhere—then—silence.”

Now Emmy Lou had no idea what it meant—“examine further into your qualifications for this grade.” It might be the form of punishment in vogue for the chastisement of the members of the First Reader. But “stay after school” she did understand, and her heart sank, and her little breast heaved.

It was then past the noon recess. In those days, in this particular city, school closed at half-past one. At last the bell for dismissal had rung. The Large Lady, arms folded across her bombazine bosom, had faced the class, and with awesome solemnity had already enunciated, “Attention,” and sixty little people had sat up straight, when the door opened, and a teacher from the floor above came in.

At her whispered confidence, the Large Lady left the room hastily, while the strange teacher with a hurried “one—two—three, march out quietly, children,” turned, and followed her. And Emmy Lou, left sitting at her desk, saw through gathering tears the line of First-Readers wind around the room and file out the door, the sound of their departing footsteps along the bare corridors and down the echoing stairway coming back like a knell to her sinking heart. Then class after class from above marched past the door and on its clattering way, while voices from outside, shrill with the joy of the release, came up through the open windows in talk, in laughter, together with the patter of feet on the bricks. Then as these familiar sounds grew fewer, fainter, farther away, some belated footsteps went echoing through the building, a door slammed somewhere—then—silence.

Emmy Lou waited. She wondered how long it would be. There was watermelon at home for

dinner; she had seen it borne in, a great, striped promise of ripe and juicy lusciousness, on the marketman's shoulder before she came to school. And here a tear, long gathering, splashed down the pink cheek.

Still that awesome personage presiding over the fortunes of the First-Readers failed to return. Perhaps this was "the examination into—into—" Emmy Lou could not remember what—to be left in this big, bare room with the flies droning and humming in lazy circles up near the ceiling. The forsaken desks, with a forgotten book or slate left here and there upon them, the pegs around the wall empty of hats and bonnets, the unoccupied chair upon the platform—Emmy Lou gazed at these with a sinking sensation of desolation, while tear followed tear down her chubby face. 42
And listening to the flies and the silence, Emmy Lou began to long for even the Bombazine Presence, and dropping her quivering countenance upon her arms folded upon the desk she sobbed aloud. But the time was long, and the day was warm, and the sobs grew slower, and the breath began to come in long-drawn, quivering sighs, and the next Emmy Lou knew she was sitting upright, trembling in every limb, and someone coming up the stairs—she could hear the slow, heavy footfalls, and a moment after she saw The Man—the Recess Man, the low, black-bearded, black-browed, scowling Man—with the broom across his shoulder, reach the hallway, and make toward the open doorway of the First-Reader room. Emmy Lou held her breath, stiffened her little body, and—waited. But The Man pausing to light his pipe, Emmy Lou, in the sudden respite thus afforded, slid in a trembling heap beneath the desk, and on hands and knees went crawling across the floor. And as Uncle Michael came in, a moment after, broom, pan, and feather-duster in hand, the last fluttering edge of a little pink dress was disappearing 43
into the depths of the big, empty coal-box, and its sloping lid was lowering upon a flaxen head and cowering little figure crouched within. Uncle Michael having put the room to rights, sweeping and dusting, with many a rheumatic groan in accompaniment, closed the windows, and going out, drew the door after him and, as was his custom, locked it.

Meanwhile, at Emmy Lou's home the elders wondered. "You don't know Emmy Lou," Aunt Cordelia, round, plump, and cheery, insisted to the lady visitor spending the day; "Emmy Lou never loiters."

Aunt Katie, the prettiest auntie, cut off a thick round of melon as they arose from the table, and put it in the refrigerator for Emmy Lou. "It seems a joke," she remarked, "such a baby as Emmy Lou going to school anyhow; but then she has only a square to go and come."

But Emmy Lou did not come. And by half-past two Aunt Louise, the youngest auntie, started out 44
to find her. But as she stopped on the way at the houses of all the neighbors to inquire, and ran around the corner to Cousin Tom Macklin's to see if Emmy Lou could be there, and then, being but a few doors off, went on around that corner to Cousin Amanda's, the school-house, when she finally reached it, was locked up, with the blinds down at every front window as if it had closed its eyes and gone to sleep. Uncle Michael had a way of cleaning and locking the front of the building first, and going in and out at the back doors. But Aunt Louise did not know this, and, anyhow, she was sure that she would find Emmy Lou at home when she got there.

But Emmy Lou was not at home, and it being now well on in the afternoon, Aunt Katie and Aunt Louise and the lady visitor and the cook all started out in search, while Aunt Cordelia sent the house-boy downtown for Uncle Charlie. Just as Uncle Charlie arrived—and it was past five o'clock by then—some of the children of the neighborhood, having found a small boy living some squares off who confessed to being in the First Reader with Emmy Lou, arrived also, with the 45
small boy in tow.

"She didn't know 'dog' from 'frog' when she saw 'em," stated the small boy, with the derision of superior ability, "an' teacher, she told her to stay after school. She was settin' there in her desk when school let out, Emmy Lou was."

But a big girl of the neighborhood objected. "Her teacher went home the minute school was out," she declared. "Isn't the new lady, Mrs. Samuels, your teacher?" this to the small boy. "Well, her daughter, Lettie, she's in my room, and she was sick, and her mother came up to our room and took her home. Our teacher, she went down and dismissed the First-Readers."

"I don't care if she did," retorted the small boy. "I reckon I saw Emmy Lou settin' there when we come away."

Aunt Cordelia, pale and tearful, clutched Uncle Charlie's arm. "Then she's there, Brother Charlie, locked up in that dreadful place—my precious baby——"

"Pshaw!" said Uncle Charlie.

But Aunt Cordelia was wringing her hands. "You don't know Emmy Lou, Charlie. If she was told 46
to stay, she has stayed. She's locked up in that dreadful place. What shall we do, my baby, my precious baby——"

Aunt Katie was in tears, Aunt Louise in tears, the cook in loud lamentation, Aunt Cordelia fast verging upon hysteria.

The small boy from the First Reader, legs apart, hands in knickerbocker pockets, gazed at the crowd of irresolute elders with scornful wonder. "What you wanter do," stated the small boy, "is find Uncle Michael; he keeps the keys. He went past my house a while ago, going home. He lives in Rose Lane Alley. 'Taint much outer my way," condescendingly; "I'll take you there." And meekly they followed in his footsteps.

It was dark when a motley throng of uncle, aunties, visiting lady, neighbors, and children went climbing the cavernous, echoing stairway of the dark school building behind the toiling figure of the skeptical Uncle Michael, lantern in hand.

"Ain't I swept over every inch of this here school-house myself and carried the trash outten a dust-pan?" grumbled Uncle Michael, with what inference nobody just then stopped to inquire. Then with the air of a mistreated, aggrieved person who feels himself a victim, he paused before a certain door on the second floor, and fitted a key in its lock. "Here it is then, No. 9, to satisfy the lady," and he flung open the door. The light of Uncle Michael's lantern fell full upon the wide-eyed, terror-smitten person of Emmy Lou, in her desk, awaiting, her miserable little heart knew not what horror.

"She—she told me to stay," sobbed Emmy Lou in Aunt Cordelia's arms, "and I stayed; and the Man came, and I hid in the coal-box!"

And Aunt Cordelia, holding her close, sobbed too, and Aunt Katie cried, and Aunt Louise and the lady visitor cried, and Uncle Charlie passed his plump white hand over his eyes, and said, "Pshaw!" And the teacher of the First Reader, when she heard about it next day, cried hardest of them all, so hard that not even Aunt Cordelia could cherish a feeling against her.

HARE-AND-TORTOISE OR THE BLISS OF IGNORANCE

There was head and foot in the Second Reader. Emmy Lou heard it whispered the day of her entrance into the Second-Reader room.

Once, head and foot had meant Aunt Cordelia above the coffee tray and Uncle Charlie below the carving-knife. But at school head and foot meant little girls bobbing up and down, descending and ascending the scale of excellency.

There were no little boys. At the Second Reader the currents of the sexes divided, and little boys were swept out of sight. One mentioned little boys now in undertones.

But head and foot meant something beside little girls bobbing out of their places on the bench to take a neighbor's place. Head and foot meant tears—that is, when the bobbing was downward and not up. However, if one bobbed down to-day there was the chance of bobbing up to-morrow—that is, with all but Emmy Lou and a little girl answering to the call of "Kitty McKoeghany."

Step by step Kitty went up, and having reached the top, Kitty stayed there.

And step by step, Emmy Lou, from her original, alphabetically determined position beside Kitty, went down, and then, only because further descent was impossible, Emmy Lou stayed there. But since the foot was nearest the platform Emmy Lou took that comfort out of the situation, for the Teacher sat on the platform, and Emmy Lou loved the Teacher.

"Emmy Lou."

The Second-Reader Teacher was the lady, the nice lady, the pretty lady with white hair, who patted little girls on the cheek as she passed them in the hall. On the first day of school, the name of "Emily Louise MacLauren" had been called. Emmy Lou stood up. She looked at the Teacher. She wondered if the Teacher remembered. Emmy Lou was chubby and round and much in earnest. And the lady, the pretty lady, looking down at her, smiled. Then Emmy Lou knew that the lady had not forgotten. And Emmy Lou sat down. And she loved the Teacher and she loved the Second Reader. Emmy Lou had not heard the Teacher's name. But could her grateful little heart have resolved its feelings into words, "Dear Teacher" must ever after have been the lady's name. And so, as if impelled by her own chubby weight and some head-and-foot force of gravity, though Emmy Lou descended steadily to the foot of the Second-Reader class, there were compensations. The foot was in the shadow of the platform and within the range of Dear Teacher's smile.

Besides, there was Hattie.

Emmy Lou sat with Hattie. They sat at a front desk. Hattie had plaits; small affairs, perhaps, but tied with ribbons behind each ear. And the part bisecting Hattie's little head from nape to crown was exact and true. Emmy Lou admired plaits. And she admired the little pink sprigs on Hattie's dress.

After Hattie and Emmy Lou had sat together a whole day, Hattie took Emmy Lou aside as they were going home, and whispered to her.

"Who's your mos' nintimate friend?" was what Emmy Lou understood her to whisper.

Emmy Lou had no idea what a nintimate friend might be. She did not know what to do.

"Haven't you got one?" demanded Hattie.

Emmy Lou shook her head.

Hattie put her lips close to Emmy Lou's ear.

“Let’s us be nintimate friends,” said Hattie.

Though small in knowledge, Emmy Lou was large in faith. She confessed herself as glad to be a nintimate friend.

When Emmy Lou found that to be a nintimate friend meant to walk about the yard with Hattie’s arm about her, she was glad indeed to be one. Hitherto, at recess, Emmy Lou had known the bitterness of the outcast and the pariah, and had stood around, principally in corners, to avoid being swept off her little feet by the big girls at play, and had gazed upon a paired-off and sufficient-unto-itself world. 55

“Kitty McKoeghany.”

“‘Let's us be nintimate friends.'”

Hattie seemed to know everything. In all the glory of its newness Emmy Lou brought her Second Reader to school. Hattie was scandalised. She showed her reader soberly encased in a calico cover. 56

Emmy Lou grew hot. She hid her Reader hastily. Somehow she felt that she had been immodest. The next day Emmy Lou’s Reader came to school discreetly swathed in calico.

Hardly had the Second Reader begun, when one Friday the music man came. And after that he came every Friday and stayed an hour.

“Hattie.”

He was a tall, thin man, and he had a point of beard on his chin that made him look taller. He wore a blue cape, which he tossed on a chair. And he carried a violin. His name was Mr. Cato. He drew five lines on the blackboard, and made eight dots that looked as though they were going upstairs on the lines. Then he rapped on his violin with his bow, and the class sat up straight. 57

“This,” said Mr. Cato, “is A,” and he pointed to a dot. Then he looked at Emmy Lou. Unfortunately Emmy Lou sat at a front desk.

“Now, what is it?” said Mr. Cato.

“A,” said Emmy Lou, obediently. She wondered. But she had met A in so many guises of print and script that she accepted any statement concerning A. And now a dot was A.

“And this,” said Mr. Cato, “is B, and this is C, and this D, and E, F, G, which brings us naturally to A again,” and Mr. Cato with his bow went up the stairway punctuated with dots.

Emmy Lou wondered why G brought one naturally to A again.

But Mr. Cato was tapping up the dotted stairway with his bow. “Now what are they?” asked Mr. Cato.

“Dots,” said Emmy Lou, forgetting.

Mr. Cato got red in the face and rapped angrily.

“A,” said Emmy Lou, hastily, “B, C, D, E, F, G, H,” and was going hurriedly on when Hattie, with a surreptitious jerk, stopped her. 58

“That is better,” said Mr. Cato, “A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A—exactly—but we are not going to call them A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A—” Mr. Cato paused impressively, his bow poised, and looked at Emmy Lou—“we are going to call them”—and Mr. Cato touched a dot—“do”—his bow went up the punctuated stairway—“re, mi, fa, sol, la, si. Now what is this?” The bow pointed itself to Emmy Lou, then described a curve, bringing it again to a dot.

“A,” said Emmy Lou. The bow rapped angrily on the board, and Mr. Cato glared.

“Do,” said Mr. Cato, “do—always do—not A, nor B, nor C, never A, nor B, nor C again—do, do,” the bow rapping angrily the while.

“Dough,” said Emmy Lou, swallowing miserably.

Mr. Cato was mollified. “Forget now it was ever A; A is do here. Always in the future remember

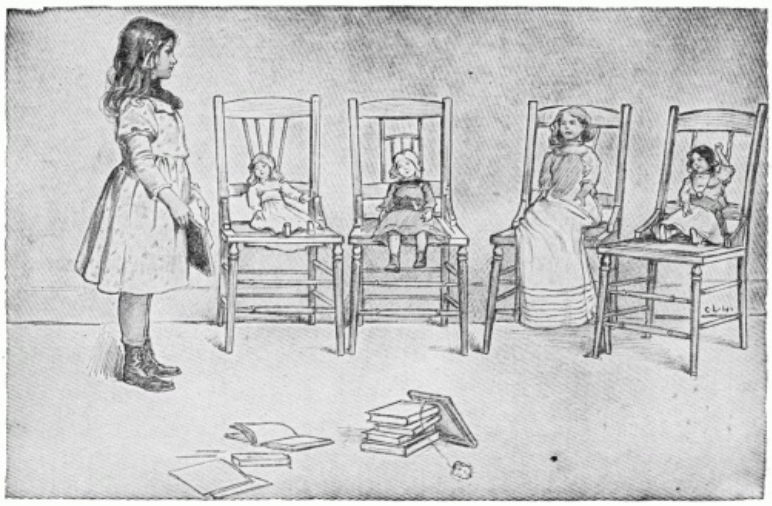
the first letter in the scale is do. Whenever you meet it placed like this, A is do, A is do.”

“Dear Teacher, smiling at Emmy Lou just arriving with her school-bag, went in, too.”

Emmy Lou resolved she would never forget. A is dough. How or why or wherefore did not matter. The point was, A is dough. But Emmy Lou was glad when the music man went. And then came spelling, when there was always much bobbing up and down and changing of places and tears. This time the rest might forget, but Emmy Lou would not. It came her turn.

She stood up. Her word was Adam. And A was dough. Emmy Lou went slowly to get it right. “Dough-d-dough-m, Adam,” said Emmy Lou.

They laughed. But Dear Teacher did not laugh. The recess-bell rang. And Dear Teacher, holding Emmy Lou’s hand, sent them all out. Everyone must go. Desks and slates to be scrubbed, mattered not. Everyone must go. Then Dear Teacher lifted Emmy Lou to her lap. And when she was sure they were every one gone, Emmy Lou cried. And after a while Dear Teacher explained about A and do, so that Emmy Lou understood. And then Dear Teacher said, “You may come in.” And the crack of the door widened, and in came Hattie. Emmy Lou was glad she was a nintimate friend. Hattie had not laughed.



“It was Emmy Lou's joy to gather her doll children in line, and giving out past lessons, recite them ... for her children.”

But that day the carriage which took Dear Teacher to and from her home outside of town—the carriage with the white, woolly dog on the seat by the little coloured-boy driver and the spotted dog running behind—stopped at Emmy Lou’s gate. And Dear Teacher, smiling at Emmy Lou just arriving with her school-bag, went in, too, and rang the bell.

Then Dear Teacher and Aunt Cordelia and Aunt Katie and Aunt Louise sat in the parlour and talked.

And when Dear Teacher left, all the aunties went out to the gate with her, and Uncle Charlie, just leaving, put her in the carriage, and stood with his hat lifted until she was quite gone.

“At her age——” said Aunt Cordelia.

“To have to teach——,” said Aunt Katie.

“How beautiful she must have been——” said Aunt Louise.

“Is——” said Uncle Charlie.

“But she has the little grandchild,” said Aunt Cordelia; “she is keeping the home for him. She is happy.” And Aunt Cordelia took Emmy Lou’s hand. 63

That very afternoon Aunt Louise began to help Emmy Lou with her lessons, and Aunt Cordelia went around and asked Hattie’s mother to let Hattie come and get her lessons with Emmy Lou.

And at school Dear Teacher, walking up and down the aisles, would stop, and her fingers would close over and guide the labouring digits of Emmy Lou, striving to copy within certain ruled lines upon her slate the writing on the blackboard:

The pen is the tongue of the mind.

Emmy Lou began to learn. As weeks went by, now and then Emmy Lou bobbed up a place, although, sooner or later, she slipped back. She was not always at the foot.

But no one, not even Dear Teacher, who understood so much, realised one thing. The day after a lesson, Emmy Lou knew it. On the day it was recited, Emmy Lou had lacked sufficient time to grasp it.

With ten words in the spelling lesson, Emmy Lou listened, letter by letter, to those ten droned out five times down the line, then twice again around the class of fifty. Then Emmy Lou, having already laboured faithfully over it, knew her spelling lesson. 64

And at home, it was Emmy Lou’s joy to gather her doll children in line, and giving out past lessons, recite them in turn for her children. And so did Emmy Lou know by heart her Second Reader as far as she had gone; she often gave the lesson with her book upside down. And an old and battered doll, dearest to Emmy Lou’s heart, was always head, and Hattie, the newest doll, was next. Even the Emmy Lous must square with Fate somehow.

Along in the year a new feature was introduced in the Second Reader. The Second Reader was to have a Medal. Dear Teacher did not seem enthusiastic. She seemed to dread tears. But it was decreed that the school was to use medals.

At recess Emmy Lou asked Hattie what a medal was. The big Fourth and Fifth Reader girls were playing games from which the little girls were excluded, for the school was large and the yard was small. At one time it had seemed to Emmy Lou that the odium, the obloquy, the reproach of being a little girl was more than she could bear, but she would not change places with anyone, now she was a nintimate friend. 65

Emmy Lou asked Hattie what it was—this medal.

Hattie explained. Hattie knew everything. A medal was—well—a medal. It hung on a blue ribbon. Each little girl brought her own blue ribbon. You wore it for a week—this medal.

That afternoon Emmy Lou went round the corner to Mrs. Heinz’s little fancy store. Her chin just came to Mrs. Heinz’s counter. But she knew what she wanted—a yard of blue ribbon.

She showed it to Hattie the next day, folded in its paper, and slipped for safety beneath the long criss-cross stitches which held the calico cover of her Second Reader.

Then Hattie explained. One had to stay head a whole week to get the medal.

Emmy Lou’s heart was heavy—the more that she had now seen the medal. It was a silver medal that said “Merit.” It was around Kitty McKoeghany’s neck. 66

And Kitty tossed her head. And when, at recess, she ran, the medal swung to and fro on its ribbon. And the big girls all stopped Kitty to look at the medal.

There was a condition attached to the gaining of the medal. Upon receiving it one had to go foot. But that mattered little to Kitty McKoeghany. Kitty climbed right up again.

And Emmy Lou peeped surreptitiously at the blue ribbon in her Second Reader. And at home she placed her dolls in line and spelt the back lessons faithfully, with comfort in her knowledge of them. And the old battered doll, dear to her heart, wore oftenest a medal of shining tinfoil. For even Hattie, in one of Kitty’s off weeks, had won the medal.

It was late in the year when a rumour ran around the Second Reader room. The trustees were coming that day to visit the school.

"Emmy Lou spelled steadily."

Emmy Lou wondered what trustees were. She asked Hattie. Hattie explained. "They are men, in black clothes. You daren't move in your seat. They're something like ministers." Hattie knew everything.

"Will they come here, in our room?" asked Emmy Lou. It was terrible to be at the front desk. Emmy Lou remembered the music man. He still pointed his bow at her on Fridays.

"Of course," said Hattie; "comp'ny always comes to our room."

Which was true, for Dear Teacher's room was different. Dear Teacher's room seemed always ready, and the Principal brought company to it accordingly.

It was after recess they came—the Principal, the Trustee (there was just one Trustee), and a visiting gentleman.

There was a hush as they filed in. Hattie was right. It was like ministers. The Principal was in black, with a white tie. He always was. And the Trustee was in black. He rubbed his hands and bowed to the Second Reader Class, sitting very straight and awed. And the visiting gentleman was in black, with a shiny black hat.

The Trustee was a big man, and his face was red, and when urged by the Principal to address the Second Reader Class, his face grew redder.

The Trustee waved his hand toward the visiting gentleman. "Mr. Hammel, children, the Hon. Samuel S. Hammel, a citizen with whose name you are all, I am sure, familiar." And then the Trustee, mopping his face, got behind the visiting gentleman and the Principal.

The visiting gentleman stood forth. He was a short, little man—a little, round man, whose feet were so far back beneath a preponderating circumference of waist line, that he looked like nothing so much as one of Uncle Charlie's pouter pigeons.

He was a smiling-and-bowing little man, and he held out his fat hand playfully, and in it a shining white box.

Dear Teacher seemed taller and very far off. She looked as she did the day she told the class they were to have a medal. Emmy Lou watched Dear Teacher anxiously. Something told her Dear Teacher was troubled.

The visiting gentleman began to speak. He called the Second Reader Class "dear children," and "mothers of a coming generation," and "moulders of the future welfare."

The Second Reader Class sat very still. There seemed to be something paralysing to their infant faculties, mental and physical, in learning they were "mothers" and "moulders." But Emmy Lou breathed freer to have it applied impartially and not to the front seat.

Their "country, the pillars of state, everything," it seemed, depended on the way in which these mothers learned their Second Readers. "As mothers and moulders, they must learn now in youth to read, to number, to spell—exactly—to spell!" And the visiting gentleman nodded meaningly, tapped the white box and looked smilingly about. The mothers moved uneasily. The smile they avoided. But they wondered what was in the box.

The visiting gentleman lifted the lid, and displayed a glittering, shining something on a bed of pink cotton.

Then, as if struck by a happy thought, he turned to the blackboard. He looked about for chalk. The Principal supplied him. Fashioned by his fat, white hand, these words sprawled themselves upon the blackboard:

The best speller in this room is to recieve this
medal.

There was silence. Then the Second Reader class moved. It breathed a long breath.

A whisper went around the room while Dear Teacher and the gentleman were conferring. Rumour said Kitty McKoeghany started it. Certainly Kitty, in her desk across the aisle from Hattie, in the sight of all, tossed her black head knowingly.

The whisper concerned the visiting gentleman. “He is running for Trustee,” said the whisper.

Emmy Lou wondered. Hattie seemed to understand. “He puts his name up on tree-boxes and fences,” she whispered to Emmy Lou, “and that’s running for Trustee.”

The rumour was succeeded by another.

“He’s running against the Trustee that’s not here to-day.”

No wonder Kitty McKoeghany was head. The extent of Kitty’s knowledge was boundless. 72

The third confidence was freighted with strange import. It came straight from Kitty to Hattie, who told it to Emmy Lou.

“When he’s Trustee, he means the School Board shall take his pork house for the new school.”

Even Emmy Lou knew the pork house which had built itself unpleasantly near the neighbourhood.

Just then the Second Reader class was summoned to the bench. As the line took its place a hush fell. Emmy Lou, at its foot, looked up its length and wondered how it would seem to be Kitty McKoeghany at the head.

The three gentlemen were looking at Kitty, too. Kitty tossed her head. Kitty was used to being looked at because of being head.

The low words of the gentleman reached the foot of the line. “The head one, that’s McKoeghany’s little girl.” It was the Trustee telling the visiting gentleman. Emmy Lou did not wonder that Kitty was being pointed out. Kitty was head. But Emmy Lou did not know that it 73 was because Kitty was Mr. Michael McKoeghany’s little girl that she was being pointed out as well as because she was head, for Mr. Michael McKoeghany was the political boss of a district known as Limerick, and by the vote of Limerick a man running for office could stand or fall.

Now there were many things unknown to Emmy Lou, about which Kitty, being the little girl of Mr. Michael McKoeghany, could have enlightened her.

Kitty could have told her that the yard of the absent Trustee ran back to the pork house. Also that the Trustee present was part owner of that offending building. And further that Emmy Lou’s Uncle Charlie, leading an irate neighbourhood to battle, had compelled the withdrawal of the obnoxious business.

But to Emmy Lou only one thing was clear. Kitty was being pointed out by the Principal and the Trustee to the visiting gentleman because she was head.

Dear Teacher took the book. She stood on the platform apart from the gentlemen, and gave out 74 the words distinctly but very quietly.

Emmy Lou felt that Dear Teacher was troubled. Emmy Lou thought it was because Dear Teacher was afraid the poor spellers were going to miss. She made up her mind that she would not miss.

Dear Teacher began with the words on the first page and went forward. Emmy Lou could tell the next word to come each time, for she knew her Second Reader by heart as far as the class had gone.

She stood up when her time came and spelled her word. Her word was “wrong.” She spelled it right.

Dear Teacher looked pleased. There was a time when Emmy Lou had been given to leaving off the introductory “w” as superfluous.

On the next round a little girl above Emmy Lou missed on “enough.” To her phonetic understanding, a *u* and two *f*’s were equivalent to an *ough*.

Emmy Lou spelled it right and went up one. The little girl went to her seat. She was no longer in the race. She was in tears.

Presently a little girl far up the line arose to spell. 75

“Right, to do right,” said Dear Teacher.

“W-r-i-t-e, right,” said the little girl promptly.

“R-i-t-e, right,” said the next little girl.

The third stood up with triumph preassured. In spelling, the complicated is the surest, reasoned this little girl.

“W-r-i-g-h-t, right,” spelled the certain little girl; then burst into tears.

The mothers of the future grew demoralised. The pillars of state of English orthography at least seemed destined to totter. The spelling grew wild.

“R-i-t, right.”

“W-r-i-t, right.”

Then in the desperation of sheer hopelessness came “w-r-i-t-e, right,” again.

There were tears all along the line. At their wits’ end, the mothers, dissolving as they rose in turn, shook their heads hopelessly.

Emmy Lou stood up. She knew just where the word was in a column of three on page 14. She

could see it. She looked up at Dear Teacher, quiet and pale, on the platform.

“R,” said Emmy Lou, steadily, “i-g-h-t, right.”

A long line of weeping mothers went to their seats, and Emmy Lou moved up past the middle of the bench.

The words were now more complicated. The nerves of the mothers had been shaken by this last strain. Little girls dropped out rapidly. The foot moved on up toward the head, until there came a pink spot on Dear Teacher’s either cheek. For some reason Dear Teacher’s head began to hold itself finely erect again.

“Beaux,” said Dear Teacher.

The little girl next the head stood up. She missed. She burst into audible weeping. Nerves were giving out along the line. It went wildly down. Emmy Lou was the last. Emmy Lou stood up. It was the first word of a column on page 22. Emmy Lou could see it. She looked at Dear Teacher.

“B,” said Emmy Lou, “e-a-u-x, beaux.”

The intervening mothers had gone to their seats, and Kitty and Emmy Lou were left.

Kitty spelled triumphantly. Emmy Lou spelled steadily. Even Dear Teacher’s voice showed a touch of the strain.

She gave out half a dozen words. Then “receive,” said Dear Teacher.

It was Kitty’s turn. Kitty stood up. Dear Teacher’s back was to the blackboard. The Trustee and the visiting gentleman were also facing the class. Kitty’s eyes, as she stood up, were on the board.

“The best speller in this room is to recieve this medal,”

was the assurance on the board.

Kitty tossed her little head. “R-e, re, c-i-e-v-e, ceive, receive,” spelled Kitty, her eyes on the blackboard.

“Wrong.”

Emmy Lou stood up. It was the second word in a column on a picture page. Emmy Lou could see it. She looked at Dear Teacher.

“R-e, re, c-e-i-v-e, ceive, receive,” said Emmy Lou.

One person beside Kitty had noted the blackboard. Already the Principal was passing an eraser across the words of the visiting gentleman.

Dear Teacher’s cheeks were pink as Emmy Lou’s as she led Emmy Lou to receive the medal. And her head was finely erect. She held Emmy Lou’s hand through it all.

The visiting gentleman’s manner was a little stony. It had quite lost its playfulness. He looked almost gloomily on the mother who had upheld the pillars of state and the future generally.

It was a beautiful medal. It was a five-pointed star. It said “Reward of Merit.”

The visiting gentleman lifted it from its bed of pink cotton.

“You must get a ribbon for it,” said Dear Teacher.

Emmy Lou slipped her hand from Dear Teacher’s. She went to the front desk. She got her Second Reader, and brought forth a folded packet from behind the criss-cross stitches holding the cover.

Then she came back. She put the paper in Dear Teacher’s hand.

“There’s a ribbon,” said Emmy Lou.

They were at dinner when Emmy Lou got home. On a blue ribbon around her neck dangled a new medal. In her hand she carried a shiny box.

Even Uncle Charlie felt there must be some mistake.

Aunt Louise got her hat to hurry Emmy Lou right back to school.

At the gate they met Dear Teacher’s carriage, taking Dear Teacher home. She stopped.

Aunt Cordelia came out, and Aunt Katie. Uncle Charlie, just going, stopped to hear.

“Spelling match!” said Aunt Louise.

“Not our Emmy Lou?” said Aunt Katie.

“The precious baby,” said Aunt Cordelia.

“Hammel,” said Uncle Charlie, “McKoeghany,” and Uncle Charlie smote his thigh.

“I SING OF HONOR AND THE FAITHFUL HEART”

The Real Teacher was sick. The Third Reader was to begin its duties with a Substitute. The Principal announced it to the class, looking at them coldly and stating the matter curtly. It was as though he considered the Third Reader Class to blame.

Somehow Emmy Lou felt apologetic about it and guilty. And she watched the door. A Substitute might mean anything. Hattie, Emmy Lou's desk-mate, watched the door, too, but covertly, for Hattie did not like to acknowledge she did not know.

"Hattie peeped out from behind the shed."

The Substitute came in a little breathlessly. She was pretty—as pretty as Emmy Lou's Aunt Katie. She seemed a little uncertain as to what to do. Perhaps she felt conscious of forty pairs of eyes waiting to see what she would do.

The Substitute stepped hesitatingly up on the platform. She gripped the edge of the desk, and opened her lips, but nothing came. She closed them and swallowed. Then she said, "Children——"

"She's goin' to cry!" whispered Hattie, in awed accents. Emmy Lou felt it would be terrible to see her cry. It was evidently something so unpleasant to be a Substitute that Emmy Lou's heart went out to her.

But the Substitute did not cry. She still gripped the desk, and after a moment went on: "—you will find printed on the slips of paper upon each desk the needs of the Third Reader."

She did not cry, but everybody felt the tremor in her voice. The Substitute was young, and new to her business.

Reading over the needs of the Third Reader printed on the slips of paper, Emmy Lou found them so complicated and lengthy she realised one thing—she would have to have a new school-bag, a larger, stronger one, to accommodate them.

Now, there is a difference between a Real Teacher and a Substitute. The Real Teacher loves mystery and explains grudgingly. The Real Teacher stands aloof, with awe and distance between herself and the inhabitants of the rows of desks she holds dominion over.

But a Substitute tells the class all about her duty and its duty, and about what she is planning and what she expects of them. A Substitute makes the occupants of the desks feel flattered and conscious and important.

The Substitute's name was Miss Jenny. The class speedily adored her. Soon her desk might have been a shrine to Pomona. It was joy to forego one's apple to swell the fruitage of adoration piled on Miss Jenny's desk. The class could scarcely be driven to recess, since going tore them from her. They found their happiness in Miss Jenny's presence.

So, apparently, did Mr. Bryan. Mr. Bryan was the Principal. He wore his black hair somewhat long and thrown off his forehead, only Mr. Bryan would have called it brow.

Mr. Bryan came often to the Third Reader room. He said it was very necessary that the Third Reader should be well grounded in the rudiments of number. He said he was astonished, he was appalled, he was chagrined.

He paused at "chagrined," and repeated it impressively, so that the guttural grimness of its second syllable sounded most unpleasant. Appalled and astonished must be bad, but to be chagrined, as Mr. Bryan said it, must be terrible.

He was chagrined, so it proved, that a class could show such deplorable ignorance concerning the very rudiments of number.

It was Emmy Lou who displayed it, when she was called to the blackboard by Mr. Bryan. He called a different little girl each day, with discriminating impartiality. When doing so, Mr. Bryan would often express a hope that his teachers would have no favourites.

Emmy Lou went to the board.

"If a man born in eighteen hundred and nine, lives—" began Mr. Bryan. Then he turned to speak to Miss Jenny.

Emmy Lou took the chalk and stood on her toes to reach the board.

"While the children drew, Mr. Bryan would lean on Miss Jenny's desk, rearrange his white necktie, and talk to Miss Jenny."

"Set it down," said Mr. Bryan, turning—"the date."

Emmy Lou paused, uncertain. Had he said one thousand, eight hundred and nine, she would have known; that was the way one knew it in the Second Reader, but eighteen hundred was confusing.

Again Mr. Bryan looked around, to see the chubby little girl standing on her toes, chalk in hand, still uncertain. Mr. Bryan's voice expressed tried but laudable patience.

"Put it down—the date," said Mr. Bryan, "eighteen hundred and nine."

Emmy Lou put it down. She put it down in this way:

18
100
9

Then it was he was astonished, appalled, chagrined; then it was he found it would be necessary to come even oftener to the Third Reader to ground it in the rudiments of number.

But he did not always go when the lesson ended. Directly following its work in the "New Eclectic Practical and Mental Primary Arithmetic," the class was given over to mastering "Townsend's New System of Drawing."

"And she, like Mr. Townsend, had her system."

While the children drew, Mr. Bryan would lean on Miss Jenny's desk, rearrange his white necktie, and talk to her. Miss Jenny was pretty. The class gloried in her prettiness, but it felt it would have her more for its own if Mr. Bryan would go when the number lesson ended.

Mr. Townsend may have made much of the system he claimed was embodied in "Book No. 1," but the class never tried his system. There is a chance Miss Jenny had not tried it either. Drawing had never been in the public school before, and Miss Jenny was only a Substitute.

So the class drew with no supervision and with only such verbal direction as Miss Jenny could insert between Mr. Bryan's attentions. Miss Jenny seemed different when Mr. Bryan was there, she seemed helpless and nervous.

Emmy Lou felt reasonably safe when it came to drawing. She had often copied pictures out of books, and she, like Mr. Townsend, had her system.

On the first page of "Book No. 1" were six lines up and down, six lines across, six slanting lines, and a circle. One was expected to copy these in the space below. To do this Emmy Lou applied

her system. She produced a piece of tissue-paper folded away in her “Montague’s New Elementary Geography”—Emmy Lou was a saving and hoarding little soul—which she laid over the lines and traced them with her pencil. 91

It was harder to do the rest. Next she laid the traced paper carefully over the space below, and taking her slate-pencil, went laboriously over each line with an absorbing zeal that left its mark in the soft drawing paper. Lastly she went over each indented line with a lead-pencil, carefully and frequently wetted in her little mouth.

Miss Jenny exclaimed when she saw it. Mr. Bryan had gone. Miss Jenny said it was the best page in the room.

Emmy Lou could not take her book home, for drawing-books must be kept clean and were collected and kept in the cupboard, but she told Aunt Cordelia that her page had been the best in the room. Aunt Cordelia could hardly believe it, saying she had never heard of a talent for drawing in any branch of the family.

Now Hattie had taken note of Emmy Lou’s system in drawing, and the next day she brought tissue-paper. That day Miss Jenny praised Hattie’s page. Emmy Lou’s system immediately became popular. All the class got tissue-paper. And Mr. Bryan, finding the drawing-hour one of undisturbed opportunity, stayed until the bell rang for Geography. 92

A little girl named Sadie wondered if tissue-paper was fair. Hattie said it was, for Mr. Bryan saw her using it, and turned and went on talking to Miss Jenny. But a little girl named Mamie settled it definitely. Did not her mamma, Mamie wanted to know, draw the scallops that way on Baby Sister’s flannel petticoat? And didn’t one’s own mamma know?

Sadie was reassured. Sadie was a conscientious little girl. Miss Jenny said so. Miss Jenny was conscientious, too. Right at the beginning she told them how she hated a story, fib-story she meant.

The class felt that they, too, abhorred stories. They loved Miss Jenny. And Miss Jenny disliked stories. Just then a little girl raised her hand. It was Sadie.

Sadie said she was afraid she had told Miss Jenny a story, a fib-story, the day before, when Miss Jenny had asked her if she felt the wind from the window opened above, and she had said no. Afterward she had realised she did feel the wind. A thrill, deep-awed, went around the room. In her secret soul every little girl wished she had told a story, that she might tell Miss Jenny. 93

Miss Jenny praised Sadie, she called her a brave and conscientious little girl. She closed the book and came to the edge of the platform and talked to them about duty and honour and faithfulness.

Emmy Lou, her cheeks pink, longed for opportunity to prove her faithfulness, her honesty; she longed to prove herself a Sadie.

There was Roll Call in the Third Reader. The duties were much too complicated for mere Head and Foot. After each lesson came Roll Call.

As Emmy Lou understood them, the marks by which one graded one’s performance and deserts in the Third Reader were interpreted:

6—The final state which few may hope to attain.

5—The gate beyond which lies the final and unattainable state. 94

4—The highest hope of the humble.

3—The common condition of mankind.

2—The just reward of the wretched.

1—The badge of shame.

0—Outer darkness.

When Roll Call first began, Miss Jenny said to her class: “You must each think earnestly before answering. To give in a mark above what you feel yourself entitled, is to tell worse than a story, it is to tell a falsehood, and a falsehood is a lie. I shall leave it to you. I believe in trusting my pupils, and I shall take no note of your standing. Each will be answerable for herself.” Miss Jenny was very young.

The class sat weighted with the awfulness of the responsibility. It was a conscientious class, and Miss Jenny’s high ideals had worked upon its sensibilities. No little girl dared to be “six.” How could she know, for instance, in her reading lesson, if she had paused the exact length of a full stop every time she met with a period? Who could decide? Certainly not the little girl in her own favour, and perhaps be branded with a falsehood, which was a lie. Or who, when Roll Call for deportment came, could ever dare call herself perfect? Self-examination and inward analysis lead rather to a belief in natural sin. The Third Reader Class grew conscientious to the splitting of a hair. It was better to be “four” than “five” and be saved, and “three” than “four,” if there was room for doubt. Class standing fell rapidly. 95

Emmy Lou struggled to keep up with the downward tendency.

Hattie outstripped her promptly. Hattie could adapt herself to all exigencies. Emmy Lou even felt envy of Hattie creeping into her heart.

There came an awful day. It was Roll Call for drawing. It had been a fish, a fish with elaborately

serrated fins. Miss Jenny had said that Emmy Lou's fish was as good as the copy. In her heart Miss Jenny wondered at the proficiency of her class in drawing, for she could not draw a straight line. But since Mr. Bryan seemed satisfied and said every day, "Let them alone, they are getting along," Miss Jenny gave the credit to Mr. Townsend's system.

She was enthusiastic over Emmy Lou's fish, which Emmy Lou brought up as soon as Mr. Bryan departed.

"It is wonderful," said Miss Jenny. "It is perfect."

Emmy Lou went back to her desk much troubled. What was she to do? She had not moved, she had not whispered, she had not lifted the lashes sweeping her chubby cheeks even to look at Hattie, yet it was the general belief that no little girl could answer "six," and not tell a falsehood, which is a lie. Yet, on the other hand, being perfect, Emmy Lou could not say less. She was perfect. Miss Jenny said so. Emmy Lou shut her eyes to think. It was approaching her turn to answer.

"Six," said Emmy Lou, opening her eyes and standing, the impersonation of conscious guilt. She felt disgraced. She felt the silence. She felt she could not meet the eyes of the other little girls. And she felt sick. Her throat was sore. In the Third Reader one's face burned from the red-hot stove so near by, while one shivered from the draught when the window was lowered above one's head.

Emmy Lou did not come to school the next day, so Hattie went out to see her. It was Friday. The class had had singing. Every Friday the singing teacher came to the Third Reader for an hour.

"He changed my seat over to the left," said Hattie. "I can sing alto."

Emmy Lou felt cross. She felt the strenuousness of striving to keep abreast of Hattie. And the taste of a nauseous dose from a black bottle was in her mouth, and another dose loomed an hour ahead. And now Hattie could sing alto.

"Sing it," said Emmy Lou.

It disconcerted Hattie. "It—isn't—er—you can't just up and sing it—it's alto," said Hattie, nonplussed.

"You said you could sing it," said Emmy Lou. This was the nearest Emmy Lou had come to fussing with Hattie.

The next Monday Emmy Lou was late in starting, that is, late for Emmy Lou, and she made a discovery—Miss Jenny passed Emmy Lou's house going to school. Emmy Lou did not have courage to join her, but waited inside her gate until Miss Jenny had passed. But the next morning she was at her gate again as Miss Jenny came by.

Miss Jenny said, "Good morning."

Emmy Lou went out. They walked along together. After that Emmy Lou waited every morning. One day it was icy on the pavements. Miss Jenny told Emmy Lou to take her hand. After that Emmy Lou's mittened hand went into Miss Jenny's every morning.

Emmy Lou told Hattie, who came out to Emmy Lou's the next morning. They both waited for Miss Jenny. They each held a hand. It was in this way they came to know the Drug-Store Man. Sometimes he waited for them at the corner. Sometimes he walked out to meet them. He and Miss Jenny seemed to be old friends. He asked them about rudiments of number. They wondered how he knew.

One day Hattie proposed a plan. It was daring. She persuaded Emmy Lou to agree to it. That night Emmy Lou packed her school-bag even to the apple for Miss Jenny. Next morning, early as Hattie arrived, she was waiting for her at the gate, though hot and cold with the daring of the expedition. They were going to walk out in the direction of the Great Unknown, from which, each day, Miss Jenny emerged. They were going to meet Miss Jenny!

They knew she turned into their street at the corner. So they turned. At the next corner they saw Miss Jenny coming. But along the intersecting street, one walking southward, one northward, toward the corner where Hattie, Emmy Lou, and Miss Jenny were about to meet, came two others—Mr. Bryan and the Drug-Store Man!

Something made Emmy Lou and Hattie feel queer and guilty. Something made them turn and run. They ran fast. They ran faster. Emmy Lou's heavy school-bag thumped against her little calves. Her apple flew out. Emmy Lou never stopped.

Hattie told her afterward that it was the Drug-Store Man who brought Miss Jenny to school. Hattie peeped out from behind the shed where the water-buckets sat. She said he brought Miss Jenny to the gate and opened it for her. He had never come farther than the corner before. That day Mr. Bryan did not come to ground them in the rudiments of number, nor did he come the next day; nor ever, any more. Yet the Third Reader Class was undoubtedly poor in arithmetic. Miss Jenny found that out. Mr. Bryan's instruction seemed not to have helped them at all. Miss Jenny said that as they were so well up in drawing, they would lay those books aside, and give that time to arithmetic. And she also reminded them to be conscientious in all their work. They were, and the Roll Call bore witness to their rigourous self-depreciation.

Mr. Bryan never came for number again, but he came, one day, because of Roll Call. Once a week Roll Call was sent to the office. It was called their Class Average. The day of Class Average Mr. Bryan walked in. He rapped smartly on the red and blue lined paper in his hand. Miss Jenny's Class Average, so the class learned, was low, and she must see to it that her class made

a better showing. She was a substitute, Mr. Bryan recognised that, and made allowance accordingly, “but”—then he went.

“The Third Reader class gathered in knots.”

Miss Jenny looked frightened. The class feared she was going to cry. They determined to be better and more conscientious for her sake, feeling that they would die for Miss Jenny. But the Class Average was low again. How could it be otherwise with forty over-strained little consciences determining their own deserts?

One day Miss Jenny was sent for. When one was sent for, one went to the office. Little boys went there to be whipped. Sadie went there once; her grandma was dead, and they had sent for her.

Miss Jenny had been crying when she came back. Lessons went on miserably. Then Miss Jenny put the book down. It was evident she had not heard one word of the absent-minded and sympathetic little girl who said that a peninsula was a body of water almost surrounded by land.

Miss Jenny came to the edge of the platform. She looked way off a moment; then she looked at the class, and spoke. She said she was going to take them into her confidence. Miss Jenny was very young. She told them the teacher of the Third Reader, the Real Teacher, was not coming back, and that she had hoped to take the Real Teacher’s place, but the Class Average was being counted against her.

Everybody noticed the tremor in Miss Jenny’s voice. It broke on the fatal Class Average. Sadie began to cry.

“To use tissue-paper would be cheating.”

Miss Jenny came to the very edge of the platform. She looked slight and young and appealing, did Miss Jenny.

Next week, she went on to tell them, would be Quarterly Examination. If they did well in Examination, even with the Class Average against her, Miss Jenny might be allowed to remain, but if they failed——

The Third Reader Class gathered in knots and groups at recess. It depended on them whether Miss Jenny went or stayed. Emmy Lou stood in one of the groups, her chubby face bearing witness to her concern. “What is a Quarterly Examination?” asked Emmy Lou. Nobody seemed very sure.

“Oh,” said another little girl, “they give you questions, and you write down answers. My brother is in the Grammar School, and he has Examinations.”

“Quarterly Examinations?” asked Emmy Lou, who was definite.

The little girl did not know. She only knew if you answered right, you passed; if wrong, you failed.

And Miss Jenny would go.

"Miss Jenny was throwing a kiss to the Third Reader class."

There was an air of mystery about a Quarterly Examination. It made one uneasy before the actual thing came, while the uncertainty concerning it was trying to the nerves. 105

The day before Examination, Miss Jenny told every little girl to clear out her desk and carry all her belongings home. Then she went around and looked in each desk, for not a scrap of paper even must remain.

Miss Jenny told them that she trusted them, it was not that, it was because it was the rule.

"To cheat at Examination," said Miss Jenny, "is worse even than to lie. To cheat is to steal—steal knowledge that doesn't belong to you. To cheat at Examination is to be both a liar and a thief."

The class scarcely breathed. This was terrible.

"About the first subject," said Miss Jenny, "I feel safe. The first thing in the morning you will be examined in drawing."

Emmy Lou at that remembered she had no tissue-paper. Neither had Hattie. Neither had Mamie. Everybody must be reminded. Miss Jenny told them to come with slate, pencils, and legal-cap paper. After school Emmy Lou and Hattie and Sadie and Mamie made mention of tissue-paper. The Drug-Store Man waited on Emmy Lou the next morning. Emmy Lou had a nickel. She wanted tissue-paper. The Drug-Store Man was curious. It seemed as if every little girl who came in wanted tissue-paper. Emmy Lou and the Drug-Store Man were great friends. 106

"What's it got to do with rudiments of number?" asked the Drug-Store Man.

"It's for drawing," said Emmy Lou. "It's Quarterly Examination."

The Drug-Store Man was interested. He did not quite understand the system. Emmy Lou explained. Her chin did not reach the counter, but she looked up and he leaned over. The Drug-Store Man grew serious. He was afraid this might get Miss Jenny into trouble. He explained to Emmy Lou that it would be cheating to use tissue-paper in Examination, and told her she must draw right off the copy, according to the directions set down in the book. He suggested that she go and tell the others of the class. For that matter, if they came right over, he would take back the tissue-paper and substitute licorice sticks. 107

Emmy Lou hurried over to tell them. Examinations, she explained, were different, and to use tissue-paper would be cheating. And what would Miss Jenny say? Little girls hurried across the street, and the jar of licorice was exhausted.

Miss Jenny saw them seated. She told them she could trust them. No one in her class would cheat. Then a strange teacher from the class above came in to examine them. It was the rule. And Miss Jenny was sent away to examine a Primary School in another district.

But at the door she turned. Every eye was following her. They loved Miss Jenny. Her cheeks were glowing, and the draught, as Miss Jenny stood in the open doorway, blew her hair about her face. She smiled back at them. She turned to go. But again she turned—Miss Jenny—yes, Miss Jenny was throwing a kiss to the Third Reader Class.

The door closed. It was Examination. The page they were to draw had for copy a cup and saucer. No, worse, a cup in a saucer. And by it was a coffee-pot. And next to that was a pepper-box. And these were to be drawn for Quarterly Examination—without tissue-paper. 108

When Emmy Lou had finished she felt discouraged. In the result one might be pardoned for some uncertainty as to which was coffee-pot and which pepper-box. The cup and saucer seemed strangely like a circle in a hole. There was a yawning break in the paper from much erasure where the handle of the coffee-pot should have been. There were thumb marks and smears where nothing should have been. Emmy Lou looked at Hattie. Hattie looked worn out. She had her book upside down, putting the holes in the lid of the pepper-box. Sadie was crying. Tears were dropping right down on the page of her book.

The bell rang. Examination in drawing was over. The books were collected. Just as the teacher was dismissing them for recess she opened a book. She opened another. She turned to the front pages. She passed a finger over the reverse side of a page. She was a teacher of long years of experience. She told the class to sit down. She asked a little girl named Mamie Sessum to please rise. It was Mamie's book she held. Mamie rose. 109

The teacher's tones were polite. It made one tremble, they were so polite. "May I ask," said the teacher, "to have explained the system by which the supposedly freehand drawing in this book has been done?"

"It wasn't any system," Mamie hastened to explain, anxious to disclaim a connection evidently so undesirable; "it was tissue-paper."

"And this confessed openly to my face?" said the teacher. She was, even after many years at the business of exposing the natural depravity of the youthful mind, appalled at the brazenness of Mamie.

Mamie looked uncertain. Whatever she had done, it was well to have company. "We all used tissue-paper," said Mamie.

It proved even so. The teacher, that this thing might be fully exposed, called the roll. Each little girl responded in alphabetical sequence. The teacher's condition of shocked virtue rendered her coldly laconic.

"Tissue-paper?" she asked each little girl in turn. 110

"Tissue-paper" was the burden, if not the form, of every alarmed little girl's reply.

"Cipher," said the teacher briefly as each made confession, and called the next.

O—Outer darkness!

The teacher at the last closed her book with a snap. "Cipher and worse," she told them. "You are cheats, and to cheat is to lie. And further, the class has failed in drawing."

A bell rang. Recess was over.

The teacher, regarding them coldly, picked up the chalk, and turned to write on the board, "If a man——"

Examination in "New Eclectic Practical and Mental Primary Arithmetic" had begun.

The Third Reader Class, stunned, picked up its pencils. Miss Jenny had feared for them in arithmetic. They had feared for themselves. They were cheats and liars and they had failed. And the knowledge did not make them feel confident. They were cheats, and a suspicious and cold surveillance on the part of the teacher kept them reminded that she looked upon them as cheats 111 and watched them accordingly. Misery and despair were their portion. And further, failure. In their state of mind it was inevitable for them to get lost in the maze of conditions surrounding "If a man——"

They did better next day in geography and reading. They passed on Friday in spelling and penmanship.

But the terrible fact remained—the teacher had declared them cheats and liars. If they could only see Miss Jenny. Miss Jenny would understand. Miss Jenny would make it all right after she returned.

When the Third Reader Class assembled on Monday, a tall lady occupied the platform. She was a Real Teacher. But at the door stood a memory of Miss Jenny, the hair blown about her face, kissing her hand.

The Third Reader Class never saw Miss Jenny again.

113

THE PLAY'S THE THING

It was the day of the exhibition. At close of the half year the Third Reader Class had suffered a 115 change in teachers, the first having been a Substitute, whereas her successor was a Real Teacher. And since the coming of Miss Carrie, the Third Reader Class had lived, as it were, in the public eye, for on Fridays books were put away and the attention given to recitations and company.

Miss Carrie talked in deep tones, which she said were chest tones, and described mysterious sweeps and circles with her hands when she talked. And these she called gestures. Miss Carrie was an elocutionist and had even recited on the stage.

She gave her class the benefit of her talent, and in teaching them said they must suit the action to the word. The action meant gestures, and gestures meant sweeps and circles.

Emmy Lou had to learn a piece for Friday. It was poetry, but you called it a piece, and though 116 Uncle Charlie had selected it for Emmy Lou, Miss Carrie did not seem to think much of it.

Emmy Lou stood up. Miss Carrie was drilling her, and though she did her best to suit the action to the word, it seemed a complicated undertaking. The piece was called, "A Plain Direction." Emmy Lou came to the lines:

"Straight down the Crooked Lane
And all round the Square."

Whatever difficulties her plump forefinger had had over the first three of these geometrical propositions, it triumphed at the end, for Emmy Lou paused. A square has four sides, and to suit a four-sided action to the word, takes time.

Miss Carrie, whose attention had wandered a little, here suddenly observing, stopped her, saying her gestures were stiff and meaningless. She said they looked like straight lines cut in the air.

Emmy Lou, anxious to prove her efforts to be conscientious, explained that they were straight 117
lines, it was a square. Miss Carrie drew herself up, and, using her coldest tones, told Emmy Lou not to be funny.

“Funny!” Emmy Lou felt that she did not understand.

But this was a mere episode between Fridays. One lived but to prepare for Fridays, and a Sunday dress was becoming a mere everyday affair, since one’s best must be worn for Fridays.

No other class had these recitations and the Third Reader was envied. Its members were pointed out and gazed upon, until one realised one was standing in the garish light of fame. The other readers, it seemed, longed for fame and craved publicity, and so it came about that the school was to have an exhibition with Miss Carrie’s genius to plan and engineer the whole. For general material Miss Carrie drew from the whole school, but the play was for her own class alone.

And this was the day of the exhibition.

Hattie and Sadie and Emmy Lou stood at the gate of the school. They had spent the morning in
rehearsing. At noon they had been sent home with instructions to return at half past two. The 118
exhibition would begin at three.

“Of course,” Miss Carrie had said, “you will not fail to be on time.” And Miss Carrie had used her deepest tones.

Hattie and Sadie and Emmy Lou had wondered how she could even dream of such a thing.

It was not two o’clock, and the three stood at the gate, the first to return.

They were in the same piece. It was The Play. In a play one did more than suit the action to the word, one dressed to suit the part.

In the play Hattie and Sadie and Emmy Lou found themselves the orphaned children of a soldier who had failed to return from the war. It was a very sad piece. Sadie had to weep, and more than once Emmy Lou had found tears in her own eyes, watching her.

Miss Carrie said Sadie showed histrionic talent. Emmy Lou asked Hattie about it, who said it meant tears, and Emmy Lou remembered then how tears came naturally to Sadie.

When Aunt Cordelia heard they must dress to suit the part she came to see Miss Carrie, and so 119
did the mamma of Sadie and the mamma of Hattie.

“Dress them in a kind of mild mourning,” Miss Carrie explained, “not too deep, or it will seem too real, and, as three little sisters, suppose we dress them alike.”

And now Hattie and Sadie and Emmy Lou stood at the gate ready for the play. Stiffly immaculate white dresses, with beltings of black sashes, flared jauntily out above spotless white stockings and sober little black slippers, while black-bound Leghorn hats shaded three anxious little countenances. By the exact centre, each held a little handkerchief, black-bordered.

“It seems almost wicked,” Aunt Cordelia had ventured at this point; “it seems like tempting Providence.”

But Sadie’s mamma did not see it so. Sadie’s mamma had provided the handkerchiefs. Tears were Sadie’s feature in the play.

Hattie and Sadie and Emmy Lou wore each an anxious seriousness of countenance, but it was a variant seriousness.

Hattie’s tense expression breathed a determination which might have been interpreted do or 120
die; to Hattie life was a battling foe to be overcome and trodden beneath a victorious heel; Hattie was an infantile St. George always on the look for The Dragon, and to-day The Exhibition was The Dragon.

Sadie’s seriousness was a complacent realization of large responsibility. Her weeping was a feature. Sadie remembered she had histrionic talent.

Emmy Lou’s anxiety was because there loomed ahead the awful moment of mounting the platform. It was terrible on mere Fridays to mount the platform and, after vain swallowing to overcome a labial dryness and a lingual taste of copper, try to suit the action to the word, but to mount the platform for The Play—Emmy Lou was trying not to look that far ahead. But as the hour approached, the solemn importance of the occasion was stealing brainward, and she even began to feel glad she was a part of The Exhibition, for to have been left out would have been worse even than the moment of mounting the platform.

“My grown-up brother’s coming,” said Hattie, “an’ my mamma an’ gran’ma an’ the rest.” 121

“My Aunt Cordelia has invited the visiting lady next door,” said Emmy Lou.

But it was Sadie’s hour. “Our minister’s coming,” said Sadie.

“Oh, Sadie,” said Hattie, and while there was despair in her voice one knew that in Hattie’s

heart there was exultation at the very awfulness of it.

“Oh, Sadie,” said Emmy Lou, and there was no exultation in the tones of Emmy Lou’s despair. Not that Emmy Lou had much to do—hers was mostly the suiting of the action to some other’s word. She was chosen largely because of Hattie and Sadie who had wanted her. And then, too, Emmy Lou’s Uncle Charlie was the owner of a newspaper. The Exhibition might get into its columns. Not that Miss Carrie cared for this herself—she was thinking of the good it might do the school.

Emmy Lou’s part was to weep when Sadie wept, and to point a chubby forefinger skyward when Hattie mentioned the departure from earth of the soldier parent, and to lower that forefinger 122
footward at Sadie’s tearful allusion to an untimely grave.

Emmy Lou had but one utterance, and it was brief. Emmy Lou was to advance one foot, stretch forth a hand and say, in the character of orphan for whom no asylum was offered, “We know not where we go.”

That very morning, at gray of dawn, Emmy Lou had crept from her own into Aunt Cordelia’s bed, to say it over, for it weighed heavily on her mind, “We know not where we go.”

As Emmy Lou said it the momentous import of the confession fell with explosive relief on the *go*, as if the relief were great to have reached that point.

It seemed to Aunt Cordelia, however, that the *where* was the problem in the matter.

Aunt Louise called in from the next room. Aunt Louise had large ideas. The stress, she said, should be laid equally on *know not*, *where*, and *go*.

Since then, all day, Emmy Lou had been saying it at intervals of half minutes, for fear she might forget.

Meanwhile, it yet lacking a moment or so to two o’clock, the orphaned heroines continued to 123
linger at the gate, awaiting the hour.

“Listen,” said Hattie, “I hear music.”

There was a church across the street. The drug-store adjoined it. It was a large church with high steps and a pillared portico, and its doors were open.

“It’s a band, and marching,” said Hattie.

The orphaned children hurried to the curb. A procession was turning the corner and coming toward them. On either sidewalk crowds of men and boys accompanied it.

“It’s a funeral,” said Sadie, as if she intuitively divined the mournful.

Hattie turned with a face of conviction. “I know. It’s that big general’s funeral; they’re bringing him here to bury him with the soldiers.”

“We’ll never see a thing for the crowd,” despaired Sadie.

Emmy Lou was gazing. “They’ve got plumes in their hats,” she said.

“Let’s go over on the church steps and see it go by,” said Hattie, “it’s early.”

The orphaned children hurried across the street. They climbed the steps. At the top they turned. 124

There were plumes and more, there were flags and swords, and a band led.

But at the church with unexpected abruptness the band halted, turned, it fell apart, and the procession came through; it came right on through and up the steps, a line of uniforms and swords on either side from curb to pillar, and halted.

Aghast, between two glittering files, the orphaned children shrank into the shadow behind a pillar, while upstreamed from the carriages below an unending line—bare-headed men, and ladies bearing flowers. Behind, below, about, closing in on every side, crowded people, a sea of people.

The orphaned children found themselves swept from their hiding by the crowd and unwillingly jostled forward into prominence.

A frowning man with a sword in his hand seemed to be threatening everybody; his face was red and his voice was big, and he glittered with many buttons. All at once he caught sight of the 125
orphaned children and threatened them vehemently.

“Here,” said the frowning man, “right in here,” and he placed them in line.

The orphaned children were appalled, and even in the face of the man cried out in protest. But the man of the sword did not hear, for the reason that he did not listen. Instead he was addressing a large and stout lady immediately behind them.

“Separated from the family in the confusion, the grandchildren evidently—just see them in, please.”

And suddenly the orphaned children found themselves a part of the procession as grandchildren. The nature of a procession is to proceed. And the grandchildren proceeded with it. They could not help themselves. There was no time for protest, for, pushed by the crowd which closed and swayed above their heads, and piloted by the stout lady close behind, they were swept into the church and up the aisle, and when they came again to themselves were in the inner corner of a pew near the front.

The church was decked with flags.

So was the Third Reader room. It was hung with flags for The Exhibition.

Hattie in the corner nudged Sadie. Sadie urged Emmy Lou, who, next to the stout lady, touched her timidly. “We have to get out,” said Emmy Lou, “we’ve got to say our parts.”

“Not now,” said the lady, reassuringly, “the programme is at the cemetery.”

Emmy Lou did not understand, and she tried to tell the lady.

“S’h’h,” said that person, engaged with the spectacle and the crowd, “sh-h-”

Abashed, Emmy Lou sat, sh-h-ed.

Hattie arose. It was terrible to rise in church, and at a funeral, and the church was filled, the aisles were crowded, but Hattie rose. Hattie was a St. George and A Dragon stood between her and The Exhibition.

She pushed by Sadie, and past Emmy Lou. Hattie was as slim as she was strenuous, or perhaps she was slim because she was strenuous, but not even so slim a little girl as Hattie could push by the stout lady, for she filled the space.

At Hattie’s touch she turned. Although she looked good-natured, the size and ponderance of the lady were intimidating. She stared at Hattie; people were looking; it was in church; Hattie’s face was red.

“You can’t get to the family,” said the lady, “you couldn’t move in the crowd. Besides I promised to see to you. Now be quiet,” she added crossly, when Hattie would have spoken. She turned away. Hattie crept back vanquished by this Dragon.

“So suitably dressed,” the stout lady was saying to a lady beyond; “grandchildren, you know.”

“She says they are grandchildren,” echoed the whispers around.

“Even their little handkerchiefs have black borders,” somebody beyond replied.

Emmy Lou wondered if she was in some dreadful dream. Was she a grandchild or was she an orphan? Her head swam.

The service began and there fell on the unwilling grandchildren the submission of awe. The stout lady cried, she also punched Emmy Lou with her elbow whenever that little person moved, but finally she found courage to turn her head so she could see Sadie.

Sadie was weeping into her black-bordered handkerchief, nor were they the tears of histrionic talent. They were real tears. People all about were looking at her sympathetically. Such grief in a grandchild was very moving.

It may have been minutes, it seemed to Emmy Lou hours, before there came a general up-rising. Hattie stood up. So did Sadie and Emmy Lou. Their skirts no longer stood out jauntily; they were quite crushed and subdued.

There was a wild, hunted look in Hattie’s eyes. “Watch the chance,” she whispered, “and run.”

But it did not come. As the pews emptied, the stout lady passed Emmy Lou on, addressing some one beyond. “Hold to this one,” she said, “and I’ll take the other two, or they’ll get tramped in the crowd.”

Emmy Lou felt herself grasped, she could not see up to find by whom. The crowd in the aisle had closed above her head, but she heard the stout lady behind saying, “Did you ever see such an ill-mannered child!” and Emmy Lou judged that Hattie was struggling against Fate.

Slowly the crowd moved, and, being a part of it however unwillingly, Emmy Lou moved too, out of the church and down the steps. Then came the crashing of the band and the roll of carriages, and she found herself in the front row on the curb.

The man with the brandishing sword was threatening violently. “One more carriage is here for the family,” called the man with the sword. His face was red and his voice was hoarse. His glance in search for the family suddenly fell on Emmy Lou. She felt it fall.

The problem solved itself for the man with the sword, and his brow cleared. “Grandchildren next,” roared the threatening man.

“Grandchildren,” echoed the crowd.

Hattie and Sadie were pushed forward from somewhere, Hattie lifting her voice. But what was the cry of a Hattie before the brazen utterance of the band? Sadie was weeping wildly.

Emmy Lou with the courage of despair cried out in the grasp of the threatening man, but the man lifting her into the carriage, was speaking himself, and to the driver. “Keep an eye on them —separated from the family,” he was explaining, and a moment later Hattie and Sadie were lifted after Emmy Lou into the carriage, and as the door banged, their carriage moved with the rest up the street.

“Now,” said Hattie, and Hattie sprang to the farther door.

It would not open. Things never will in dreadful dreams.

Through the carriage windows the school, with its arched doorways and windows, gazed frowningly, reproachfully. A gentleman entered the gate and went in the doorway.

“It’s our minister,” said Sadie, weeping afresh.

Hattie beat upon the window, and called to the driver, but no mortal ear could have heard above that band.

“An’ my grown-up brother, an’ gran’ma an’ the rest,” said Hattie. And Hattie wept.

“And the visiting lady next door,” said Emmy Lou. She did not mean to weep, tears did not come readily to Emmy Lou, but just then her eyes fell upon the handkerchief still held by its exact centre in her hand. What would The Exhibition do without them? 131

Then Emmy Lou wept.

Late that afternoon a carriage stopped at a corner upon which a school building stood. Since his charges were but infantile affairs, the coloured gentleman on the box thought to expedite matters and drop them at the corner nearest their homes.

Descending, the coloured gentleman flung open the door, and three little girls crept forth, three crushed little girls, three limp little girls, three little girls in a mild kind of mourning.

They came forth timidly. They looked around. They hoped they might reach their homes unobserved.

There was a crowd up the street. A gathering of people—many people. It seemed to be at Emmy Lou’s gate. Hattie and Sadie lived farther on.

“It must be a fire,” said Hattie.

But it wasn’t. It was The Exhibition, the Principal, and Miss Carrie, and teachers and pupils, and mammas and aunties and Uncle Charlie. 132

“An’ gran’ma—” said Hattie.

“And the visiting lady—” said Emmy Lou.

“And our minister,” said Sadie.

The gathering of many people caught sight of them presently, and came to meet them, three little girls in mild mourning.

The little girls moved slowly, but the crowd moved rapidly.

The gentlemen laughed, Uncle Charlie and the minister and the papa or two, laughed when they heard, and laughed again, and went on laughing, they leaned against the fence.

But the ladies could see nothing funny, the mammas, nor Aunt Cordelia. That mild mourning had been the result of anxious planning and consultation.

Neither could Miss Carrie. She said they had failed her. She said it in her deepest tones and used gestures.

Sadie wept, for the sight of Miss Carrie recalled afresh the tears she should have shed with Histrionic Talent. 133

The parents and guardians led them home.

Emmy Lou was tired. She was used to a quiet life, and never before had been in the public eye.

At supper she nodded and mild mourning and all, suddenly Emmy Lou collapsed and fell asleep, her head against her chair.

Uncle Charlie woke her. He stood her up on the chair and held out his arms. Uncle Charlie meant to carry her as if she were a baby thing again up to bed.

“Come,” said Uncle Charlie.

Emmy Lou stood dazed and flushed, she was not yet quite awake.

Uncle Charlie had caught snatches of school vernacular. “Come,” said he, “suit the action to the word.”

Emmy Lou woke suddenly, the words smiting her ears with ominous import. She thought the hour had come, it was The Exhibition.

She stood stiffly, she advanced a cautious foot, her chubby hand described a careful half circle. Emmy Lou spoke— 134

“We know not where we go,” said Emmy Lou.

“No more we do,” said Uncle Charlie.

THE SHADOW OF A TRAGEDY

135

Miss Lizzie kept in. 137

The ways of teachers like rainy days and growing pains belong to the inexplicable and inevitable. All teachers have ways, that is to be expected, it is the part of an Emmy Lou to adjust herself to meet, not to try to understand, these ways.

Miss Lizzie kept in, but that was only one of her ways, she had many others. Perhaps they were no more peculiar than the ways of her predecessors, but they were more alarming.

Miss Lizzie placed a deliberate hand on her call bell and, as its vibrations dinged and smote upon the shrinking tympanum, a rigid and breathless expectancy would pervade the silence of the Fourth Reader room.

Miss Lizzie was tall, she seemed to tower up and over one's personality. One had no mind of her own, but one said what one thought Miss Lizzie wanted her to say. Sometimes one got it wrong. Then Miss Lizzie's cold up-and-down survey smote one into a condition something akin to vacuity, until Miss Lizzie said briefly, "Sit down."

Then one sat down hastily. 138

Miss Lizzie never wasted a word. Miss Lizzie closed her lips. She closed them so their lines were blue. Her eyes were blue too, but not a pleasant blue. Miss Lizzie did not scold, she looked. She kept looking until one became aware of an elbow resting on the desk. In her room little girls must sit erect.

Sometimes she changed. It came suddenly. One day it came suddenly and Miss Lizzie boxed the little girl's ears. The little girl had knocked over a pile of slates collected on the platform for marking.

Another time she changed. It was when the little girl brought a note from home because her ears were boxed. Miss Lizzie tore the note in pieces and threw them on the floor.

One lived in dread of her changing. One watched in order to know the thing she wanted. Emmy Lou knew every characteristic feature of her face—the lean nose that bent toward the cheek, 139 the thin lips that tightened and relaxed, the cold survey that travelled from desk to desk.

Miss Lizzie's thin hands were never still any more than were her eyes. Most often her fingers tore bits of paper into fine shreds while she heard lessons.

Life is strenuous. In each reader the strenuousness had taken a different form. In the Fourth Reader it was Copy-Books.

Miss Lizzie always took an honour in Copy-Books, and she meant to take an honour this year. But the road to fame is laborious.

She had her methods. Each morning she gave out four slips of paper to each little girl. This was trial paper. On these slips each little girl practised until the result was good enough, in Miss Lizzie's opinion, to go into the book. Some lines must be fine and hair-like. Over these Emmy Lou held her breath anxiously. Others must be heavy and laboured. Over these she unconsciously put the tip of her tongue between her teeth until it was just visible between her lips.

What, however, is school for but the accommodating of self to the changing demands of 140 teachers? In the Fourth Reader it was fine lines on the upward strokes and heavy lines on the downward.

Emmy Lou finally found the way. By turning the pen over and writing with the back of the point, the upward strokes emerged fine and hair-like. This having somewhat altered the mechanism of the pen point, its reversal brought lines sombre and heavy. It was slow and laborious, and it spoiled an alarming number of pen points; but then it achieved fine lines upward and heavy lines downward, and that is what Copy-Books are for.

Hattie reached the result differently. She kept two bottles of ink, one for fine and one for heavy lines. One was watered ink and one was not.

The trouble was about the trial-paper. One could have only four pieces. And the copy could go in the book only after the writing on the trial paper met with the approval of Miss Lizzie. So if one reached the end of the trial-paper before reaching approval one was kept in, for a half page of 141 Copy-Book must be done each day. And "kept in" meant staying after school, in hunger, disgrace, and the silence of a great, deserted building, to write on trial-paper until the copy was good enough to be put in.

Emmy Lou did not sit with Hattie in the Fourth Reader. On the first day Miss Lizzie asked the class if there was any desk-mate a little girl preferred. At that one's heart opened and one told Miss Lizzie.

At first Emmy Lou did not understand. For Miss Lizzie promptly seated all the would-be mates as far apart as possible.

Emmy Lou thought about it. *It seemed as though Miss Lizzie did it to be mean.*

Then Emmy Lou's cheeks grew hot. She put the thought quickly away that she might forget it; but the wedge was entered. Teachers were no longer *infallible*. Emmy Lou had questioned the motives of pedagogic deism.

And so Emmy Lou and Hattie were separated. But there were three new little girls near Emmy Lou. Their kid button-shoes had tassels. Very few little girls had button-shoes. Button-shoes 142 were new. Emmy Lou had button-shoes. She was proud of them. But they did not have tassels.

The three new little girls looked amused at everything, and exchanged glances; but they were not mean glances—not the kind of glances when little girls nudge each other and go off to whisper. Emmy Lou liked the new little girls. She could not keep from looking at them. They spread their skirts so easily when they sat down. There was something alluring about the little

girls.

At recess Emmy Lou waited near the door for them. They all went out together. After that they were friends. They lived on Emmy Lou's square. It was strange. But they had just come there to live. That explained it.

"In the white house, the white house with the big yard," the tallest of the little girls explained. She was Alice. The others were her cousins. They were Rosalie and Amanthus. Such charming names.

Emmy Lou was glad that she lived in the other white house on the square with the next biggest 143
yard. She never had thought of it before, but now she was glad.

Alice talked and Amanthus shook her curls back off her shoulders, and Rosalie wore a little blue locket hung on a golden chain. And Rosalie laughed.

"Isn't it funny and dear?" asked Alice.

"What?" said Emmy Lou.

"The public school," said Alice.

"Is it?" said Emmy Lou.

And then they all laughed, and they hugged Emmy Lou, these three fluttering butterflies. And they told Emmy Lou she was funny and dear also.

"We've never been before," said Alice.

"But we are too far from the other school now," said Rosalie.

"It was private school," said Amanthus.

"And this is public school," said Alice.

"It's very different," said Amanthus.

"Oh, very," said Rosalie.

Emmy Lou went and brought Hattie to know the little girls. All the year Emmy Lou was bringing
Hattie to know the little girls. But Hattie did not seem to like the little girls as Emmy Lou did. 144
She seemed to prefer Sadie when she could not have Emmy Lou alone. Hattie liked to lead. She could lead Sadie. Generally she could lead Emmy Lou, not always.

But all the while slowly a conviction was taking hold in Emmy Lou's mind. It was a conviction concerning Miss Lizzie.

Near Emmy Lou in the Fourth Reader room sat a little girl named Lisa—Lisa Schmit. Once Emmy Lou had seen Lisa in a doorway—a store doorway hung with festoons of linked sausage. Lisa had told Emmy Lou it was her papa's grocery store.

One day the air of the Fourth Reader room seemed unpleasantly freighted. As the stove grew hotter, the unpleasantness grew assertive.

Forty little girls were bending over their slates. It was problems. It had been Digits, Integral Numbers, Tables, Rudiments, according to the teacher, in one's upward course from the Primer, but now it was Problems, though in its nature it was always the same, as complicated as in its name it was varied.

The air was most unpleasant. It took the mind off the finding of the Greatest Common Divisor. 145

The call-bell on Miss Lizzie's desk dinged. The suddenness and the emphasis of the ding told on unexpected nerves, but it brought the Fourth Reader class up erect.

"File by the platform in order, bringing your lunch."

Miss Lizzie was about to speak. Emmy Lou watched Miss Lizzie's lips open. Emmy Lou often found herself watching Miss Lizzie's lips open. It took an actual, deliberate space of time. They opened, moistened themselves, then shaped the word.

"Who in this room has lunch?" said Miss Lizzie, and her very tones hurt. It was as though one 146
were doing wrong in having lunch.

Many hands were raised. There were luncheons in nearly every desk.

"File by the platform in order, bringing your lunch," said Miss Lizzie.

"Lisa's head went down on her arm on the desk."

Feeling apprehensively criminal—of what, however, she had no idea—Emmy Lou went into line, lunch in hand. One's luncheon might be all that it should, neatly pinned in a fringed napkin by Aunt Cordelia, but one felt embarrassed carrying it up. Some were in newspaper. Emmy Lou's heart ached for those.

Meanwhile Miss Lizzie bent and deliberately smelled of each package in turn as the little girls filed by. Most of the faces of the little girls were red. 147

Then came Lisa—Lisa Schmit. Her lunch was in paper—heavy brown paper.

Miss Lizzie smelled of Lisa's lunch and stopped the line.

"Open it," said Miss Lizzie.

Lisa rested it on the edge of the platform and untied it. The unpleasantness wafted heavily. There was sausage and dark gray bread and cheese. It was the cheese that was unpleasant.

Miss Lizzie's nose, which bent slightly toward her cheek, had a way of dilating. It dilated now.

"Go open the stove door," said Miss Lizzie.

Lisa went and opened the stove door.

"Now, take it and put it in," said Miss Lizzie.

Lisa took her lunch and put it in. Her round, soap-scoured little cheeks had turned a mottled red. When she got back to her seat, Lisa's head went down on her arm on the desk, and presently even her yellow plaits shook with the convulsiveness of her sobs.

It wasn't the loss of the sausage or the bread or the cheese. Emmy Lou was a big girl now, and she knew. 148

Emmy Lou went home. It was at the dinner table.

"I don't like Miss Lizzie," said she.

Aunt Cordelia was incredulous, scandalised. "You mustn't talk so."

"Little girls must not know what they like," said Aunt Louise. Aunt Louise was apt to be sententious. She was young.

"Except in puddings," said Uncle Charlie, passing Emmy Lou's saucer. There was pudding for dinner.

But wrong or not, Emmy Lou knew that it was so, she knew she did not like Miss Lizzie.

One morning Miss Lizzie forgot the package of trial-paper. The supply was out.

She called Rosalie. Then she called Emmy Lou. She told them where her house was, then told them to go there, ring the bell, ask for the paper, and return.

It seemed strange and unreal to be walking the streets in school-time. Rosalie skipped. So Emmy Lou skipped, too. Miss Lizzie lived seven squares away. It was a cottage—a little cottage. 149
On one side its high board fence ran along an alley, but on the other side was a big yard with trees and bushes. The cottage was almost hidden, and it seemed strange and far off.

Rosalie rang the bell. Then Emmy Lou rang the bell.

Nobody came.

They kept on ringing the bell. They did not know what to do. They were afraid to go back and tell Miss Lizzie, so they went around the side. It was a narrow, paved court between the house and the high board fence. It was dark. They held each other's hands.

There was a window. Someone tapped. It was a lady—a pretty lady. There was a flower in her hair—an artificial flower. She nodded to them. She smiled. She laughed. Then she put her finger on her lips. Emmy Lou and Rosalie did not know what to do.

The lady pointed to her throat and then to Rosalie. It seemed as if it were the blue locket on the golden chain she wanted.

Then someone came. It was an old woman. It was the servant Miss Lizzie had said would come to the door. She came from the front. She had been away somewhere. 150

She looked cross. She told them to go around to the front door. As they went the lady tapped. Rosalie looked back. Rosalie said the lady had pulled the flower from her hair and was tearing it to pieces.

The old woman brought the trial-paper. She told them not to mention coming around in the court, and not to say they had had to wait.

It was strange. But many things are strange when one is ten. One learns to put many strange things aside.

There were more worrisome things nearer. The screw was loose which secured the iron foot of Emmy Lou's desk to the floor. Now the front of one desk formed the seat to the next.

Muscles, even in the atmosphere of a Miss Lizzie's rigid discipline, sometimes rebel. The little girl sitting in front of Emmy Lou was given to spasmodic changes of posture, causing unexpected upheavals of Emmy Lou's desk.

On one of these occasions Emmy Lou's ink bottle went over. It was Copy-Book hour. That one's apron, beautiful with much fine ruffling, should be ruined, was a small matter when one's trial-paper had been straight in the path of the flood. Neither was Emmy Lou's condition of digital helplessness to be thought of, although it did seem as if all great Neptune's ocean and more might be needed to make those little fingers white again. Sponges, slate-rags, and neighbourly solicitude did what they could. But the trial-paper was steeped indelibly past redemption. 151

"She raised a timid and deep-dyed hand."

Still not a word from Miss Lizzie. Only a cold and prolonged survey of the scene, only an entire suspension of action in the Fourth Reader room while Miss Lizzie waited. 152

At last Emmy Lou was ready to resume work. She raised a timid and deep-dyed hand, and made known her need.

"Please, I have no trial-paper."

Miss Lizzie's lips unclosed. Had she waited for this? "Then," said Miss Lizzie, "you will stay after school."

Emmy Lou's heart burned, the colour slowly left her cheeks.

It was something besides Emmy Lou that looked straight out of Emmy Lou's eyes at Miss Lizzie. It was Judgment.

Miss Lizzie was not fair.

Emmy Lou did not reach home until dinner was long over. She had first to cover four slips of trial-paper and half a page in her book with upward strokes fine and hair-like, and downward strokes black and heavy. Emmy Lou ate her dinner alone.

At supper she spoke. Emmy Lou generally spoke conclusions and, unless pressed, did not enter into the processes of her reasoning. 153

"I don't want to go to school any more."

Aunt Cordelia looked shocked. Aunt Louise looked stern. Uncle Charlie looked at Emmy Lou.

"That sounds more natural," said Uncle Charlie, but nobody listened.

"She's been missing," said Aunt Louise.

"She's growing too fast," said Aunt Cordelia, who had just been ripping two tucks out of Emmy Lou's last winter's dress; "she can't be well."

So Emmy Lou was taken to the doctor, who gave her a tonic. And following this, she all at once regained her usual cheerful little state of mind, and expressed no more unwillingness to go to school.

But it was not the tonic.

It was the Green and Gold Book. 154

Rosalie brought it. It belonged to her and to Alice and to Amanthus.

They lent it to Emmy Lou.

And the glamour opened and closed about Emmy Lou, and she knew—she knew it all—why the hair of Amanthus gleamed, why Alice flitted where others walked, why laughter dwelt in the cheek of Rosalie. The glamour opened and closed about Emmy Lou, and she and Rosalie and Alice and Amanthus moved in a world of their own—the world of the Green and Gold Book, for the Green and Gold Book was "The Book of Fairy Tales."

"One loved the far corner of the sofa."

The strange, the inexplicable, the meaningless, that hitherto one had thought the real—teachers, problems, such—they became the outer world, the things of small matter.

One loved the far corner of the sofa now, with the book in one's lap, with one's hair falling about one's face and book, shutting out the unreal world and its people.

The real world lay between the covers of the Green and Gold Book—the real world and its people.

And the Princess was always Rosalie, and the Prince—ah! the Prince was the Prince. One had met one's Rosalie, but not yet the Prince. 155

One could not talk of these things except to Rosalie. Hattie would not understand. One was glad when Rosalie told them to Alice and Amanthus, but one could not tell one's self.

And Miss Lizzie? Miss Lizzie had stepped all at once into her proper place. One had not understood before. One would not want Miss Lizzie different. It was right and natural to Miss Lizzie's condition—which condition varied according to the page in the Book, for Miss Lizzie was the Cruel Step-mother, Miss Lizzie was the Wicked Fairy Godmother, Miss Lizzie was the Ogress, the wife of the terrible giant.

One told Rosalie. But Rosalie went even further. Miss Lizzie was the grim and terrible Ogress who dwelt in her lonely castle. True. The school-house was the castle of the Ogress. And the forty little girls in the Fourth Reader were the captives—the captive Princesses—kept by Miss Lizzie until certain tasks were performed.

One looked at Problems differently now. One saw Copy-books through a glamour. They were 156
tasks, and each task done, the nearer release from Miss Lizzie.

Did one fail—?

Emmy Lou held her breath. Rosalie spoke softly: "The lady at the window—her finger at her lips —she had failed—"

Miss Lizzie was the Ogress, and the lady was the Princess—the captive Princess—waiting at the window for release.

And so one played one's part. And so Emmy Lou and Rosalie moved and lived and dreamed in the glamour and the world of the Green and Gold Book.

It stayed in one's desk—sometimes with Alice, or with Amanthus, sometimes with Rosalie. To-day it was with Emmy Lou.

One never read in school. But at recess, on the steps outside the big door, one read aloud in turn while the others ate their apples. And Hattie came, too, when she liked, and Sadie. But one carried the book home, that one might not be parted from it.

To-day it was with Emmy Lou. It had certain treasures between its leaves. One expects to find 157
faint sweet rose-leaves between the pages of the Green and Gold Book, and the scrap of tinsel recalls the gleam and shimmer of the goose girl's ball-dress of woven moonbeams.

To-day the book was in Emmy Lou's desk.

Emmy Lou was at the board. It was Problems. She did not need a book. Miss Lizzie dictated when one was at the board. Emmy Lou was poor at Problems and Miss Lizzie was cross about it.

Sadie, at her desk, needed a book. She had forgotten her Arithmetic, and asked permission to borrow Emmy Lou's.

She went to get it. She pulled it out. Sadie had a way of being 158
unfortunate. She also pulled another book out which fell open on the floor, shedding rose-leaves and tinsel.

"You hadn't any right."

The green and gold glitter of the book caught Miss Lizzie's eye.

Her fingers had been tearing at bits of paper all morning until her desk was strewn.

"Bring it to me," she said.

Miss Lizzie took the book from Sadie and looked at it.

Emmy Lou had just failed quite miserably at Problems. Miss Lizzie's face changed. It was as if a white rage passed over it. She stepped to the stove and cast the book in.

The very flames turned green and gold.

It was gone—the world of glamour, of glory, of dreams—the world of Emmy Lou and Rosalie, of Alice and Amanthus.

It was not Emmy Lou. It was a cry through Emmy Lou. Emmy Lou was just beginning to grow tall, just losing the round-eyed faith of babyhood.

"*You hadn't any right.*"

It was terrible. The Fourth Reader class failed to breathe. 159

Emmy Lou must say she was sorry. Emmy Lou would not.

The hours of school dragged on. Emmy Lou sat silent.

Rosalie looked at her. Laughter had died in Rosalie's cheek. Rosalie pressed her fingers tight in misery for Emmy Lou.

Sadie looked at Emmy Lou. Sadie wept.

Hattie looked at Emmy Lou. Hattie straightened her straight little back and ground her little teeth. Hattie was of that blood which has risen up and slain for affection's sake.

This was an Emmy Lou nobody knew—white-cheeked, brooding, defiant. There are strange potentialities in every Emmy Lou.

The last bell rang.

Emmy Lou must say she was sorry. Emmy Lou would not.

Everyone went—everyone but Emmy Lou and Miss Lizzie—casting backward looks of awe and commiseration.

To be left alone in that nearness solitude entails meant torture, the torture of loathing, of shrinking, of revulsion. 160

She must say she was sorry. Emmy Lou was not sorry.

She sat dry-eyed. The tears would come later. More than once this year they had come after home and Aunt Cordelia's arms were reached. And Aunt Cordelia had thought it was because one was growing too fast. And Aunt Cordelia had rocked and patted and sung about "The Frog Who Would A-Wooing Go."

And then Emmy Lou had laughed because Aunt Cordelia did not know that The Frog and Jenny Wren and The Little Wee Bear were gone into the past, and The Green and Gold Book come to take their place.

The bell had rung at two o'clock. At three Tom came. Tom was the house-boy. He was suave and saddle-coloured and smiling. He had come for Emmy Lou.

Miss Lizzie looked at Emmy Lou. Emmy Lou looked straight ahead.

Then Miss Lizzie looked at Tom. Miss Lizzie could do a good deal with a look. Tom became uneasy, apologetic, guilty. Then he went. It took a good deal to wilt Tom. 161

At half-past three he knocked at the door again. He gave his message from outside the threshold this time. Emmy Lou must come home. Miss Cordelia said so. Emmy Lou's papa had come.

Emmy Lou heard Papa—who came a hundred miles once a month to see her.

Would Emmy Lou say she was sorry? Emmy Lou was not sorry, she could not.

Miss Lizzie shut the door in Tom's face.

Later Aunt Cordelia, bonnet on, returning from the school, explained to her brother-in-law.

Her brother-in-law regarded her thoughtfully through his eye-glasses. He was an editor, and had a mental habit of classifying people while they talked, and putting them away in pigeon-holes. While Aunt Cordelia talked he was putting her in a pigeon-hole marked "Guileless."

"She stood on the outside of the door, Brother Richard," said Aunt Cordelia, quite flushed and breathless, "with the door drawn to behind her. She's a terrifying woman, Richard. She said it was a case for discipline. She said she would allow no interference. My precious baby! And I kept on giving her iron——" 162

Uncle Charlie had come out with the buggy to take his brother-in-law driving.

"What did you come back without her for?" demanded Uncle Charlie.

Aunt Cordelia turned on Uncle Charlie. "You go and see why," said Aunt Cordelia.

Truly an Aunt Cordelia is the last one to stand before a Miss Lizzie.

Uncle Charlie took his brother-in-law in the buggy, and they drove to the school. Emmy Lou's father went in.

Uncle Charlie sat in the buggy and waited. Uncle Charlie wondered if it was right. Miss Lizzie was one of three. One was in an asylum. One was kept at home. And Miss Lizzie, with her rages, taught.

But could one speak, and take work and bread from a Miss Lizzie?

When papa came down, he had Emmy Lou, white-cheeked, by the hand. He had also a sternness about his mouth.

"I got her, you see," he explained with an assumption of comical chagrin, "but with limitations. She's got to say she's sorry, or she can't come back." 163

"I'm not sorry," said Emmy Lou wearily, but with steadiness.

"Stick it out," said Uncle Charlie, who knew his Emmy Lou.

"She needn't go back this year," said Aunt Cordelia when she heard, "my precious baby!"

"I will teach her at home," said Aunt Louise.

"There must be other Green and Gold Books," said papa, "growing on that same tree."

But Uncle Charlie, with brows drawn into a frown, was wondering.

165

ALL THE WINDS OF DOCTRINE

Emmy Lou was now a Big Girl. One climbed from floor to floor as one went up in Readers. With the Fifth Reader one reached the dizzy eminence of top. Emmy Lou now stood, as it were, upon 167

a peak in Darien and stared at the great unknown, rolling ahead, called The Grammar School.

Behind, descended the grades of one's achievements back to the A, B, C of things. One had once been a pygmy part of the Primer World on the first floor one's self, and from there had gazed upward at the haloed beings peopling these same Fifth Reader Heights.

But Emmy Lou felt that somehow she was failing to experience the expected sense of dizzy height, or the joy of perquisite and privilege. To be sure, being a Big Girl, she found herself at recess, one of many, taking hands in long, undulating line, and, like the Assyrian, sweeping down on the fold, while the fold, in the shape of little girls, fled shrieking before the onslaught. 168

But there had been a time when Emmy Lou had been a little girl, and had fled, shrieking, herself. The memory kept her from quite enjoying the onslaught now, though of course a little girl of the under world is only a Primary and must be made to feel it. The privileged members of the Fifth Reader World are Intermediates.

They are other things, too. They are Episcopalians or Presbyterians or some other correspondingly polysyllabic thing, as the case may be. In this case each seemed to be a different thing. Hattie first called the attention of Emmy Lou to it.

The Fifth Reader members ate lunch in groups. Without knowing it, one was growing gregarious. And as becomes a higher social state, one passed one's luncheon around.

169

"Hattie took Emmy Lou aside. 'It's their religion.'"

Emmy Lou passed her luncheon around. Emmy Lou herself knew the joys of eating; and hers, too, was a hospitable soul. She brought liberal luncheons. On this day, between the disks of her beaten biscuit showed the pinkness of sliced ham. 170

Mary Agatha drew back; Mary Agatha was Emmy Lou's newest friend. "It's Friday," said Mary Agatha.

"Of course," said Rosalie, "I forgot." Rosalie put her biscuit back.

"It's ham," said Rebecca Steinau.

Emmy Lou was hurt. It seemed almost like preconcerted reflection on her biscuits and her ham.

Hattie took Emmy Lou aside. "It's their religion," said Hattie, in tones of large tolerance. "We can eat anything, you and I, 'Piscopalians and Presbyterians."

"But Rosalie," said Emmy Lou; Rosalie, like Emmy Lou, was Episcopalian.

But Rosalie had joined Hattie and Emmy Lou. "My little brother's singing in the vested choir," said Rosalie, "and we're going to be High Church."

Hattie looked at Rosalie steadily. Then Hattie took another biscuit. Hattie took another biscuit, deliberately, aggressively. It was as though, with Hattie, to take another biscuit was a matter of conscience and protest. Hattie was Presbyterian. 171

But to Emmy Lou biscuits and ham had lost their savour. Emmy Lou admired Rebecca. Rebecca could reduce pounds and shillings to pence with a rapidity that Emmy Lou could not even follow. Yet Rebecca stooped from this eminence to help labouring Emmy Lou with her sums.

And Emmy Lou saw life through Rosalie's eyes. Emmy Lou trudged unquestioningly after, where the winged feet of Rosalie's fancy led. For yet about Rosalie's light footsteps trailed back some clouds of glory, and through the eyes of Rosalie one still caught visions of the glory and the dream.

And high as are the peaks of the Fifth Reader Heights, Mary Agatha stood on one yet higher. Mary Agatha went to church, not only on Sundays, but on Saints' days.

Mary Agatha loved to go to church.

But, for the matter of that, Rebecca went to church on Saturdays. When did Rebecca *play*? 172

To Emmy Lou church meant several things. It meant going, when down in her depraved heart

lay the knowledge she tried to hide even from herself that she did not want to go. It meant a sore and troubled conscience, because her eye would travel ahead on the page to the Amens. The Amens signified the end. And it meant a fierce and unholy joy that would not down, when that end came.

But Mary Agatha loved to go to church. And Rebecca gave Saturdays to church. And now Rosalie, who admired Mary Agatha, was taking to church. No wonder that to Emmy Lou biscuits and ham were tasteless.

But the Fifth Reader is an Age of Revelation. One is more than an Intermediate. One is an Animal and a Biped. One had to confess it on paper in a Composition under the head of “Man.”

One accepted the Intermediate and Biped easily, because of a haziness of comprehension, but to hear that one is an Animal was a shock.

173 But Miss Fanny said so. Miss Fanny also said the course in Language was absurd. She said it under her breath. She said it as Emmy Lou handed in her Composition on “Man.”

So one was an animal. One felt confidence in Miss Fanny’s statements. Miss Fanny walked lightly, she laughed in her eyes; that last fact one did not cherish against Miss Fanny, though sometimes one smiled doubtfully back at her. Was Miss Fanny laughing at one?

Miss Fanny was a Real Person. The others had been Teachers. Miss Fanny had a grandpapa. He was rich. And she had a mamma who cried about Miss Fanny’s teaching school. But her grandpapa said he was proud of Miss Fanny.

Emmy Lou knew all about Miss Fanny. Miss Fanny’s sister was Aunt Louise’s best friend.

Mr. Bryan, the Principal, came often to the Fifth Reader room. He came for Language Lessons. Mr. Bryan told them he had himself introduced the Course in Language into the School Curriculum.

174 Its purpose, he explained, was to increase the comprehension and vocabulary of the child. The paucity of vocabulary of even the average adult, he said, is lamentable.

“In all moments of verbal doubt and perplexity,” said Mr. Bryan, “seek the Dictionary. In its pages you will find both vocabulary and elucidation.”

Toward spring Religions became more absorbing than ever. One day Rebecca and Gertie and Rachel brought notes. Rebecca and Gertie and Rachel must thereafter be excused on certain days at an early hour for attendance at Confirmation Class.

Miss Fanny said “Of course.” But she reminded them of Examination for the Grammar School looming ahead.

A little later a second influx of notes piled Miss Fanny’s desk. Mary Agatha and Kitty and Nora and Anne must go at noon, three times a week, to their Confirmation Class.

Then Yetta and Paula could not come at all on their instruction days, because the Lutheran Church was far up-town in Germanberg. They, too, were making ready for Confirmation.

Again Miss Fanny reminded them all of Examination.

175 Just at this time Emmy Lou was having trouble of her own. It was Lent, which meant Church three times a week. Aunt Louise said Emmy Lou must go. She said Emmy Lou, being now a big girl, ought to want to go.

Rosalie, being High, had Church every afternoon. But Rosalie liked it. Emmy Lou feared she was the only one in all the class who did not like it.

Even Sadie must enjoy church. For one day she missed in every lesson and lost her temper and cried; next day she brought a note from her mamma, and then she told Emmy Lou about it; it asked that Sadie be excused for missing, for because of the Revival at her church, Sadie would be up late every night.

Mr. Bryan was in the room when Miss Fanny read this note. She handed it to him.

“To each year its evils, I suppose,” said Miss Fanny; “to the Primer its whooping-cough and measles, to the First Reader the shedding of its incisors. With the Fifth Reader comes the inoculation of doctrines. We are living the Ten Great Religions.”

176 Mr. Bryan laid the note down. He said he must caution Miss Fanny that, as Principal or as Teacher, neither he nor she had anything to do with the religions of the children intrusted to their care. And he must remind Miss Fanny that these problems of school life could not be met with levity. He hoped Miss Fanny would take this as he meant it, kindly.

The class listened breathlessly. Was Miss Fanny treating their religions with levity? What is levity?

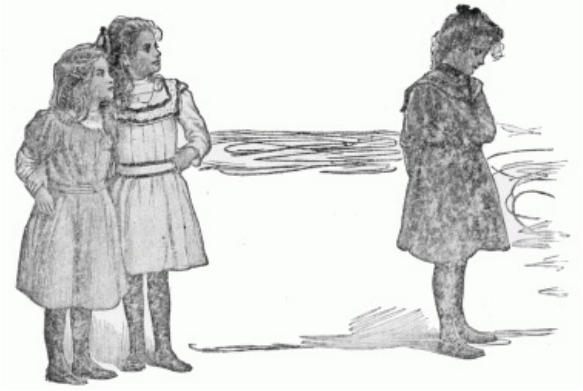
It was Emmy Lou who asked the others when they sought to pin the accusation to Miss Fanny.

Mary Agatha looked it up in the Dictionary. Then she reported: “Lightness of conduct, want of weight, inconstancy, vanity, frivolity.” She told it off with low and accusing enunciation.

It sounded grave. Emmy Lou was troubled. Could Miss Fanny be all this? Could she be guilty of levity?

177 It was soon after that Mary Agatha brought a note; she told Rosalie and Emmy Lou about it; it asked that Mary Agatha be allowed a seat to herself. This, Mary Agatha explained, was because, preparatory to Confirmation, she was trying to keep her mind from secular things, and a seat to

herself would help her to do it.



"Mary Agatha was as one already apart from things secular."

To Rosalie and Emmy Lou, Mary Agatha was as one already apart from things secular. To them the look on her clear, pale little profile was already rapt.

But Mary Agatha went on to tell them why she was different from Kitty or Nora, or the others of her Confirmation Class. It was because she was going to be a Bride of Heaven. 178

Rosalie listened, awed. But Emmy Lou did not quite understand.

Mary Agatha looked pityingly at her. "You know what a bride is? And you know what's Heaven?"

The bell rang. Emmy Lou returned to the mental eminence of her Fifth Reader heights, still hazy. Yet she hardly needed the Dictionary, for she knew a bride. Aunt Katie had been a bride. With a diamond star. And presents. And Emmy Lou knew Heaven.

Though lately Emmy Lou's ideas of Heaven had broadened. Hitherto, Heaven, conceived of the primitive, primary mind, had been a matter of vague numbers seated in parallel rows, answering to something akin to Roll Call, and awarded accordingly. But lately, a birthday had brought Emmy Lou a book called "Tanglewood Tales." And Heaven had since taken on an Olympian colouring and diversity more complex and perplexing.

Miss Fanny read Mary Agatha's note, and looking down at her said that she wondered, since every desk was in use in its dual capacity, if Mary Agatha were to devote herself quite closely to reducing pounds to pence, would it not be possible for her to forget her nearness to things secular? 179

Mary Agatha was poor in Arithmetic. And Miss Fanny was laughing in her eyes. Was Miss Fanny laughing at Mary Agatha?

Mary Agatha cried at recess. She said her Papa furnished pokers and tongs and shovels and dust-pans for the public schools, and he would see to it that she had a seat to herself if she wanted it.

But when the class went up from recess, there was a seat for Mary Agatha. Miss Fanny had sent the note down to Mr. Bryan, and he had arranged it. It was a table from the office, and a stool. For want of other place, they stood beneath the blackboard in front of the class. It was a high stool.

Being told, Mary Agatha gathered her books together and went and climbed upon her stool, apart from things secular.

Miss Fanny turned to Mr. Bryan. "For the propagation of infant Saint Stylites," said Miss Fanny. 180

"Ur-r—exactly," said Mr. Bryan. He said it a little, perhaps, doubtfully.

Suddenly Mr. Bryan grew red. He had caught Miss Fanny's eyes laughing, and saw her mouth twitching. Was Miss Fanny laughing at Mr. Bryan? What about?

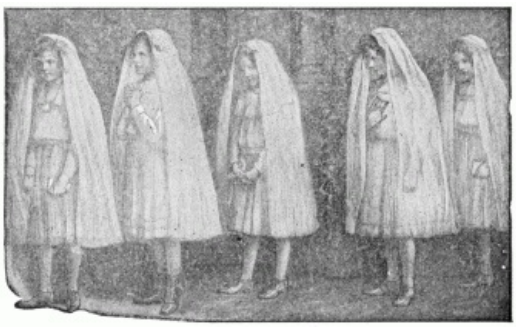
Mr. Bryan went out. He closed the door. It closed sharply.

Then everything came at once. Hot weather, and roses and syringa piling Miss Fanny's desk, and Reviews for Examination, and Confirmations.

Mary Agatha asked them to her confirmation. Rosalie and Emmy Lou went. The great doors at Mary Agatha's church opened and closed behind them; it was high and dim; there were twinkling lights and silence, and awe, and colour. Something quivered. It burst forth. It was music. It was almost as if it hurt. One drew a deep breath and shut one's eyes a moment because it hurt; then one opened them. The aisles were filled with little girls in misty white and floating veils, stealing forward.

And Mary Agatha was among them. 181

Rosalie told Emmy Lou she meant some day to belong to Mary Agatha's church. Emmy Lou thought she would, too.



"And Mary Agatha was among them."

But afterward Emmy Lou found herself wavering. Was Emmy Lou's a sordid soul? For next came Confirmation at the Synagogue, and that, it seemed, meant presents. Gertie wore to school a locket on a glittering chain; Rebecca showed a new ring. Emmy Lou's faith was wavering.

About this time Miss Fanny spoke her mind. Because of excuses and absences, because of abstractions and absorptions, Miss Fanny said marks were low; and she reminded them of Examination for the Grammar School near at hand. Then she asked a little girl named Sally why she had failed to hand in her Composition. 182

"Gertie wore to school a locket on a glittering chain; Rebecca showed a new ring."

Sally said her church was having a season of prayer, and her Mother said Sally was old enough now to go, and as it was both afternoons and evenings, Sally had had no time to write a Composition. 183

Miss Fanny told Sally to remain in at recess and write it. Mr. Bryan had inquired for her Composition.

Sally remained in tears. The subject for her Composition was "Duty."

Miss Fanny put her hand on Sally's shoulder and said something about a divided duty. And Sally cried some more, and Miss Fanny sat down at the desk and helped her.

Emmy Lou saw it. She had come upstairs, in a moment of doubt and perplexity, to consult the Dictionary; the word was *heretic*.

It was this way. They had been in a group at recess and Mary Agatha was dividing her button-string. Mary Agatha said she had given up worldly things, and it would be a sin for her to own a button-string.

She offered Hattie a button. Hattie refused it; she said if it was a sin to own a button-string, why should Mary Agatha offer her buttons to other people? And she walked off. Hattie had an uncompromising way of putting things. Hattie was a Presbyterian. 184

Emmy Lou felt anxious; she had been offered a button first and had taken it gratefully, for her button-string was short.

But Mary Agatha assured her that she and Hattie and the others of the group could own button-strings where Mary Agatha could not. A mere matter of a button-string made small difference. They were Heretics.

Rosalie put her arm about Emmy Lou. Being High Church, she did not take it to herself; she took it for Emmy Lou.

Emmy Lou hesitated. Ought she to be offended? Was she a Heretic? Emmy Lou was cautious, for she had contradicted Hattie about being an Animal, and then had to confess on paper that such she was.

But Sadie had no doubts. Sadie, following the revival, had joined the church, and she felt she knew where she stood. "I'd have you know," said Sadie, "I'm a Christian," and Sadie began to cry.

Rebecca Steinau lifted her black eyes. She gave her beringed little hand a dramatic and 185

conclusive wave. “You’re all of you Gentiles,” said Rebecca.

Emmy Lou left the group. As Animal, Biped, Intermediate, Low Church, Episcopalian, Gentile, and possible Heretic, she went upstairs to seek the Dictionary. It was a moment of doubt and perplexity; with labouring absorption she and her index finger pored over the page.

“One whose errors are doctrinal and usually of a malignant character—” Ought she to be offended?

The bell rang. The class filed in. Sadie’s eyes were red. Miss Fanny tried not to see her—her eyes were chronically red. But so insistently and ostentatiously did Sadie continue to mop them, that Miss Fanny was compelled to take notice.

Sadie told her grievances. Her voice broke on Heretic, and she wept afresh at Gentile.

186

Miss Fanny was outdone. She said they had better all be little Heretics than little Pharisees; she said she only needed a few infant Turks and Infidels, and her sectarian Babel would be complete.

That day there were more notes. Miss Fanny gave them this time. To Sadie and Mary Agatha and Rebecca and Sally among others.

Emmy Lou heard about the notes afterward. Each said the same thing. Each said that Sadie or Rebecca or Mary Agatha or whichever little girl it might be, had repeatedly fallen below; that she had not for weeks given her mind to her lessons, and she could not conscientiously be recommended as ready for Examination for the Grammar School.

“She and her index finger pored over the page.”

The next day, near recess, there came a knock at the Fifth Reader door. Sadie’s mamma came in. Sadie grew red. One always grows red when it is one’s relative who comes in. Sadie’s mamma was a pale, little lady who cried. She cried now. She said that for Sadie to be kept back for no other reason than her natural piety, was evidence of a personal dislike. She said Miss Fanny had upheld another little girl who called Sadie a Heretic.

187

Miss Fanny asked Sadie’s mamma to sit down on the bench. Recess was near, and then Miss Fanny could talk.

There came a knock at the door. A lady with black eyes came in. Rebecca got red. It was Rebecca’s mamma. She said Rebecca had always done well at school. She said Rebecca was grand at figures. She said Miss Fanny had thrown her religion at Rebecca, and had called her a Pharisee.

Miss Fanny asked Rebecca’s mamma to sit down on the bench. It would soon be recess.

Sadie’s mamma and Rebecca’s mamma looked at each other coldly.

The door opened. Sally got red. Sally looked frightened. It was Sally’s mamma. The flower in her bonnet shook when she talked. She said Sally had refused to go to church for fear of Miss Fanny. And because Sally had been made to do her religious duty she was being threatened with failure——

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Miss Fanny interrupted Sally’s mamma to say there was the bench, if she cared to sit down. At recess Miss Fanny would be at leisure.

Mr. Bryan threw open the door. Mary Agatha grew pink as Mr. Bryan waved in a slender lady with trailing silken skirts and reproachful eyes. It was Mary Agatha’s mamma. She said that even with the note, threatening Mary Agatha with failure, she could not have believed it true; that Miss Fanny disliked Mary Agatha because of the seat to herself; that Miss Fanny had classed Mary Agatha with Turks and Infidels—but since Mr. Bryan had just admitted downstairs that he had had to caution Miss Fanny about this matter of religion——

Miss Fanny looked at Mr. Bryan. Then she rang the bell. It was not yet recess-time; but since Miss Fanny rang the bell, the Fifth Reader Class filed out wonderingly. Miss Fanny, looking at Mr. Bryan, had a queer smile in her eyes. Yet it was not as though Miss Fanny’s smile was laughter.

189

But, after all, Sadie and Mary Agatha and Sally and Rebecca did try at Examination. Miss Fanny, it seemed, insisted they should. A teacher from the Grammar School came and examined the class.

Later, one went back to find out. There was red ink written across the reports of Sadie and Sally and Mary Agatha and Rebecca. It said “Failure.”

Emmy Lou breathed. There was no red ink on her report. Emmy Lou had passed for the Grammar School.

Down-stairs Mary Agatha said her papa would see to it because she had failed. Her papa furnished pokers and shovels for the schools, and her papa would call on the Board.

Mary Agatha’s Papa did see to it, and the papas of Sadie and Sally and Rebecca supported him. They called it religious persecution; and they wanted Miss Fanny removed.

Emmy Lou heard about it at home. It was vacation.

Uncle Charlie owned a newspaper. It was for Miss Fanny. And Miss Fanny’s grandpapa, talking at the gate with Uncle Charlie, struck the pavement hard with his cane; he’d see about it, too, said her grandpapa. Emmy Lou heard him.

But when it came time for the Board to meet, Miss Fanny, it seemed, had resigned. Aunt Louise read it out of the paper at breakfast.

“How strange—” said Aunt Louise.

“Not at all,” said Uncle Charlie.

Aunt Louise said, “Oh!” She was reading on down the column.

“—resignation by request, because the Board, in recognition of her merit and record as Teacher, has appointed her Principal of the new school on Elm Street.”

“But she’s not a man,” said Emmy Lou when it had been explained to her. Emmy Lou was bewildered.

“It’s a departure,” said Uncle Charlie.

“Don’t tease her, Charlie,” said Aunt Cordelia.

Emmy Lou felt troubled; she liked Miss Fanny; she could not bear to contemplate her in the guise of Principal. One could never like Miss Fanny then any more.

Miss Fanny’s mamma had cried because Miss Fanny was a teacher, Emmy Lou remembered. But that was nothing to this.

Some teachers could be nice. Miss Fanny had been nice. But to be a Principal!

Emmy Lou had known but one type. She looked up from her plate. “I reckon Miss Fanny’s mamma will cry some more,” said Emmy Lou.

THE CONFINES OF CONSISTENCY

Aunt Louise was opposed to the public school.

Uncle Charlie said he feared Aunt Louise did not appreciate the democratic institutions of her country.

Emmy Lou caught the word—democratic; later she had occasion to consider it further.

Aunt Louise said that Uncle Charlie was quite right in his fear, and the end was that Emmy Lou was started at private school.

But it was not a school—it was only a Parlour; and there being a pupil more than there were accommodations, and Emmy Lou being the new-comer, her portion was a rocking-chair and a lap-board.

There was not even a real teacher, only an old lady who called one “my dear.”

At home Emmy Lou cried with her head buried in Aunt Cordelia’s new bolster sham; for how could she confess to Hattie and to Rosalie that it was a parlour and a lap-board?

Upon consultation, Uncle Charlie said, let her do as she pleased, since damage to her seemed to be inevitable either way. So, Emmy Lou, rejoicing, departed one morning for the Grammar School.

Public school being different from private school, Emmy Lou at once began to learn things. For instance, at Grammar School, one no longer speaks of boys in undertones. One assumes an attitude of having always known boys. At Grammar School, classes attend chapel. There are boys in Chapel, still separated from the girls, to be sure, after the manner of the goats from the sheep; but after one learns to laugh from the corners of one’s eyes at boys, a dividing line of mere aisle is soon abridged. Watching Rosalie, Emmy Lou discovered this.

There was a boy in Chapel whom she knew, but it takes courage to look out of the corners of one’s eyes, and Emmy Lou could only find sufficient to look straight, which is altogether a different thing. But the boy saw her. Emmy Lou looked away quickly.

Once the boy’s name had been Billy; later, at dancing school, it was Willie; now, the Principal who conducted Chapel Exercises called him William.

Emmy Lou liked this Principal. He had white hair, and when it fell into his eyes he would stand it wildly over his head, running his fingers through its thickness; but one did not laugh because of greater interest in what he said.

Emmy Lou asked Rosalie the Principal’s name, but Rosalie was smiling backward at a boy as the classes filed out of Chapel. Afterward she explained that his name was Mr. Page.

At Grammar School Emmy Lou continued to learn things. The pupils of a grammar school abjure school bags; a Geography now being a folio volume measurable in square feet, it is the thing to build upon its basic foundation an edifice of other text-books, and carry the sum total to and fro on an aching arm.

Nor do grammar-school pupils bring lunch; they bring money, and buy lunch—pies, or doughnuts, or pickles—having done with the infant pabulum of primary bread and butter.

Nor does so big a girl as a grammar-school pupil longer confess to any infantile abbreviation of entitlement; she gives her full baptismal name and is written down, as in Emmy Lou's case, Emily Louise Pope MacLauren, which has its drawbacks; for she sometimes fails to recognise the unaccustomed sound of that name when called unexpectedly from the platform.

For at twelve years, an Emmy Lou finds herself dreaming, and watching the clouds through the school-room windows. The reading lesson concerns one Alnaschar, the Barber's Fifth Brother; and while the verses go droningly round, the kalsomined blue walls fade, and one wanders the market-place of Bagdad, amid bales of rich stuffs, and trays of golden trinkets and mysteries that trouble not, purveyors and Mussulmen, eunuchs and seraglios, khans, mosques, drachmas —one has no idea what they mean, nor does one care: on every hand in Life lie mysteries, why not in books? The thing is, to seize upon the Story, and to let the other go. 199

And so Emily Louise fails to answer to the baptismal fulness of her name spoken from the platform, until at a neighbour's touch she springs up, blushing.

"One finds one's self dreaming, and watching the clouds through the school-room window."

But, somehow, she did not take the reproach in Miss Amanda's voice to heart; Miss Amanda was given to saying reproachfully, "Please, p-ple-e-ase—young *la*dies," many times a day, but after a brief pause one returned to pleasant converse with a neighbour. 200

Jokes were told about Miss Amanda among the girls, and, gathering at recess about her desk, her pupils would banter Miss Amanda as to who was her favourite, whereupon, she, pleased and flattered, would make long and detailed refutation of any show of partiality.

Miss Amanda pinned a bow in her hair, and wore a chain, and rings, and was given to frequent patting and pushing of her hair into shape; was it possible Miss Amanda felt herself to be —*pretty*?

Ordinarily, however, Emily Louise did not think much about her one way or another, except at those times when Miss Amanda tried to be funny; then she quite hated her with unreasoning fierceness.

Right now Miss Amanda was desiring Emily Louise MacLauren to give attention. 201

"Miss Amanda, pleased and flattered, would make long, detailed refutation of any show of partiality."

Once a week there was public recitation in the Chapel. Mr. Page considered it good for boys and girls to work together, which was a new way of regarding it peculiar to grammar school, for hitherto, boys, like the skull and cross-bones bottles in Aunt Cordelia's closet, had been things 202

to be avoided.

“Hitherto boys, like skull and cross-bones bottles, had been things to be avoided.”

“To-morrow,” Miss Amanda was explaining, “the chapel recitation will be in grammar; you will conjugate,” Miss Amanda simpered, “the verb—to love,” with playful meaning in her emphasis; “but I need have no fear, young ladies,” archly, “that you will let yourselves be beaten at this lesson.” 203

“After one has learned to smile out one's eyes, a dividing line of aisle is soon bridged."

Miss Amanda meant to be funny. Emily Louise, for one, looked stonily ahead; not for anything would she smile. 204

But the weekly recitation varied, and there came a week when the classes were assembled for a lesson in composition.

Mr. Page laughed at what he called flowery effusions. “Use the matter and life about you,” he said.

“There is one boy,” he went on to state, “whose compositions are generally good for that reason. William, step up, sir, and let us hear what you have made of this.”

William arose. He was still square, but he was no longer short; there was a straight and handsome bridge building to his nose, and he had taken to tall collars. William’s face was somewhat suffused at this summons to publicity, but his smile was cheerful and unabashed. His composition was on “Conscience.” So were the compositions of the others; but his was different.

“A boy has one kind of a conscience,” read William, “and a girl has another kind. Two girls met a cow. ‘Look her right in the face and pretend like we aren’t afraid,’ said the biggest girl; but the littlest girl had a conscience. ‘Won’t it be deceiving the cow?’ she wanted to know.” 205

Emily Louise blushed; how could William! For Emily Louise was “the littlest girl;” Hattie was the other, and William had come along and driven the cow away.

William was still reading: “There was a girl found a quarter in the snow. She thought how it would buy five pies, or ten doughnuts, or fifteen pickles, and then she thought about the person who would come back and find the place in the snow and no quarter, and so she went and put the quarter back.”

How could William! Mr. Page, his hair wildly rumpled, was clapping hand to knee; even the teachers were trying not to smile. Emily Louise blushed hotter, for Emily Louise, taking the quarter back, had met William.

“Boys are different,” stated William’s composition. “There was a boy went to the office to be

whipped. The strap hit a stone in his pocket. So the Principal, who went around on Saturdays with a hammer tapping rocks, let the boy off. He didn't know the boy got the rock out the alley on purpose. But I reckon boys have some kind of a conscience. That boy felt sort of mean."

It was the teachers who were laughing now, while Mr. Page, running his fingers through his hair, wore a smile—arrested, reflective, considering. But it broadened; there are Principals, here and there, who can appreciate a William.

The cheek of Emily Louise might be hot, but in her heart was a newer feeling; was it pleasure? Something, somewhere, was telling Emily Louise that William liked her the better for these things he was laughing at. Was she pleased thereat? Never. Her cheek grew hotter. Yet the pleasurable sensation was there. Suddenly she understood. It was because of this tribute to the condition of her conscience. Of course it would be perfectly proper, therefore, to determine to keep up this reputation with William.

"For one's feelings in verse one paid a pie."

There was other proof that William liked her. At grammar school it was the proper thing to own an autograph album. William's page in the album of Emily Louise was a triumph in purple ink upon a pinkish background. Not that William had written it. Jimmy Reed had written it for him. Jimmy wielded a master pen in flourish and shading, upon which he put a price accordingly. A mere name cost the patrons of Jimmy a pickle, while a pledge to eternal friendship or sincerity was valued at a doughnut. For the feelings in verse, one paid a pie.

William had paid a pie, and his sentiments at maximum price thus set forth declared:

"True friendship is a golden knot
Which angles' hands have tied,
By heavenly skill its textures wrought
Who shall its folds divide?"

Emily Louise wondered about the "angles hands." What were they? It never suggested itself that a master of the pen such as Jimmy might be weak in spelling.

One has to meet new responsibilities at grammar school, too; one has to be careful with whom she associates.

Associate was Isobel's word; she used many impressive words, but then Isobel was different; she spelled her name with an o, and she did not live in a home; Isobel lived in a hotel, and her papa was the holder of a government position. Hattie's papa, someone told Emily Louise, had wanted to hold it, but Isobel's papa got it.

Isobel said a person must discriminate. This Emily Louise found meant, move in groups that talked each about the others. Isobel and Rosalie pointed out to Emily Louise that the nice girls were in their group.

Yet Hattie was not in it; Emily Louise wondered why.

"It depends on who you are," said Isobel, with the sweeping calmness of one whose position is assured. "My papa is own second cousin to the Attorney-General of the United States."

And that this claim conveyed small meaning to the group about Isobel, made her family connections by no means the less impressive and to be envied. The Isobels supply their part of the curriculum of grammar school.

Emily Louise went home anxious. "Have I a family?" she inquired.

"It's hard to say, since you abandoned it," said Uncle Charlie.

Emily Louise blushed; she did not feel just happy in her mind yet about those dolls buried in a mausoleum-like trunk in the attic.

She explained: the kind of family that has a tree? Did she belong to a family? Had she a tree?

"The only copper beech in town," said Uncle Charlie.

But Aunt Cordelia's vulnerable spot was touched; she grew quite heated. Emily Louise learned that she was a Pringle and a Pope.

"And a MacLauren?" queried Emily Louise.

But Aunt Cordelia's enthusiasm had cooled.

There came a time when Emily Louise divined why. All at once talk began at school, about a thing looming ahead, called an Election. It seemed a disturbing thing, keeping Uncle Charlie at the office all hours. And when in time it actually arrived, Emily Louise could not go to school that day because the way would take her past the Polls, yet ordinarily this was only the grocery; but so dreadful a place is it when it becomes a poll, that Aunt Cordelia could not go to it for her marketing.

Hitherto, except when Miss Amanda wanted to be funny, Emily Louise had felt her to be inoffensive; but as election became the absorbing topic of Grammar School, a dreadful thing came to light—Miss Amanda was a Republican.

Hattie told Emily Louise; her voice was low and full of horror. For Hattie reflected the spirit of her State and age; the State was in the South, the year was preceding the '80's.

Emily Louise lowered her voice, too; it was to ask just what is a Republican. She was conscious of a vagueness.

Hattie looked at her, amazed. “A Republican—why—people who are not Democrats—of course.”

“How does one know which one is?” asked Emily Louise, feeling that it would be disconcerting, considering public opinion, to find herself a Republican. 211

Hattie looked tried. “You’re what your father is, naturally. I should think you’d know that, Emily Louise.”

On the way from school William joined Emily Louise.

“What’s a Republican, William?” she asked.

His countenance changed. “It’s—well—it’s the sort you don’t want to have anything to do with,” said William, darkly.

Emily Louise, knowing how William regarded her conscientiousness, was uneasy because of a certain recollection. She must get to the bottom of this. She sought Aunt Louise privately. “Aren’t you a Democrat?” she inquired.

The indignant response of Aunt Louise was disconcerting. “What else could you dream I am?” she demanded with asperity.

“You said you didn’t approve of Democratic Institutions,” explained Emily Louise, recalling.

“I approve of nothing under Republican domination,” said Aunt Louise haughtily—which was muddling.

“What’s Papa?” asked Emily Louise, suddenly. 212

Aunt Louise, dressing for a party, shut her door sharply.

One could ask Aunt Cordelia. But Aunt Cordelia turned testy, and even told Emily Louise to run away.

Uncle Charlie was gone.

There was Aunt M’randa and Tom, so Emily Louise sought the kitchen. It was after supper. Tom was spelling the news from a paper spread on the table, and Aunt M’randa was making up the flannel cakes for breakfast.

“Who? Yo’ paw?” said Tom; “he’s a Republican; he done edit that kinder paper over ’cross the Ohier River, he does.”

There was unction in the glib quickness of Tom’s reply. Then he dodged; it was just in time.

“Shet yo’ mouf,” said Aunt M’randa with wrath; “ain’t I done tol’ how they’ve kep’ it from the chile.”

Emily Louise was swallowing hard. “Then—then—am I a Republican?” Her voice sounded way off.

Aunt M’randa turned a scandalised face upon her last baby in the family. “Co’se yer ain’t chile; huccome yer think sech er thing? Ain’t yer done learned its sinnahs is lumped wi’ ’publicans—po’ whites, an’ cul’d folks an’ sech?” 213

The comfort in Aunt M’randa’s reassuring was questionable. “But—you said—my papa—” said Emily Louise.

The tension demanded relief. Aunt M’randa turned on Tom. “I lay I bus’ yo’ haid open ef yer don’t quit yo’ stan’in’ wi’ yer mouf gapin’ at the trouble yer done made.”

Aunt M’randa was sparring for time.

“Don’ yer worry ’bout dat, honey”—this to Emily Louise—“hit’s jes’ one dese here mistakes in jogaphy, seem like, same es yer tell erbout gettin’ kep’ in foh. Huccome a gen’man like yo’ paw, got bawn y’other side de Ohier River, ’ceptin’ was an acci-dent? Dess tell me dat? But dere’s ’nough quality dis here side de fam’ly to keep yer a good Dem’crat, honey—” and Aunt M’randa, muttering, glared at Tom.

For Emily Louise was gazing into a gulf wider than the river rolling between home—and papa, a gulf called war; nor did Emily Louise know, as Aunt M’randa knew, that it was a baby’s little fists clutching at Aunt Cordelia that had bridged that gulf. 214

Emily Louise turned away—her papa was that thing for lowered voice and bated breath—her papa—was a Republican.

Then Emily Louise was a Republican also. Hattie said so; Aunt M’randa did not know. At twelve one begins determinedly to face facts.

Yet the very next day Emily Louise made discovery that a greater than her papa had been that thing for lowered tones. She was working upon her weekly composition, and this week the subject was “George Washington.”

Emily Louise had just set forth upon legal cap her opening conclusions upon the matter. She had gone deep into the family annals of George, for, by nature, Emily Louise was thorough, and William had testified that she was conscientious.

“George Washington was a great man and so was his mother.”

Here she paused, pen suspended; for the full meaning of a statement in the history spread 215

before her had suddenly dawned upon her; for that history declared George Washington “a firm advocate for these republican principles.”

Should an Emily Louise then turn traitor to her father, or should she desert an Aunt Cordelia and an Aunt Louise?

Life is complex. At twelve a pucker of absorption and concentration begins to gather between the brows.

On the homeward way, William was waiting at the corner. “What is a person when they are not either Democrat or Republican?” Emily Louise asked as they went along.

William’s tones were uncompromising. “A mugwump,” he said, and he said it with contempt.

It sounded unpleasant, and as though it ought to merit the contempt of William.

And grammar was becoming as complex as life itself. One forenoon Emily Louise was called upon to recite the rule. Every day it was a different rule, which in itself was discouraging. But 216
the exceptions were worse than the rule; for a rule is a matter of a mere paragraph, while the exceptions are measurable by pages.

But Emily Louise knew the rule. Even with town one background for flag and bunting; even with the streets one festive processional; even with the advent, in her city, of the President of the United States on his tour of the South; even with this in her civic precincts, Emily Louise, arising, was able correctly to recite the rule.

“An article should only be used once before a complex description of one and the same object.”

“An example,” said Miss Amanda.

Emily Louise stood perplexed, for none had been given in the book.

“Simply apply the rule and make your own,” said Miss Amanda.

But it did not seem simple; Emily Louise was still thinking in the concrete.

Hattie had grasped abstractions. Hattie waved her hand. There was a scarlet spot upon her cheek. Before school there had been words between Hattie and Isobel. The politics of the 217
President of the United States had figured in it, and Emily Louise had learned that the President was a Republican. And yet flags! And processions!

Miss Amanda said, “Well, Hattie?”

Hattie arose. “There is a single, only, solitary Republican pupil in this class,” said she promptly and with emphasis.

Miss Amanda might proceed to consider the proposition grammatically, her mind being on the rule, and not the import, but the class interpreted it as Hattie meant they should. In their midst! And unsuspected!

Emily Louise grew hot. Could Hattie, would Hattie, do this thing? Hattie, accuse her thus? Yet who else could Hattie mean? The heart of Emily Louise swelled—Hattie to do this thing!

And Hattie was wrong. She should know that she was wrong. She should read it in her own autograph album, just brought to Emily Louise for her inscribing. Emily Louise remained in at recess. Verse was beyond her. She recognised her limitations. Some are born to prose and some 218
to higher things. She applied herself to a plain statement in Hattie’s album:

Dear Hattie:
I am a Mugwump and your true friend.

EMILY LOUISE MACLAUREN

Then she put the book on Hattie’s desk as the bell rang.

With the class came a visible and audible excitement. Mr. Page followed, his hair wildly erect, and he conversed with Miss Amanda hurriedly.

With visual signalling and labial dumb show, Emily Louise implored enlightenment.

“Ours is the honour class, so we’re to be chosen,” enunciated Hattie, in a staccato whisper.

Rosalie was nearer. “There’s to be a presentation—in the Chapel,” whispered Rosalie; “sh-h—he’s going to choose us—now——”

Mr. Page and Miss Amanda were surveying the class. Some two score pairs of eager eyes sought each to stay those glances upon themselves. Perhaps Mr. Page lacked courage.

“The choice I leave to you,” said he to Miss Amanda. Then he went. 219

Miss Amanda was also visibly excited. She settled her chain and puffed the elaborate coiffure of her hair, the while she continued to survey the class. She looked hesitant and undecided, glancing from row to row; then, as from some inspiration, her face cleared and she grew arch, shaking a finger playfully. “To the victors belong the spoils,” she said with sprightly humour, “and it will, at least, narrow the choice. I will ask those young ladies whose fathers chance to be of a Republican way of thinking to please arise.”

A silence followed—a silence of disappointment to the many; then Emily Louise MacLauren arose.

Was retribution following thus fast because of that subterfuge of Mugwump? Alas for that conscientiousness of which she had once been proud! Was it the measure of her degradation

she read on Rosalie's startled face—Rosalie's face of stricken incredulity and amaze? But no; Rosalie's transfixed gaze was not on Emily Louise—it passed her, to——

To where in the aisle beyond stood another—Isobel. 220

But the head of Isobel was erect, and her eyes flashed triumph; the throw of Isobel's shoulders flung defiance back in the moment of being chosen.

Excitement quivered the voice of Miss Amanda's announcement. "The wife of the President of the United States, young ladies, having signified her intention of to-day visiting our school, the young ladies standing will report to the office at once, to receive instructions as to their part in the programme; though first, perhaps"—did Miss Amanda read sex through self—"a little smoothing of hair—and ribbons——"

Emily Louise on this day carried her news home doubtfully, for Aunt Louise and Aunt Cordelia were of such violent Democracy.

"You were chosen"—Aunt Louise repeated—"Isobel, to make the speech and you to present the flowers?" Aunt Louisa's face was alight with excitement and inquiry. "And what did you do, Emmy Lou?"

"I gave them to her up on the platform; it was a pyramid in a lace paper—the bouquet." 221

"And then?" Aunt Louise was breathless with attention.

"She kissed me," said Emily Louise, "on the cheek."

Aunt Louise gave a little laugh of gratification and pride. "The wife of the President—why, Emmy Lou——"

"I'll write to her Aunt Katie this very afternoon," said Aunt Cordelia.

"Better look to the family tree," said Uncle Charlie. "There's danger of too rich soil in these public honours."

But, instead, Emily Louise went out and sat on the side-door step; she needed solitude for the readjustment of her ideas.

Aunt Cordelia was pleased, and Aunt Louise was proud.

And Emily Louise, with the kiss of Republicanism upon her cheek, had stepped down from the Chapel platform into ovation and adulation, to find herself the centre of a homeward group jostling for place beside her. Hattie had carried her books, Rosalie her jacket. William had 222 nodded to her at one corner, to be waiting at the next, where he nodded again with an incidental carelessness of manner, and joined the group. Emily Louise had stolen a glance at William, anxiously. Had William's opinion of her fallen? It would seem not.

Yet Isobel had gone home alone. Emily Louise had seen her starting, with sidewise glance and lingering saunter should any be meaning to overtake her. But she had gone on alone.

"Because she never told," said Hattie.

"Until she wanted to be chosen," said Rosalie.

"But I never told," said Emily Louise.

Hattie was final. "It's different," said Hattie. 223

"Oh, very," said Rosalie.

They travel through labyrinthian paths who seek for understanding.

The sun went down; the dusk grew chill. Emily Louise sat on the door-step, chin in palm.

A BALLAD IN PRINT O' LIFE

225

Double names are childish things; therefore Emmy Lou entered the high school as Emily 227 MacLauren.

Her disapproval of the arrangements she found there was decided. High-school pupils have no abiding place, but are nomadic in their habits and enforced wanderers between shrines of learning, changing quarters as well as teachers for every recitation; and the constant readjustment of mood to meet the varied temperaments of successive teachers is wearing on the temper.

Yet there is a law in the high school superior to that of the teacher. At the dictates of a gong, classes arise in the face of a teacher's incompleted peroration and depart. As for the pupils, there is no rest for the soles of their feet; a freshman in the high school is a mere abecedarian part of an ever-moving line, which toils, weighted with pounds of text-books, up and down the stairways of knowledge, climbing to the mansard heights for rhetoric, to descend, past doors to which it must later return, to the foundation floor for Ancient History.

Looking back at the undulating line winding in dizzy spiral about the stairways, Emily, at times, seemed to herself to be a vertebrate part of some long, forever-uncoiling monster, one of those prehistoric, seen-before-in-dreams affairs. She chose her figures knowingly, for she was studying zoology now.

Classes went to the laboratory for this subject, filing into an amphitheatre of benches about Miss Carmichael, who stood in the centre of things and wasted no time; she even clipped her words, perhaps that they might not impede each other in their flow, which lent a disconcerting curtness of enunciation to an amazing rapidity of the same. Indeed, Miss Carmichael talked so fast that Emily got but a blurred impression of her surroundings, carrying away a dazed consciousness that the contents of certain jars to the right and left of the lady were amphibian in their nature, and that certain other objects in skin leering down from dusty shelves were there because of saurian claims. And because man is a vertebrate, having an internal, jointed, bony skeleton, man stood in a glass case behind the oracular priestess of the place, in awful, articulated, bony whole, from which the newly initiated had constantly to drag their fascinated, shuddering gaze. Not that Emily wanted to look, indeed she had no time to be looking, needing it all to keep up with Miss Carmichael, discoursing in unpunctuated, polysyllablic flow of things batrachian and things reptilian, which, like the syllables falling from the lips of the wicked daughter in the story-book, proved later to be toads and lizards.

Miss Carmichael was short and square, and her nose was large. She rubbed it with her knuckle like a man. She had rubbed it one day as she looked at Emily, whom she had called upon as "the girl who answers to the name of MacLauren."

It was not a flattering way to be designated, but freshmen learn to be grateful for any identity. Then, too, Miss Carmichael was famed for her wit, and much is to be overlooked in a wit which in another might seem to be bad manners. Once Emily had been hazy about the word *wit*, but now she knew. If you understand at once it is not wit; but if, as you begin to understand, you find you don't, that is apt to be wit. Miss Carmichael was famed for hers.

Thus called upon, the girl who answered to the name of MacLauren stood up. The lecture under discussion was concerned with a matter called perpetuation of type. Under fire of questions it developed that the pupil in hand was sadly muddled over it.

Under such circumstances, it was a way with Miss Carmichael to play with the pupil's mystification. "'Be a kitten and cry mew,'" said she, her eyes snapping with the humour of it. "Why mew and not baa? Why does the family of cow continue to wear horns?"

Why, indeed? There wasn't any sense. Emily felt wild. Miss Carmichael here evidently decided it was time to temper glee with something else. Emily was prepared for that, having discovered that wit is uncertain in its humours.

"An organ not exercised loses power to perform its function. Think!" said Miss Carmichael. "Haven't you taken down the lecture?"

Emily had taken down the lecture, but she had not taken in the lecture. She looked unhappy. "I don't think I understand it," she confessed.

"Then why didn't you have it explained?"

"I did try." Which was true, for Emily had gone with questions concerning perpetuation of type to her Aunt Cordelia.

"What did you want to know?" demanded Miss Carmichael.

"About—about the questions at the end for us to answer—about that one, 'What makes types repeat themselves?'"

"And what does?" said Miss Carmichael. "That is exactly what I'm trying to find out."

Emily looked embarrassed. Aunt Cordelia's answer was the same one that she gave to all the puzzling *whys*, but Emily did not want to give it here.

"Come, come, come," said Miss Carmichael. She was standing by her table, and she rapped it sharply, "And what does?"

"God," said Emily desperately.

She felt the general embarrassment as she sat down. She felt Hattie give a quick look at her, then saw her glance around. Was it for her? Hattie's cheek was red. Rosalie, with her cheek crimson, was looking in her lap.

In the High School some have passed out of Eden, while others are only approaching the fruit of

the tree.

Hattie had glanced at her protectingly, and though Emily did not understand just why, she was glad, for of late she had been feeling apart from Hattie and estranged from Rosalie, and altogether alone and aggrieved.

Hattie now wrote herself Harriet, and had seemed to change in the process, though Emily, who had once been Emily Louise herself, felt she had not changed to her friends. But Hattie was one to look facts in the face. “If you’re not pretty,” she had a while back confided to Emily, “you’ve got to be smart.” And forthwith taking to learning, Hattie was fast becoming a shining light.

Rosalie had taken to things of a different nature, which she called Romantic Situations. To have the wind whisk off your hat and take it skurrying up the street just as you meet a boy is a Romantic Situation. 233

“'If you're not pretty, you've got to be smart.'”

Emmy Lou had no sympathy with them, whatever; it even embarrassed her to hear about them and caused her to avoid Rosalie’s eye. Perhaps Rosalie divined this, for she took to another thing—and that was Pauline. With arms about each other, the two walked around the basement promenade at recess, while Emily stood afar off and felt aggrieved.

She was doing a good deal of feeling these days, but principally she felt cross. For one thing, she was having to wear a sailor suit in which she hated herself. It takes a jaunty juvenility of spirit to wear a sailor suit properly, and she was not feeling that way these days. She was feeling tall and conscious of her angles. The tears, too, came easily, as at thought of herself deserted by Hattie and Rosalie, or at sight of herself in the sailor suit. It was in Aunt Cordelia’s Mirror that she viewed herself with such dissatisfaction; but while looking, the especial grievance was forgotten by reason of her gaze centring upon the reflected face. She was wondering if she was pretty. But even while her cheek flamed with the thinking of it, she forgot why the cheek was hot in the absorption of watching it fade, until—eyes met eyes——

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She turned quickly and hid her face against the sofa. Emmy Lou had met Self.

But later she almost quarrelled with Aunt Cordelia about the sailor suit.

One day at recess a new-comer who had entered late was standing around. Her cheek was pale, though her eager look about lent a light to her face. But all seemed paired off and absorbed and the eager look faded. Emily, whom she had not seen, moved nearer, and the new-comer’s face brightened. “They give long recesses,” she said.

235

“Wondering if she was pretty.”

Emily felt drawn to her, for since being deserted she was not enjoying recesses herself.

“Yes,” she said, “they do”; and the next day another pair, Emily and the new-comer, joined the promenade about the basement. 236

The new pupil’s name was Margaret; that is, since it stopped being Maggie. Emily confessed to having once been Emmy herself, with a middle name of Lou besides, and after that they told each other everything. Margaret loved to read and had lately come to own a certain book which she brought to lend Emily, and over its pages they drew together. The book was called “Percy’s Reliques.”

Beside the common way lies the Ballad Age, but Emily would have passed, unknowing, had not Margaret, drawing the branches aside, revealed it; and into the sylvan glades she stepped, pipes and tabret luring, with life and self at once in tune.

And then Margaret told her something, “if she would never, never tell”—Margaret wrote things

herself.

It was about this time that Rosalie was moved to seek Emily, as of old, to relate a Romantic Situation. She warned her that it would be sad, but Emily did not mind that. She loved sad things these days, and even found an exultation in them if they were very, very sad. 237

Rosalie took her aside to tell it: “There was a bride, ready, even to her veil, and he, the bridegroom, never came—he was dead.”

Rosalie called this a Romantic Situation. Emily admitted it, feeling, however, that it was more, though she could not tell Rosalie that. It—it was like the poetry in the book, only poetry would not have left it there!

“O mither, mither mak my bed
O mak it saft and narrow;
Since my love died for me to-day,
Ise die for him to-morrowe.”

“It’s about a teacher right here in the High School,” Rosalie went on to tell.

Then it was true. “Which one?” asked Emily.

But that Rosalie did not know.

It was like poetry. But then life was all turning to poetry now. One climbed the stairs to the mansard now with winged feet, for Rhetoric is concerned with metaphor and simile, and Rhetoric treats of rhyme. There is a sudden meaning in Learning since it leads to a desired end. 238

Poetry is everywhere around. The prose light of common day is breaking into prismatic rays. Into the dusty highway of Ancient History all at once sweeps the pageantry of Mythology. Philemon bends above old Baucis at the High School gate, though hitherto they have been sycamores. Olympus is just beyond the clouds. The Elysian Fields lie only the surrender of the will away, if one but droops, with absent eye, head propped on hand, and dreams——

But Emily, all at once, is conscious that Miss Beaton’s eyes are on her, at which she moves suddenly and looks up. But this mild-eyed teacher with the sweet, strong smile is but gazing absently down on her the while she talks.

Emily likes Miss Beaton, the teacher of History. Her skirts trail softly and her hair is ruddy where it is not brown; she forgets, and when she rises her handkerchief is always fluttering to the floor. Emily loves to be the one to jump and pick it up. Miss Beaton’s handkerchiefs are fine 239 and faintly sweet and softly crumpled, and Emily loves the smile when Miss Beaton’s absent gaze comes back and finds her waiting.

But to-day, what is this she is saying? Who is the beautiful youth she is telling about? Adonis? Beloved, did she say, and wounded? Wounded unto death, but loved and never forgotten, and from whose blood sprang the windswept petals of anemone——

Miss Beaton’s gaze comes back to her school-room and she takes up the book. The story is told.

Emily had not known that her eyes had filled—tears come so unlooked-for these days—until the 240 ring on Miss Beaton’s hand glistened and the facets of its jewel broke into gleams.

She caught her breath, she sat up suddenly, for she knew—all at once she knew—it was Miss Beaton who had been the bride, and the ring was the sign.

She loved Miss Beaton with a sudden rapture, and henceforth gazed upon her with secret adoration. She made excuses to consult books in Miss Beaton’s room, that she might be near her; she dreamed, and the sweetness and the sadness of it centred about Miss Beaton.

She told Rosalie. “Why, of course, I guessed her right at first,” said Rosalie; but she said it jealously, for she, too, was secretly adoring Miss Beaton.

Emily had been trying to ask Margaret something, but each time the question stuck in her throat. Now she gathered courage.

It was spring, and the High School populace turned out at recess to promenade the yard. On the third round about the gravel, in the farthest corner where a lilac bush topping the fence from 241 next door lent a sort of screen and privacy, Emily caught Margaret by the arm and held her back. After that there was no retreat; she had to speak.

“How—how do you do it?” she asked.

“What?” asked Margaret.

“Write?” said Emily, holding to Margaret tight—she had never before thus laid bare the secrets of her soul.

“Oh,” said Margaret, and her lips parted and her face lighted as she and Emily gazed into each other’s eyes, “you just feel it and then you write.”

There was a time when Emily would have asked, “Feel what?” “It” as used by Margaret was indefinite, but Emily understood. You just feel it and then you write.

In her study hour Emily took her pencil and, with Latin Grammar as barrier and blind to an outside world, bent over her paper. She did not speak them, those whispers hunting the rhyme: she only felt them, and they spoke.

She did not know, she did not dream that she was finding the use, the purpose for it all, these years of the climb toward knowledge. Some day it would dawn on her that we only garner to give out. 242

Creare—creatum, she had repeated in class from her Latin Grammar, but she did not understand the meaning then. In the beginning God made, and Man is in the image of God. She had found the answer to her discontent; for to create, to give out, is the law.

She wrote on, head bent, cheek flushed, leaning absorbed above the paper in her book.

On the way home she whispered that which had written itself, while her feet kept time to the rhythm. It was Beautiful and Sad, and it was True:

“The bride and her maidens sat in her bower——”

She nodded to William loitering near the High School gate, and hurried on. She did not want company just now:

“And they ’broidered a snow-white veil,
And their laughter was sweet as the orange flower
That breathed on the soft south gale.”

But here William caught up with her. She had thought he would take the hint, but he didn’t, going with her to her very gate. But once inside, she drew a long breath. The cherry buds were swelling and the sky was blue. She took up her verse where William had interrupted: 243

“The bride and her maidens sit in her bower,
And they stitch at a winding-sheet;
And they weep as the breath of the orange flower——”

Emily is so absorbed at the dinner-table that Aunt Cordelia is moved to argue about it. She sha’n’t go to school if she does not eat her dinner when she gets home. “And that beautiful slice of good roast beef untouched,” says Aunt Cordelia.

Emily frowned, being intent on that last line, which is not written yet. She is hunting the rhyme for winding-sheet.

What is this Aunt Cordelia is saying? “Eat—meat——”

How *can* Aunt Cordelia?—it throws one off—it upsets one.

Hattie chanced to be criticising Miss Beaton the next day, saying that she required too little of her classes. “But then she is more concerned getting ready to be married, I reckon,” said Hattie. 244

“Oh,” said Emily, “Hattie!” She was shocked, almost hurt, with Hattie. “Don’t you know about it?” she went on to explain. “She was going to be married and—he—he never came—he was dead.”

“No such thing,” said Hattie. “He runs a feed store next my father’s office. We’ve got cards. It’s the day after school’s out.”

“Then—which—” asked Emily falteringly.

“Why, I heard that the first of the year,” said Hattie. “It was Miss Carmichael that happened to.”

Emily went off to herself. She felt bitter and cross and disposed to blame Miss Beaton. She never wanted to see or to hear of Miss Beaton again.

Upstairs she took from her Latin Grammar a pencilled paper, interlined and much erased, and tore it into bits—viciously little bits. Then she went and put them in the waste-paper basket. 245

“You just feel it and then you write,” Margaret had said, and Emily was feeling again, and deeply; later she wrote.

It was gloomy, that which wrote itself on the paper, nor did it especially apply to the case in point, “but then,” she reminded herself, bitterly recalling the faithlessness of Hattie, of Rosalie, of Miss Beaton, “it’s True.” 246

She took it to Hattie from some feeling that she was mixed up in this thing. Hattie closed her Algebra, keeping her finger in the place, while she took the paper and looked at it. She did not seem impressed or otherwise, but read it aloud in a matter-of-fact tone:

“A flower sprang from the earth one day
And nodded and blew in a blithesome way,
And the warm sun filled its cup!
A careless hand broke it off and threw
It idly down where it lately grew,
And the same sun withered it up.”

“‘Up,’” said Hattie, “what’s the up for? You don’t need it.”

“It’s—it’s for the rhyme,” said Emily.

“It’s redundancy,” said Hattie.

VENUS OR MINERVA?

247

It was gratifying to be attached to a name again. As a Freshman, personality had been lost in the High School by reason of overwhelming numbers. The under-world seems always to be over-populated and valued accordingly. But progress in the High School, by rigorous enforcement of the survival of the fittest, brings ultimately a chance for identity. Emmy Lou, a survivor, found a personality awaiting her in her Sophomore year. Henceforth she was to be Miss MacLauren. 249

The year brought further distinction. Along in the term Miss MacLauren received notification that she had been elected to membership in the Platonian Society.

“On account of recognised literary qualifications,” the note set forth.

Miss MacLauren read the note with blushes, and because of the secret joy its perusal afforded, she re-read it in private many times more. The first-fruits of fame are sweet; and as an Athenian might have regarded an invitation into Olympus, so Miss MacLauren looked upon this opening into Platonia. 250

As a Freshman, on Friday afternoons, she had noted certain of the upper pupils strolling about the building after dismissal, clothed, in lieu of hats and jackets, with large importance. She had learned that they were Platonians, and from the out-courts of the un-elect she had watched them, in pairs and groups, mount the stairs with laughter and chatter and covert backward glances. She did not wonder, she would have glanced backward, too, for wherein lies the satisfaction of being elect, but in a knowledge of the envy of those less privileged?

And mounting the stairs to the mansard, their door had shut upon the Platonians; it was a secret

society.

And now this door stood open to Miss MacLauren.

She took her note to Hattie and to Rosalie, who showed a polite but somewhat forced interest.

“Of course if you have time for that sort of thing,” said Hattie.

“As if there was not enough of school and learning, now, Emily,” said Rosalie. 251

Miss MacLauren felt disconcerted, the bubble of her elation seemed pricked, until she began to think about it. Hattie and Rosalie were not asked to become Platonians; did they make light of the honour because it was not their honour?

Each seeks to be victor in some Field of Achievement, but each is jealous of the other’s Field. Hattie thought Rosalie frivolous, and Rosalie scribbled notes under the nose of Hattie’s brilliant recitations. Miss MacLauren, on the neutral ground of a non-combatant, was expected by each to furnish the admiration and applause.

Hattie’s was the Field of Learning, and she stood, with obstacles trod under heel, crowned with honours. Hattie meant to be valedictorian some day, nor did Miss MacLauren doubt Hattie would be.

Rosalie’s was a different Field. Hers was strewn with victims; victims whose names were Boys.

It was Rosalie’s Field, Miss MacLauren, in her heart, longed to enter. But how did Rosalie do it? 252
She raised her eyes and lowered them, and the victims fell. But everyone could not be a Rosalie.

And Hattie looked pityingly upon Rosalie’s way of life, and Rosalie laughed lightly at Hattie.

Miss MacLauren admired Hattie, but, secretly, she envied Rosalie. If she had known how, she herself would have much preferred Boys to Brains; one is only a Minerva as second choice.

To be sure there was William. Oh, William! He is taken for granted, and besides, Miss MacLauren is becoming sensitive because there was no one but William.

The next day she was approached by Hattie and Rosalie, who each had a note. They mentioned it casually, but Hattie’s tone had a ring. Was it satisfaction? And Rosalie’s laugh was touched with gratification, for the notes were official, inviting them, too, to become Platonians.

“Thinking it over,” said Hattie, “I’ll join; one owes something to class-spirit.”

“It’s so alluring—the sound,” said Rosalie. “A secret anything.” 253

Miss MacLauren, thinking it over, herself, after she reached home that day, suddenly laughed.

It was at dinner. Uncle Charlie looked up at his niece, whom he knew as Emmy Lou, not, as yet, having met Miss MacLauren. He had heard her laugh before, but not just that way; generally she had laughed because other people laughed. Now she seemed to be doing it of herself. There is a difference.

Emmy Lou was thinking of the changed point of view of Hattie and Rosalie, “It’s—it’s funny—” she explained, in answer to Uncle Charlie’s look.

“No!” said Uncle Charlie. “And you see it? Well!”

What on earth was Uncle Charlie talking about?

“I congratulate you,” he continued. “It will never be so hard again.”

“What?” asked Emmy Lou.

“Anything,” said Uncle Charlie.

What was he talking about?

“A sense of humour,” said Uncle Charlie, as though one had spoken. 254

Emma Lou smiled absently. Some of Uncle Charlie’s joking which she was used to accepting as mystifying.

But it was funny about Rosalie and Hattie; she was smiling again, and she felt patronisingly superior to them both.

Miss MacLauren was still feeling her superiority as she went to school the next morning. It made her pleased with herself. It was a frosty morning; she drew long breaths, she felt buoyant, and scarcely conscious of the pavements under her feet.

At the corner she met William with another boy. She knew this other boy, but that was all; he had never shown any disposition to have her know him better. But this morning things were different. William and the other boy joined her, William taking her books, while they all walked along together.

Miss MacLauren felt the boy take a sidewise look at her. Something told her she was looking well, and an intuitive consciousness that the boy, stealing a look at her, thought so too, made Miss MacLauren look better.

"At the High School gate Miss MacLauren raised her eyes again."

Her spirits soared intoxicatingly. This was a new sensation. Miss MacLauren did not know herself, the sound of her gay chatting and laughter was strange in her ears. Perhaps it was an unexpected revelation to the others, too. William was not looking pleased, but the other boy was looking at her.

Something made Miss MacLauren feel daring. She looked up—suddenly—at the other boy—square. To be sure, she looked down quicker, that part being involuntary, as well as the blush that followed. The blush was disconcerting, but the sensation, on the whole, was pleasurable.

At the High School gate, Miss MacLauren raised her eyes again. The lowering and the blush could be counted on; the only hard part was to get them raised.

She was blushing as she turned to go in, she was laughing, too, to hide the blush. And this was the Elixir of which Rosalie drank; it mounted to the brain. Intuitively, Miss MacLauren knew, if she could, she would drink of it again. She looked backward over her shoulder; the boy was looking backward, too. Hattie had said that Rosalie was frivolous, that her head was turned; no wonder her head was turned.

The next Friday, the three newly elect mounted the stairs to the Platonian doorway.

Lofty altitudes are expected to be chilly, and the elevation of the mansard was as nothing to the mental heights upon which Platonia was established. Platonian welcome had an added chilliness, besides, by reason of its formality.

The new members hastily found seats.

On a platform sat Minerva, enthroned; no wonder, for she was a Senior as well as a President. The lesser lights, on either side, it developed, were Secretary and Treasurer; they looked coldly important. The other Platonians sat around.

The Society was asked to come to order. The Society came to order. There was no settling, and re-settling and rustling, and tardy subsidal, as in the class-room, perhaps because the young ladies, in this case, wanted the order.

It went on, though Miss MacLauren was conscious that, for her part, she comprehended very little of what it was all about, though it sounded impressive. You called it Parliamentary Ruling. To an outsider, this seemed almost to mean the longest way round to an end that everybody had seen from the beginning. Parliamentary Ruling also seemed apt to lead its followers into paths unexpected even by them, from which they did not know how to get out, and it also led to revelations humiliating to new members.

The report of the Treasurer was called for.

It showed a deficit.

"Even with the initiation fees and dues from new members?" asked the President.

Even so.

"Then," said the President, "we'll have to elect some more. Any new names for nomination?"

Names, it seemed, were unflatteringly easy to supply, and were rapidly put up and voted upon for nomination.

"The three newly elect mounted the stairs to the Platonian doorway."

But suddenly a Platonian was upon her feet; she had been counting. The membership was limited and they had over-stepped that limit. The nominations were unconstitutional.

The Treasurer, at this, was upon her feet, reading from the Constitution: "The revenues of said Society may be increased only by payment of dues by new members"—she paused, and here reminded them that the Society was in debt.

Discussion waxed hot. A constitution had been looked upon as invulnerable.

At last a Platonian arose. She called attention to the fact that time was passing, and moved that the matter be tabled, and the Society proceed with the programme for the day.

Fiercer discussion ensued at this. "Business before pleasure," said a sententious member. "What's a programme to a matter concerning the Constitution itself?"

The sponsor for the motion grew sarcastic. It developed later she was on the programme. Since the business of the Society was only useful as a means of conducting the programme, which was the primary object of the Society's being, she objected to the classing of the programme as unimportant.

But the programme was postponed. When people begin to handle red tape, there is always a chance that they get enmeshed in its voluminous tangles.

It was dark when the Society adjourned. Platonians gave up dinner and Friday afternoons to the cause, but what Platonian doubted it being worth it?

Miss MacLauren and Hattie walked home together. At the corner they met a boy. It was the other boy whose name, as it chanced, was Chester. He joined them and they walked along together. Something made Miss MacLauren's cheek quite red; it was her blush when the boy joined them.

A few steps farther on, they met Miss Kilrain, the new teacher at the High School. It was just as Miss MacLauren was laughing an embarrassed laugh to hide the blush. Miss Kilrain looked at them coldly, one was conscious of her disapproval.

Miss Kilrain's name had been up that very afternoon in the Society for honorary membership. All teachers were made honorary members.

With the Sophomore year, High School pupils had met several new things. Higher Education was one of them. They met it in the person of Miss Kilrain. It looked forbidding. She lowered her voice in speaking of it, and brought the words forth reverently, coupling it with another impressively uttered thing, which she styled Modern Methods.

Miss Kilrain walked mincingly on the balls of her feet. She frequently called the attention of her classes to this, which was superfluous, for so ostentatiously did she do her walking, one could not but be aware of some unnatural quality in her gait. But Miss Kilrain, that they might remember to do the same, reminded her classes so often, they all took to walking on their heels. Human nature is contrary.

Miss Kilrain also breathed from her diaphragm, and urged her pupils to try the same.

"Don't you do it," Rosalie cautioned Emmy Lou. "Look at her waist."

Miss Kilrain came into the High School with some other new things—the new text-books.

There had been violent opposition to the new books, and as violent fight for them. The papers had been full of it, and Emmy Lou had read the particulars of it. 263

A Mr. Bryan had been in favour of the change. Emmy Lou remembered him, as a Principal, way back in the beginning of things. Mr. Bryan was quoted in the papers as saying:

“Modern methods are the oil that lubricates the wheels of progress.”

Professor Koenig, who was opposed to the change, was Principal at the High School. He said that the text-books in use were standards, and that the Latin Series were classics.

“Just what is a classic?” Emmy Lou had asked, looking up from the paper.

Uncle Charlie had previously been reading it himself.

“Professor Koenig is one,” said he.

Professor Koenig was little, his beard was grizzled, and the dome of his head was bald. He wore gold spectacles, and he didn’t always hear, at which times he would bend his head sideways and peer through his glasses. “Hey?” Professor Koenig would say. But he knew, one felt that he knew, and that he was making his classes know, too. One was conscious of something definite 264 behind Professor Koenig’s way of closing the book over one forefinger and tapping upon it with the other. It was a purpose.

What, then, did Uncle Charlie mean by calling Professor Koenig a classic?

“Just what does it mean, exactly—classic?” persisted Emmy Lou.

“That which we are apt to put on the shelf,” said Uncle Charlie.

Oh—Emmy Lou had thought he was talking about Professor Koenig; he meant the text-books—she understood now, of course.

But the old books went and the new ones came, and Miss Kilrain came with them.

She came in mincingly on the balls of her feet the opening day of school, and took her place on the rostrum of the chapel with The Faculty. Once one would have said with “the teachers,” but in the High School one knew them as The Faculty. Miss Kilrain took her place with them, but she was not of them; the High School populace, gazing up from the groundling’s point of view, in serried ranks below, felt that. It was as though The Faculty closed in upon themselves and 265 left Miss Kilrain, with her Modern Methods, outside and alone.

But Miss Kilrain showed a proper spirit, and proceeded to form her intimacies elsewhere; Miss Kilrain grew quite intimate and friendly with certain of the girls.

And now her name had come up for honorary membership in the Platonian Society.

“We’ve always extended it to The Faculty,” a member reminded them.

“Besides, she won’t bother us,” remarked another. “They never come.”

Miss Kilrain was accorded the honour.

But she surprised them. She did come; she came tripping up on the balls of her feet the very next Friday. They heard her deprecating little cough as she came up the stairs. When one was little, one had played “Let’s pretend.” But in the full illusion of the playing, if grown-up people had appeared, the play stopped—short.

It was like that, now—the silence.

“Oh,” said Miss Kilrain, in the doorway, “go on, or I’ll go away.”

They went on lamely enough, but they never went on again. Miss Kilrain, ever after, went on for 266 them, and perforce, they followed.

But to-day they went on. The secretary had been reading a communication. It was from the Literary Society of the Boy’s High School, proposing a debate between the two; it was signed by the secretary, who chanced to be a boy whose name was Chester.

Miss MacLauren, in spite of herself, grew red; she had been talking about the Platonians and their debates with him quite recently.

The effect of the note upon the Platonians was visible. A tremendous fluttering agitated the members. It was a proposition calculated to agitate them.

Rosalie was on that side opposed to the matter. Why was obvious, for Rosalie preferred to shine before boys, and she would not shine in debate.

Hattie was warmly in favour of it, for she was one who would shine.

Miss MacLauren did not express herself, but when it came to the vote, Miss MacLauren said “Aye.”

The “Ayes” had it. 267

Then, all at once, the Platonians became aware of Miss Kilrain, whom they had momentarily forgotten. Miss Kilrain was sitting in deprecating silence, and the Platonians had a sudden consciousness that it was the silence of disapproval. She sat with the air and the compressed lips of one who could say much, but since her opinion is not asked——

But just before adjournment Miss Kilrain’s lips unclosed, as she arose apologetically and begged

permission to address the chair. She then acknowledged her pleasure at the compliment of her membership, and expressed herself as gratified with the earnestness with which some of the members were regarding this voluntarily chosen opportunity for self-improvement. These she was sorry to see were in the minority; as for herself, she must express disapproval of the proposed Debate with the young gentlemen of the Male High School. It could but lead to frivolity and she was sorry to see so many in favour of it. Young ladies whose minds are given to boys and frivolity, are not the material of which to make a literary society.

As she spoke, Miss Kilrain looked steadily at two members sitting side by side. Both had voted for the Debate, and both had been seen by Miss Kilrain, one, at least, laughing frivolously, in company with—a boy. The two members, moving uneasily beneath Miss Kilrain's gaze, were Hattie and Miss MacLauren.

Miss Kilrain then went on to say, that she had taught in another school, a school where the ideals of Higher Education were being realised by the use of Modern Methods. The spirit of this school had been Earnestness, and this spirit had found voice in a school paper. As a worthier field for the talent she recognised in the Platonian Society, Miss Kilrain now proposed this society start a paper, which should be the organ for the School.

It was only a suggestion, but did it appeal to the talent she recognised before her, they could bear in mind that she stood ready to assist them, with the advice and counsel of one experienced in the work.

Going down stairs, Miss Kilrain put her arm about one of the girls, and said it was a thing she admired, an earnest young spirit. The girl was Rosalie, who blushed and looked embarrassed.

That meeting was the last of the Platonian gatherings that might be called personally conducted. The Platonians hardly knew whether they wanted a paper or not, when they found themselves full in the business of making one. Miss Kilrain was the head and front of things. She marshalled her forces with the air of one who knows what she wants. Her forces were that part of the Society which had voted against the Debate. Miss Kilrain was one of those who must lead, at something; if she could not be leader on the rostrum, she descended to the ranks.

Miss MacLauren was deeply interested, and felt she had a right to be, for these things, newspapers and such, were in her family. Considering her recognised literary qualifications, she even had secret aspirations toward a position on the staff. On a scrap of paper in class she had surreptitiously tried her hand on a tentative editorial, after this fashion:

"It is our desire to state at the start that this paper does not intend to dabble in the muddy pool of politics."

Miss MacLauren heartily indorsed the proposed paper, and like Miss Kilrain, felt that it would be a proper field for unused talent.

But her preference for a staff position was not consulted. Rosalie, however, became part of that body. Rosalie was a favourite with Miss Kilrain. Hattie, the hitherto shining light, was detailed to secure subscribers; was this all that honours in Algebra, Latin, and Chemistry could do for one?

Miss MacLauren found herself on a committee for advertisements. By means of advertisements, Miss Kilrain proposed to make the paper pay for itself.

The treasurer, because of a proper anxiety over this question of expenditure, was chairman; in private life the treasurer was Lucy—Lucy Berry.

"Write to this address," said Miss Kilrain to the committee, giving them a slip of paper. "I met one of the firm when he was in the city last week to see a friend of mine, Professor Bryan, on business." Miss Kilrain, always gave the details of her private happenings to her listeners. "Just mention my name in writing, and say I told you to ask for an advertisement."

The Chairman gave the slip to Miss MacLauren to attend to. Miss MacLauren had seen the name before on all the new text-books this year introduced into the High School.

"How will I write this?" Emmy Lou inquired of Uncle Charlie that night. "This letter to the International School Book Company?"

"What's that?" asked Uncle Charlie.

Emmy Lou explained.

Uncle Charlie looked interested. "Here to see Professor Bryan, was he? H'm. Moving against Koenig faster even than I predicted."

Miss Kilrain had instructed her committee further as to what to do.

"You meet me on Saturday," said Lucy to Emily, "and we will do Main Street together."

She met Lucy on Saturday. Lucy had a list of places.

"You—you're chairman," said Emmy Lou, "you ask——"

It was at the door of the first place on the list, a large, open doorway, and it and the sidewalk were blocked with boxes and hogsheads and men rolling things into drays.

Lucy and Emmy Lou went in; they went on going in, back through a lane between sacks and things stacked high; it was dark and cellar-like, and smelled of sugar and molasses. At last they reached a glass door, which was open. Emmy Lou stopped and held back, so did Lucy.

“You—you’re chairman—” said Emmy Lou. It was mean, she felt it was mean, she never felt meaner.

Lucy went forward; she was pretty, her cheeks were bright and her hair waved up curly despite its braiding. She was blushing.

A lot of men were at desks, dozens of men it seemed at first, though really there were four, three standing, one in his shirt sleeves. They looked up.

The fourth man was in a revolving chair; he was in shirt sleeves, too, and had a cigar in his mouth; his face was red, and his hat was on the back of his head.

“Well?” said the man, revolving just enough to see them. He looked cross.

Lucy explained. Her cheeks were very red now. 273

At first the man was testy, he did not seem to understand.

Lucy’s cheeks were redder, so Emmy Lou came forward, thinking she might make it plainer. She was blushing, too. They both explained; they both gazed at the man eagerly while they explained; they both looked pretty, but then they did not know that.

The man wheeled round a little more and listened. Then he got up. He pushed his hat back and scratched his head and nodded as he surveyed them. Then he put a hand in pocket and pursed his lips as he looked down on them.

“And what am I to get, if I give you the advertisement?” asked the man. He was smiling jocosely, and here he pinched Lucy’s cheek playfully between a thumb and forefinger.

Emmy Lou had kept her wits. She carried much paraphernalia under her arm. Miss Kilrain had posted them thoroughly as to their business.

“And what, then, do I get?” repeated the man. 274

Emmy Lou was producing a paper. “A receipt,” said Emmy Lou.

The man shouted. So did the other men.

Emmy Lou and Lucy were bewildered.

“It’s worth the price,” said the man. He promised them the advertisement, and walked back through the cellar-like store with them to the outer door.

“Come again,” said the man.

On the way to the next place they met Emmy Lou’s Uncle Charlie. It was near his office. He was a pleasant person to meet downtown, as it usually meant a visit to a certain alluring candy-place. He was feeling even now in his change pocket as he came up.

“How now,” said he; “and where to?”

Emmy Lou explained. She had not happened to mention this part about the paper at home.

“What?” said Uncle Charlie, “you have been—Say that over again——”

Emmy Lou said it over again.

No more advertisements were secured that morning. No more were solicited. Emmy Lou found herself going home with a lump in her throat. Uncle Charlie had never spoken to her in that tone before. 275

Lucy had gone on to her father’s store, as Uncle Charlie had suggested she ask permission before she seek business farther.

There were others of Uncle Charlie’s way of thinking. On Monday the Platonians were requested to meet Professor Koenig in his office. Professor Koenig was kindly but final. He had just heard of the paper and its methods. He had aimed to conduct his school on different lines. It was his request that the matter be dropped.

Miss Kilrain was indignant. She was excited; she was excited and unguarded. Miss Kilrain said more, perhaps, than she realised.

“He’s only helping to pull the roof down on his own head,” said Miss Kilrain; “it’s only another proof of his inability to adapt himself to Modern Methods.”

Next month was December. The High School adjourned for the holidays. But the Platonians were busy. They were preparing for a debate, a debate with the High School boys. Professor Koenig had thought the debate an excellent thing, and offered his library to the Society for use in preparation, saying that a friendly rivalry between the two schools would be an excellent and stimulating thing. 276

These days Miss Kilrain was holding aloof from the Society and its deteriorating tendencies. She shook her head and looked at the members sorrowfully.

The debate was set for the first Friday in the new year.

One morning in the holidays Uncle Charlie looked up from his paper. “You are going to have a new Principal,” said he.

“New Principal—” said Emmy Lou, “and Professor Koenig?”

“Like other classics,” said Uncle Charlie, “he is being put on the shelf. They have asked him to resign.”

“And who is the new one?” asked Emmy Lou.

“The gentleman named as likely is Professor Bryan.”

“Oh,” said Emmy Lou, “no.”

“I am of the opinion, therefore,” said Uncle Charlie, “that the ‘Platonian’s Mercurial Gazette’ will make its appearance yet.” 277

“If it is Professor Bryan,” said Emmy Lou, “there’s no need of my working any more on the Debate.”

“Why not?” said Uncle Charlie.

“If it’s Mr. Bryan, he’ll never let them come, he thinks they are awful things—boys.”

Miss MacLauren was right about it; the debate did not take place. Platonian affairs seemed suddenly tame. Would a strictly feminine Olympus pall?

She came into Aunt Cordelia’s room one afternoon. “There’s to be a dancing club on Friday evenings,” she explained, “and I’m invited.”

Which was doubly true, for both William and Chester had asked her. She was used to having William say he’d come round and go along; she had had a boy join her and walk home—but this ——

“You can’t do it all,” said Aunt Cordelia positively. “That Society keeps you till dark.”

278

“She stood, fingering the window curtain, irresolute.”

Emmy Lou knew when Aunt Cordelia’s tones were final. She had feared this. She stood—fingering the window-curtain—irresolute. In her heart she felt her literary qualifications were not being appreciated in Platonian circles anyway. A dancing club—it sounded alluring. The window was near the bureau with its mirror—she stole a look. She was—yes—she knew now she was pretty. 279

Late that afternoon Miss MacLauren dropped a note in the post. It was a note tendering her resignation to the Platonian Society.

THE END

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