



THE RIGHT PROMETHEAN FIRE

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN



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

Emmy Lou had noticed the little boy before. He was a square little boy. He had a sprinkling of freckles over the bridge of the nose and a cheerful breadth of nostril. And his teeth were wide apart, and his smile was broad and

constant. Not that Emmy Lou could have told all this. Emmy Lou 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. Emmy Lou did not know the little boy. 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 schoolroom 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 Emmy Lou. 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 Emmy Lou to copy digits.

Now what digits were, Emmy Lou had no

idea. But being shown them on the blackboard Emmy Lou copied them diligently. And as the time went on, Emmy Lou went on copying digits. And the one endeavor of Emmy Lou 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.

And 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 pinked-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.

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 Emmy Lou's 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." 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. And 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, Emmy Lou 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 wondered if the little boy was mad. One would think it had stung the little boy and not Emmy Lou. But since the little boy was not looking, Emmy Lou 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 that, along with remorse, there went the image of one Emmy Lou, defenseless, pink-cheeked, and smiling bravely.

The next morning Emmy Lou was early. Emmy Lou 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 the little boy was early. He was in his desk copying from his Primer on to his slate. The easy, ostentatious way the little boy glanced from slate to book was not lost upon Emmy Lou. For Emmy Lou lost her place whenever her eyes left the rows of digits upon the blackboard.

Emmy Lou watched the little boy. 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 the little boy reached the end of his page. He looked up, carelessly, incidentally. It seemed to be borne to him that Emmy Lou was there. The little boy nodded. Then, as if moved by sudden impulse, the little boy

dived into his desk, and after ostentatious search in, on, under it, brought forth a pencil. He held it up for Emmy Lou to see. Nor did Emmy Lou dream that it was for this the little boy had been there since before Uncle Michael had unlocked the Primer door.

Emmy Lou looked across at the pencil

sections. Emmy Lou belonged to the third section. It was the last section, and Emmy Lou was the last one in it. Though Emmy Lou had no idea what a section meant or why she was in it.

Yesterday the third section had said, over and over, in chorus, "One and one are two,



"Emmy Lou winked bravely, and smiled."

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, Emmy Lou learned that the bell meant, go out to the bench.

The Primer Class, according to the degree of its infant precocity, was divided in three

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 Emmy Lou 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, Emmy Lou's pencils rolled off no more.

But when Emmy Lou took up her slate there was a whole side filled with digits in soldierly rows across. And Emmy Lou's heart grew light and free from the weight of digits, and she gave her time to the washing off of her desk, a thing in which her soul reveled. And for which, patterning after her little girl neighbors, she kept within her 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 Emmy Lou. Nor did a sponge longer dangle from the frame of her slate. On coming in from recess, Emmy Lou found the pencil on her desk again, the beautiful new pencil in the gilded paper. She put it back.

When Emmy Lou 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 "Emmy Lou shook her head."

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

"No," said Aunt Katie.

"No," agreed Aunt Louise.

"Nor—on," said Uncle Charlie, the brother of the aunts, lighting his cigar to go down town.

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

"It is for you."

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 Emmy Lou looked up again, the little boy was looking.

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 the little boy, 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 procession-al and recessional. And reaching his

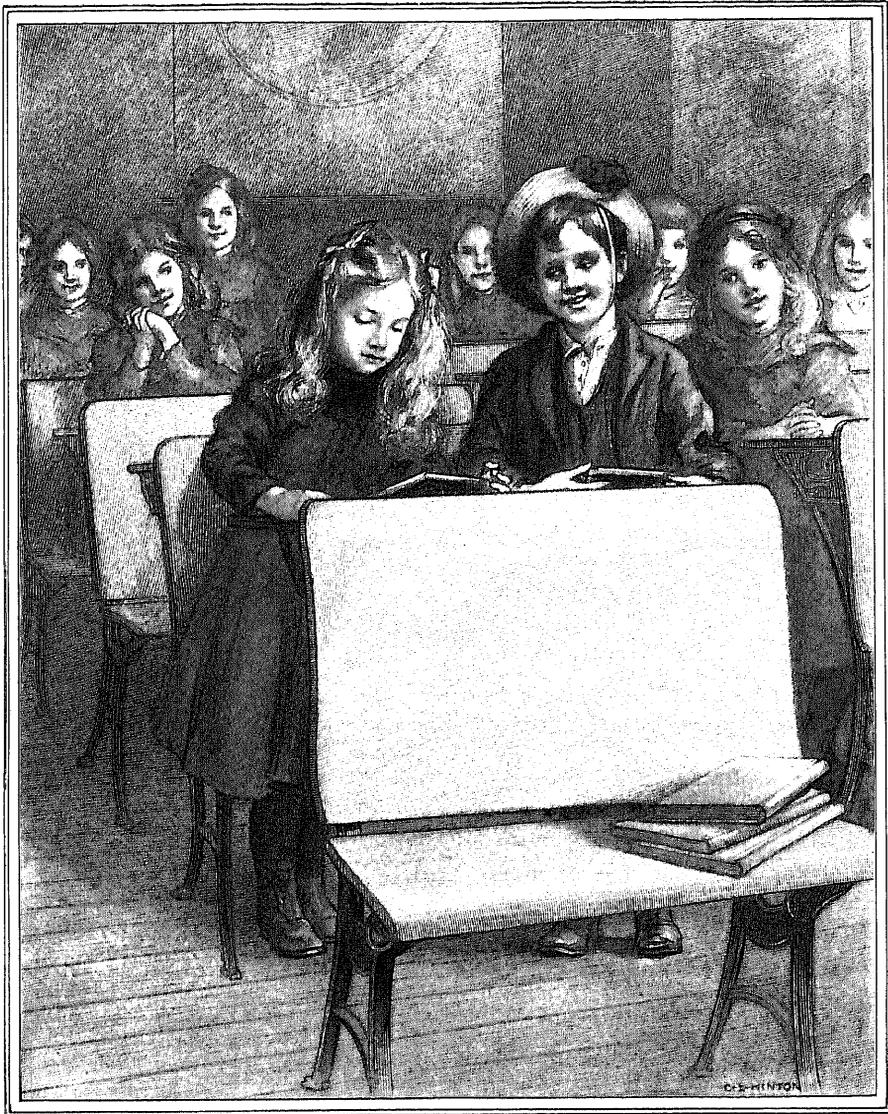
desk, the little boy slammed down his slate with clattering reverberations.

Emmy Lou watched the little boy uneasily. She was miserable for the little boy. 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 center aisle between the sheep and the goats.





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

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, and a 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.

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 your-

self 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.

Emmy Lou 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 the little boy stopped. He 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 the hat 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.

Having taken the hat down, the little boy proceeded to put it upon his own shock head. The little boy's 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.

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.

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 Emmy Lou 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.

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 Emmy Lou feel she would be to any one sending her a valentine.

And in doubt and wretchedness did Emmy Lou 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.

Emmy Lou was early. The big, empty room echoed back Emmy Lou's 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 forgot-

ten. On Emmy Lou's 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. Emmy Lou sat down. 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.

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, Emmy Lou 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 some one 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.

"What does it read?" asked Emmy Lou.

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.



"She sought the house-boy."

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, Emmy Lou added, "It has reading on it."

"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 center were two hands clasping. Emmy Lou's forefinger pointed to the words beneath the clasped hands.

"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."

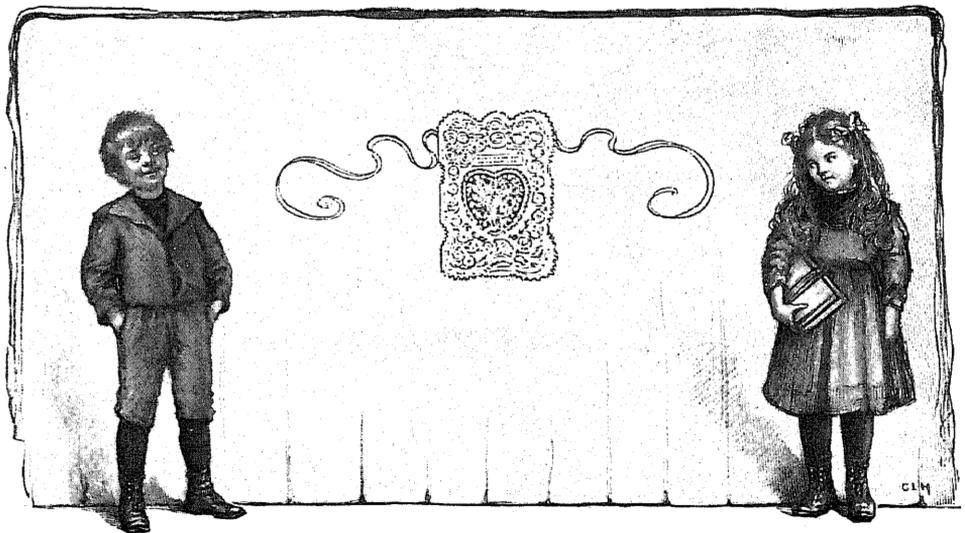
Emmy Lou did not hesitate. "V," said Emmy Lou, "a, l, e, n, t, i, n, e—Valentine. Be my Valentine."

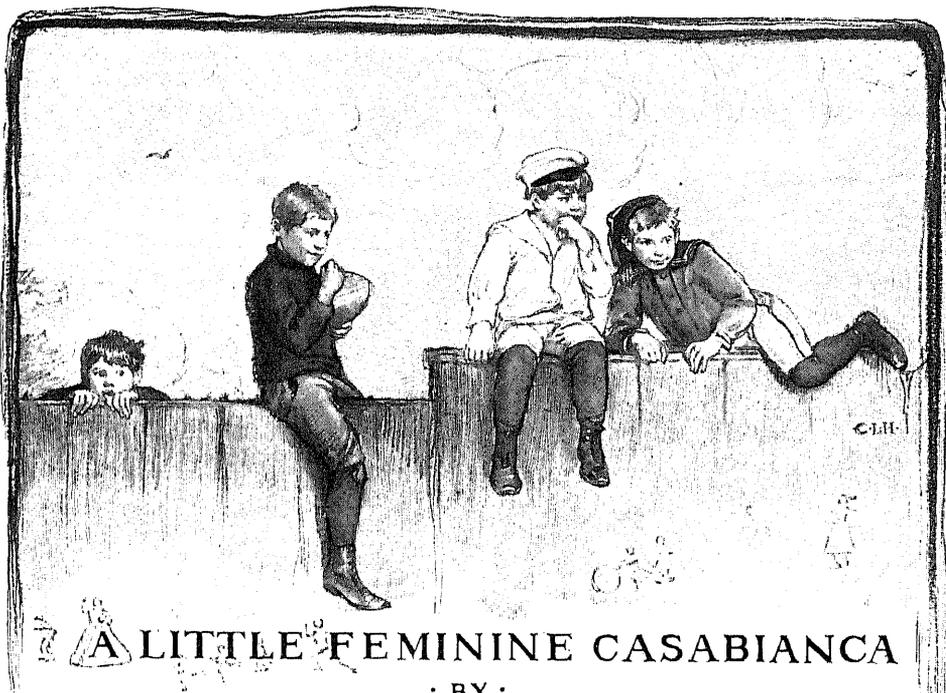
"There!" said Aunt Cordelia.

"Well!" said Aunt Katie.

"At last!" said Aunt Louise.

"H'm!" said Uncle Charlie.





A LITTLE FEMININE CASABIANCA

• BY •

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

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 kindest of hearts behind a brusque and energetic manner, and had possessed, 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."

Among other things incident to that first year, too, had been Recess. At that time everybody was 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 out-skirts 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 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 been holding her Primer upside down.

Following this, Emmy Lou was told that she had "passed"; and seeing from the jubilation 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 aunts 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 aunts 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."

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 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,



"GUIDING A SQUABAKING PENCIL ACROSS A PROTESTING SLATE."

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

while voices from outside, shrill with the joy of 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 little 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 walls 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. 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 some one coming up the stairs—she could hear the slow, heavy footfalls, and a moment later 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 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



"SOUNDS GREW FEWER, PAINTER, FARTHER AWAY . . . A DOOR SLAMMED SOMEWHERE—THEN—SILENCE."



“‘WHAT YOU WANTED DO,’ STATED THE SMALL BOY, ‘IS FIND UNCLE MICHAEL; HE KEEPS THE KEYS.’”

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 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 down-town 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 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, Hattie, 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 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 want 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. 'Tain't 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.

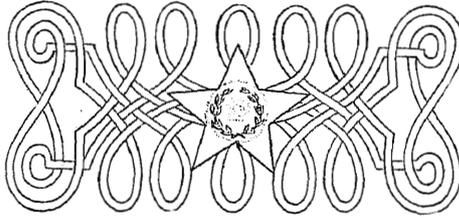
"She—she told me to stay," sobbed Emmy Lou in Aunt Cordelia's arms, "and I stayed; and the Man came, and I hid in the coal-box!"

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.



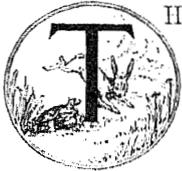


HARE AND TORTOISE OR



THE BLISS OF IGNORANCE BY GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

Author of "The Right Promethean Fire," etc.



HERE 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 McKeoghany."

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.

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 "Emma Louise MacLaurin" 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.



"Let's us be nintimate friends."

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. Emmy Lou 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.

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

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.

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.

"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.

"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

“Hattie.”

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.”

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 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. Every one must go. Desks and slates to be scrubbed, mattered not. Every one 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.

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 colored-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



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

Aunt Katie and Aunt Louise sat in the parlor and talked.

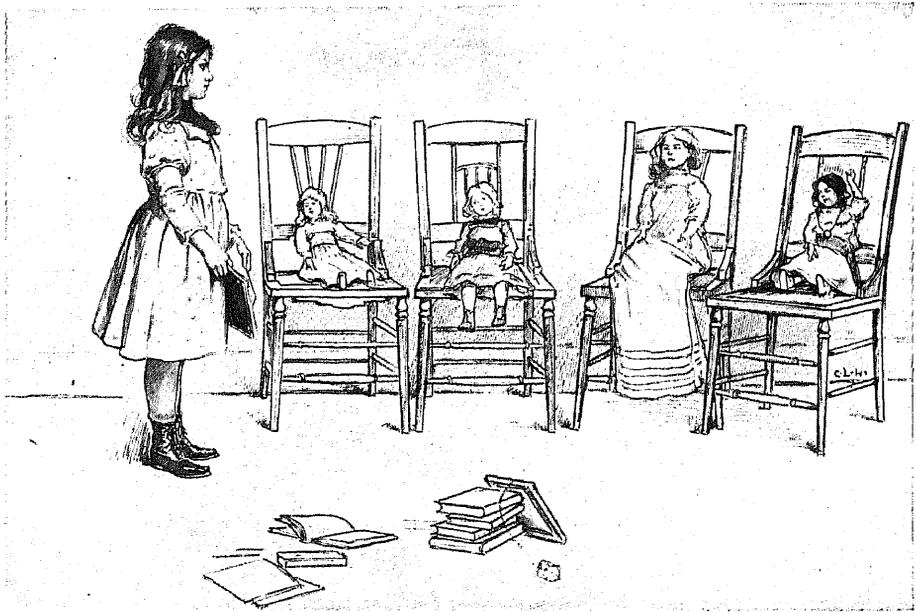
And when Dear Teacher left, all the aunties went out to the gate with her, and Uncle Charlie, just leaving, put her in the carriage, and stood with his hat lifted until she was quite gone.

"At her age—" said Aunt Cordelia.

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, realized 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,



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

"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.

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 laboring 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

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 labored faithfully over it, knew her spelling lesson.

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 Emmy Lou's 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 any one, now she was a nintimate friend.

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 it 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 McKeoghany's neck.

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 McKeoghany. 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 rumor ran around the Second Reader room. The trustees were coming that day to visit the school.

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 towards 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 "molders of the future welfare."

The Second Reader class sat very still. There seemed to be something paralyzing to their infant faculties, mental and physical, in learning they were "mothers" and "molders." 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 molders, 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.

The visiting gentleman, as if struck by a happy thought, 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 receive 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. Rumor said Kitty McKeoghany 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 rumor was succeeded by another. "He's running against the Trustee that's not here to-day."

No wonder Kitty McKeoghany was head. The extent of Kitty's knowledge was boundless.

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 neighborhood.

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 McKeoghany 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 McKeoghany'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 was because Kitty was Mr. Michael McKeoghany's little girl that she was being pointed out as well as because she was head. For Mr. Michael McKeoghany 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 McKeoghany, 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 neighborhood 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 Kitty was head.

Dear Teacher took the book. She stood on the platform apart from the gentlemen, and gave out 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.

Emmy Lou stood up when her time came and spelled her word. Her word was wrong. Emmy Lou 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.

"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 pre-sured. 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 demoralized. The "pillars of state" of English

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 towards 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.



"Emmy Lou spelled steadily."

orthography at least seemed destined to tot-
ter. 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."

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 receive 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, "McKee-ghany," and Uncle Charlie smote his thigh.



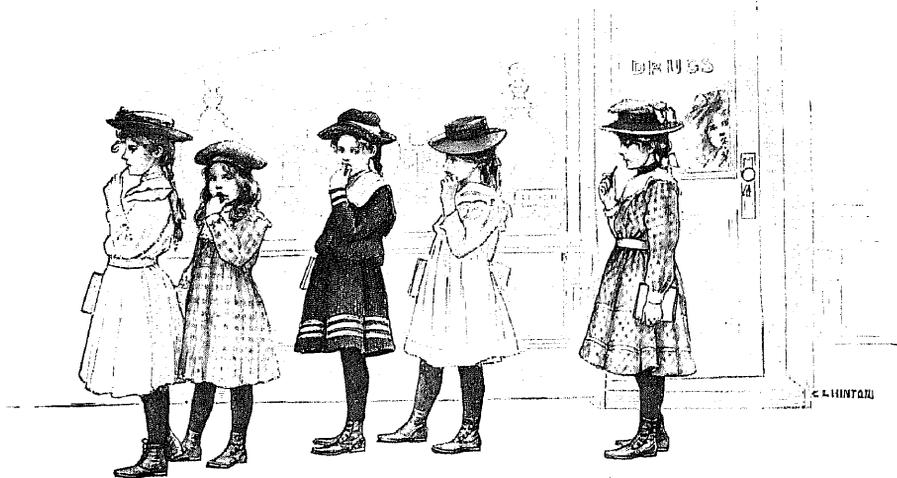
Must've been lonesome for him, livin' out there like he'd done. He was talkin' to me, just for sake o' comp'ny, but he didn't 'pear to care whether I talked back, an' that was mighty lucky. I wa'n't in no way o' talkin'. But every time I come 'round, out o' them fits o' holdin' my breath an' 'most wishin' I was dead, I'd hear him goin' on, like the squeak of his wagon wheels. 'That Turk Wesley's a mighty nervy chap,' he says once. 'Thinks a heap o' you, don't he?' 'Oh, I don' know as he does,' I says. 'There ain't no reason why he should, considerin',' I says. 'If he didn't, he wouldn't be doin' what he's doin' now,' he says, 'runnin' his head in a halter, much as his life's worth.' 'What's that?' I says. 'What you mean?' 'Why,' he says, 'goin' down where we're goin'. He's knowed down there, an' folks has been waitin' for him for quite a good bit,' he says. 'That so?' I says; an' that set me thinkin'. 'Twouldn't do; so I tells Jenks to call Turk back, an' when he rides up beside the wagon, I says, 'Turk,' I says, 'I ain't goin' to 'low this. You're my pris'ner, an' I'm bound to see you through an' turn you over, reg'lar,' I says, 'an' you know I'm no shape to perfect you now.' Turk he just laughed. 'You ain't got no business laughin',' I says. 'What you been stealin' down here?' 'Horses,' he says, real short, like he didn't want to talk about it. That was bad, an' I told him so; but he just kep' laughin', an' he said he reckoned he knowed what he was doin'. I 'lowed he didn't have no call to make a fool of hisself, just because he knowed how; an' I says, 'Turk, look here, you take my advice, an' keep away from this outfit of our'n. You go off by yourself somewheres,' I says, 'an' I'll come back some time an' 'rest you ag'in.'

'Not by a dummed sight you won't!' he says, right up on his ear. 'There's no livin' man'll never ketch me no more, with a hay-fork nor nothin' else,' he says. 'You shut up!' he says. 'I know what I'm doin'. You're in this fix on account o' me, an' I'm goin' to stay by you,' he says. 'You acted white with me, an' I ain't goin' to get you in no trouble, runnin' off now.' He wouldn't listen to no more, but just went ahead, an' we kep' on t'wards town.

"'Twas gettin' along in the gray o' the mornin' when we got to the edge o' town; an' then Turk he dropped back beside the wagon, an' he says, 'I ain't goin' in,' he says. 'I'm goin' to quit you here an' hide out somewheres, handy, till you get ready to move. I'll be watchin' out, an' I'll j'in you,' he says; an' with that he puts off in a corn-field beside the road.

"Jenks, he took me to the little ramshackle buildin' they called their hotel, an' they put me to bed an' got the doctor. My shoulder was in bad shape by then, an' 'twas for most a fortnit I was out o' my head, with blood p'ison; an' even when I come 'round, 'twas a good spell before they dast tell me anything to worry me. But I found out by an' by. Turk'd done some mighty unhealthy things 'round about there, before that, an' they was layin' for him. 'Twould've been better if he'd kep' away, like I told him. Some way or other they'd got wind of it, an' they got a committee together an' started to hunt for him. They'd run up on him where he was hidin', one evenin', an' nabbed him whiles he was sleepin', an' his pull hadn't done him a mite o' good. I was powerful sorry, 'cause I'd like to seen him have a fair show. I kind o' liked his style, if he had been some ornery."





"I SING OF HONOR AND THE FAITHFUL HEART"

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN



"Hattie peeped out from behind the shed."

THE Real Teacher was sick. The Third Reader was to begin its duties with a Substitute. The Principal announced it to the class. He looked at them coldly and stated the matter curtly. It was as though he considered the Third Reader class to be 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. Hattie did not like to acknowledge she did not know.

The Substitute came in a little breathlessly. She was pretty. She was as pretty as Emmy Lou's Aunt Katie. The Substitute 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. She 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. Evidently it was something unpleasant to be a Substitute. Emmy Lou's heart went out to the Substitute.

But the Substitute did not cry. She still gripped the desk, and after a moment she 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. She was new to her business.

Emmy Lou felt it was well the needs of the Third Reader were printed on slips of paper. The needs seemed complicated and lengthy.

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.

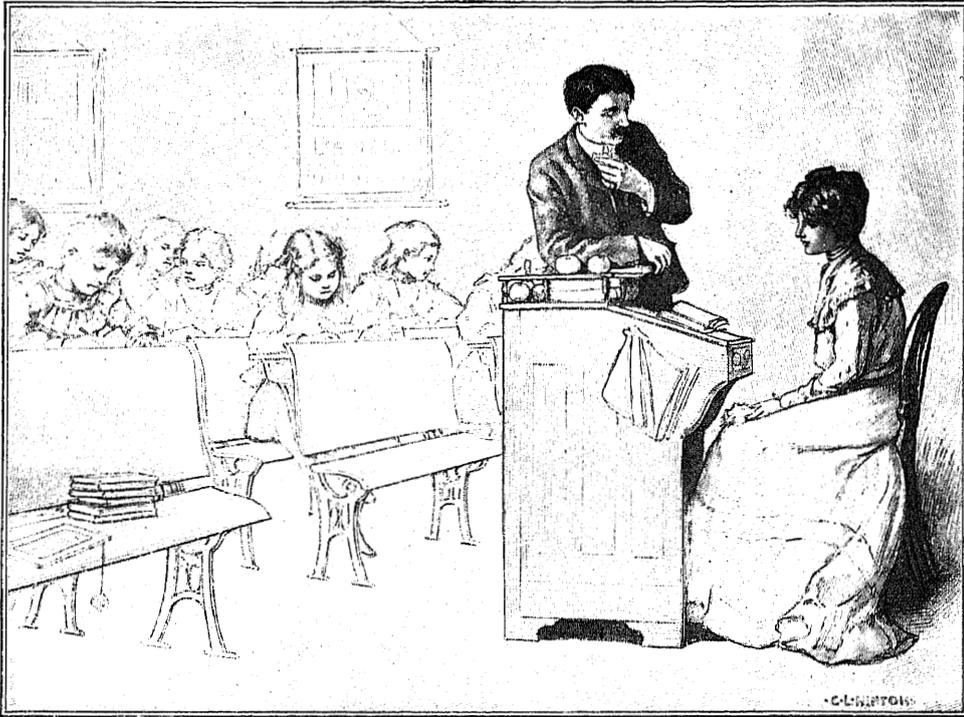
The Substitute's name was Miss Jenny. The class speedily adored Miss Jenny. Soon Miss Jenny's desk might have been a shrine to Pomona. It was joy to forego one's apple to swell the fruitage of adoration piled on Miss Jenny's desk. The class could scarcely be driven to recess, since going tore them from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

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. Emmy Lou 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 favorites.

Emmy Lou went to the board.

"If a man born in eighteen hundred and



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

So, apparently, did Mr. Bryan. Mr. Bryan was the Principal. Mr. Bryan wore his black hair somewhat long and thrown off his forehead. 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 grimace 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.

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.

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

Emmy Lou paused, uncertain. Had he said one thousand, eight hundred and nine, Emmy Lou 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 the Principal 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 number lesson ended. Directly following its lesson in the "New Eclectic Practical and Mental Primary Arithmetic," the class was given over to mastering "Townsend's New System of Drawing."

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

ty. The class gloried in her prettiness, but it felt it would have Miss Jenny 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." 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. She laid the tissue paper over the lines and traced them with her pencil.

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



CLINTON

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

it was the best page in the room.

Emmy Lou could not take her book home. Copy books and drawing books must be kept clean. They were collected and kept under lock and key in Miss Jenny's cupboard. But Emmy Lou told Aunt Cordelia that her drawing had been the best in the room. Aunt Cordelia could hardly believe it. She said 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. The next day Hattie 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.

A little girl named Sadie wondered if tissue paper was fair.

Hattie said it was. She said 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 Miss Jenny told them how she hated a story. A 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. Miss Jenny had asked her if she felt the wind from the window opened above, and she had said no. Afterward she had realized 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.

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

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 Roll Call. To give in a mark above what you feel yourself entitled, is to tell worse than a story. It is



"The Third Reader class gathered in knots."

to tell a falsehood. And a falsehood is a lie. I shall leave it to you. I believe in trusting my pupils. 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 favor, 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.

Emmy Lou struggled to keep up with the downward tendency.

Hattie outstripped her promptly. Hattie could adapt herself comfortably 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. Miss Jenny 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. Emmy Lou brought it 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 was 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 draft 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 Emmy Lou. 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 for singing," 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. 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. She

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 little mittened hand went into Miss Jenny's every morning.

Emmy Lou told Hattie. Hattie 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. The Drug-Store Man 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, Emmy Lou was waiting for her at the gate. But she was 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 their drawing-books aside, and give that time to Arithmetic. And Miss Jenny reminded them to be conscientious in all their work. They were, and the Roll Call bore witness to their rigorous 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 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. Miss Jenny must see to it that her class made a better showing. Miss Jenny was a Substitute. Mr. Bryan recognized that, and made allowance accordingly, "but"—then he went.

Miss Jenny looked frightened. The class feared she was going to cry. They determined to be better and more conscientious for her sake. They felt 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 Miss Jenny 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. Then she spoke. Miss Jenny said she was going to take them into her confidence. Miss Jenny was very young. Miss Jenny told them the teacher of the Third Reader, the Real Teacher, was not coming back. Miss Jenny told them that she had hoped to take the Real Teacher's

place. But she said 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.

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

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 bore witness of 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.

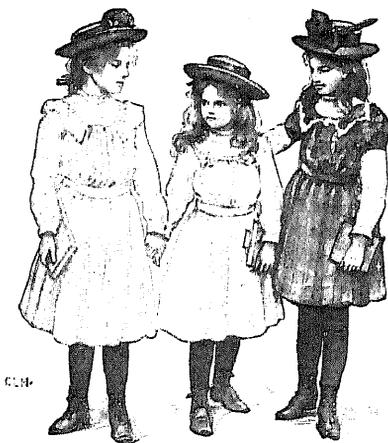
And Miss Jenny would go.

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

The day before Examination, Miss Jenny told every little girl to clear out her desk and carry all her belongings home. Then Miss Jenny went around and looked in each desk. 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."



"To use tissue paper would be cheating."



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

The class 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 Miss Jenny turned. Every eye was following her. They loved Miss Jenny. Miss Jenny's cheeks were glowing, and the draft, as Miss Jenny stood in the open doorway, blew her hair about her face. Miss Jenny 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.

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.

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 free-hand drawing in this book has been done?"

Emmy Lou hurried over to tell them. Examinations, she explained, were different. To use tissue paper would be cheating. And what would Miss Jenny say? Little girls

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.

"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. He 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.

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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.

"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.

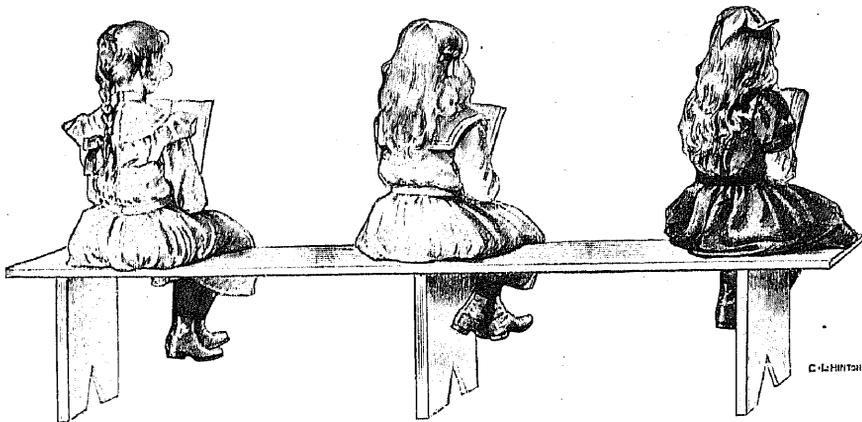
The Third Reader class, stunned, picked up its pencils. Miss Jenny had feared for them in Arithmetic. They had feared for themselves. They were cheats and liars, and they had failed. And the knowledge did not make them confident. They were cheats, and a suspicious and cold surveillance on the part of the Teacher kept them reminded that she looked upon them as cheats 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——"

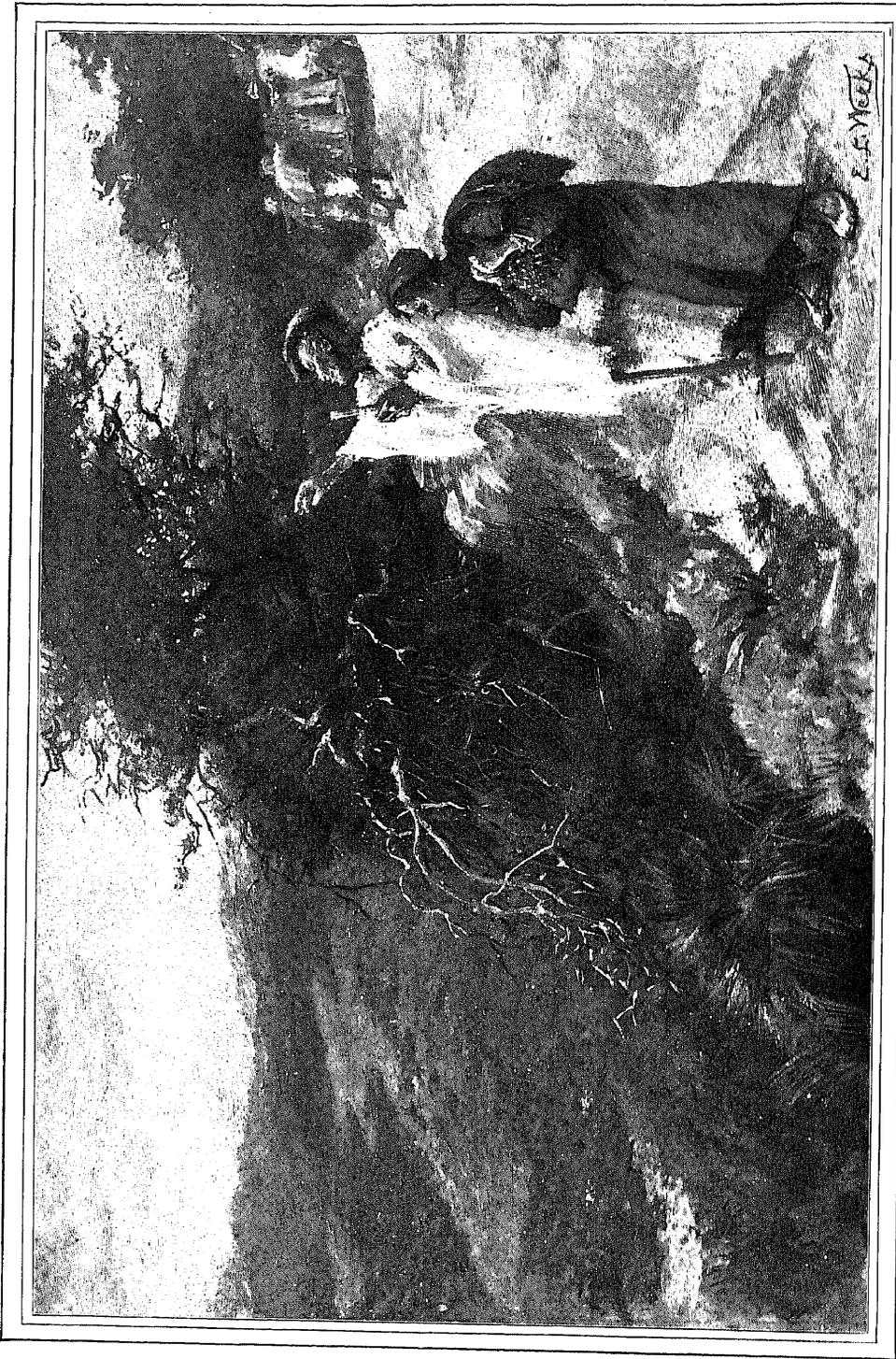
They did better next day in Geography and Reading. They passed on Friday in Spelling and Penmanship.

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.





“NOT WITH YOU, O BLESSED AMONG ALL HILLS, FELL THE ARROW OF OUR LORD! AND NEVER SHALL I BREATHE YOUR AIR AGAIN!”

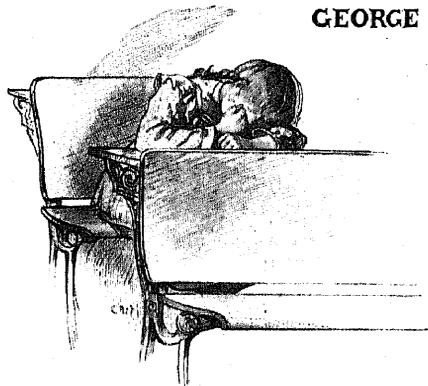
DO NOT WITH YOU, O REEBED AMONG ALL HILLS, FELL THE ARROW OF OUR LORDS AND NEVER SHALL I BREATHE YOUR



THE SHADOW OF A TRAGEDY

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN



MISS LIZZIE kept in. 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 Miss Lizzie's ways. She had many ways. Perhaps these ways 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. Miss Lizzie seemed to tower up and over one's personality. One had no mind of one's own. One said what one thought Miss Lizzie wanted one 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.

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

Sometimes Miss Lizzie 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 Miss Lizzie 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 Miss Lizzie's changing. One watched Miss Lizzie in order to

know the thing Miss Lizzie wanted. Emmy Lou knew every characteristic feature of Miss Lizzie's face—the lean nose that bent toward the cheek, the thin lips that tightened and relaxed, the cold survey that traveled from desk to desk.

Miss Lizzie's thin hands were never still any more than were Miss Lizzie's eyes. Most often Miss Lizzie's 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 honor in Copy-Books. Miss Lizzie meant to take an honor this year. But the road to fame is laborious.

Miss Lizzie 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 one held one's breath anxiously. Others must be heavy and labored. Over these one unconsciously put the tip of one's tongue between one's teeth until it was just visible between one's lips.

What, however, is school for but the accommodating of self to the changing demands of 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 somber 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. Hattie 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 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 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 the little girls. 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 Amantus. Such charming names!

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

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

"Is n'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. 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. Now it was Problems. But 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.

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.

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. Miss Lizzie's tones hurt. It was as though one 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.

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.

Then came Lisa—Lisa Schmit. Lisa's 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



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

untied it. The unpleasantness wafted forth 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. Lisa's round, soap-scoured little cheeks had turned a mottled red. When she got back to her seat, Lisa's head went down on her arms on the desk, and presently even Lisa's yellow plaits shook with the convulsiveness of Lisa's sobs.

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

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

"I don't like Miss Lizzie," said Emmy Lou.

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

"Little girls must not know what they like," said Aunt Louise. Aunt Louise was apt to be sententious. Aunt Louise 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. Emmy Lou knew she did not like Miss Lizzie.

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

Miss Lizzie called Rosalie. Then she called Emmy Lou. She told them where her house was. She told them to go there. She told them to 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. On one side, its high board fence ran along an alley, but on the other side was a big yard. The yard had trees and bushes. The cottage was almost hidden. 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. Some one 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 some one 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.

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. She told them 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 to one. 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 desk.

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 neighborly solicitude did what they could. But the trial-paper was steeped indelibly past redemption.

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.

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

"Please, I have no trial-paper."

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

Emmy Lou's heart burned. The color slowly left Emmy Lou's 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 Emmy Lou spoke. Emmy Lou generally spoke conclusions and, unless pressed, did not enter into the processes of her reasoning.

"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 dress; "she can't be well."

So Emmy Lou was taken to the doctor. The doctor gave Emmy Lou a tonic.

And following this, Emmy Lou 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.

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 fitted 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."

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.

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 oneself.

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 Stepmother. 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 schoolhouse 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.



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

They were 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 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. Miss Lizzie was cross about it.

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

Sadie went to get it. Sadie pulled it out. Sadie had a way of being unfortunate. She also pulled another book out. It fell open on the floor. It shed rose leaves and tinsel.

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

Miss Lizzie's fingers had been tearing at bits of paper all morning. Miss Lizzie's desk was strewn with bits of paper.

"Bring it to me," said Miss Lizzie.

Miss Lizzie took the book from Sadie. Miss Lizzie looked at the book. Emmy Lou had just failed quite miserably at Problems. Miss Lizzie's face changed. It was as if a white rage passed over Miss Lizzie's face. Miss

Lizzie 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.

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.

Every one went—every one 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.

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

Emmy Lou 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.



"One loved the far corner of the sofa."

The bell had rung at two o'clock. At three Tom came. Tom was the house boy. Tom was suave and saddle-colored and smiling. Tom 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 Tom went. It took a good deal to wilt Tom.

At half-past three Tom 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. Her brother-in-law was an editor. He 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—"

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."

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

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

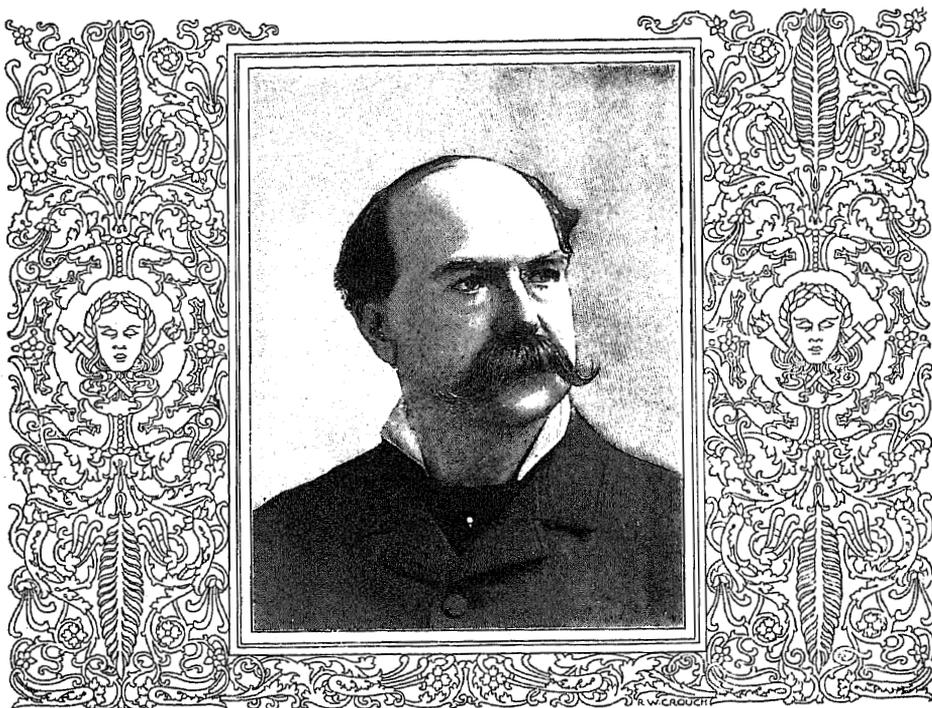
"She needn't go back this year," said Aunt Cordelia when she heard, "my precious baby!"

"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.





TOMMASO SALVINI.

BY CLARA MORRIS,
Author of "Life on the Stage."



CLARA MORRIS.

*From a photograph taken in 1883, on the same date
as the above photograph of Salvini.*

IT is not often, I fancy, that one defends one's hero or friend from himself. Yet that about describes what I am doing now for the famous Salvini. An acquaintance of mine, a man self-contained and dignified, who was reading the other day, startled me by muttering aloud, "Oh that mine enemy would write a book!" and a moment later, flinging the volume from him, he cried, "Where were his friends? Why did they permit him to write of himself?"

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed in bewilderment, "where were whose friends? Of whom are you speaking, and why are you so excited?"

"Oh," he answered impatiently, "it's the disappointment! I judged the man by his splendid work; but look at that book—the personal pronoun forms one solid third of it. I know it does!" and he handed me the volume in question.

"Well," I said, as I glanced at the title—

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Presently he caught sight of a little piece of scarlet cloth fastened to a stick that stood upright in the snow a few feet from the trail. It ought to have been a warning to him, but it only roused his foolish curiosity to a still higher pitch, as the trapper knew it would. Instead of running away, as he should have done, he sat down in the snow and considered. The thing didn't really look as if it were good to eat, and yet it might be. The only way to find out would be to taste it, and, anyhow, eatable or not, such a bit of bright color was very attractive to the eye. He got up and walked slowly toward it, and the first thing he knew a steel trap had him by the right foreleg.

He suddenly lost all interest in pieces of red flannel, and for the next few minutes he was the very maddest cat in all the Great Tahquamenon Swamp. The woods rang and rang again with his screaming, and the rabbits heard it and trembled, and the partridges, hidden away among the thick branches of the spruces and cedars, glanced furtively over their shoulders, and were glad that he was no nearer.

But after a while he began to realize that this sort of thing did him no good. Luckily he was not bound to a tree. A heavy wooden clog was fastened to the trap by a short chain, and he found that by pulling with all his might he could drag it at a snail's pace through the snow. The strain on his foot hurt him cruelly, and the blood oozed out around the steel jaws, and left a line of bright crimson stains behind him; but he pushed on, for a great fear was in his heart, and he knew that he must go away or die. How he growled and snarled with fear and rage and pain, and how his eyes flamed as he looked ahead to see what was before him, or back along the trail to know if the trapper was coming! It was a terrible journey that he made that night.

The hours dragged by, slow as his pace and heavy as his clog. Far away in the east the sky began to brighten ever so little, though to the lynx, down among the shadows of the deep woods, it seemed as dark as ever. The day was coming, and he was hardly half-way home. His strength was almost gone, he was faint from loss of blood, and he looked thinner and smaller than fifteen hours before. And now he suddenly discovered that he was not alone. Off to the right, in among some thick bushes, he caught sight of the lurking form of a timber wolf. He looked to the left, and there was another. Behind him was a third, and he thought he saw several others still farther away, slinking from bush to bush, and gradually drawing nearer. Ordinarily they would hardly have thought of tackling him, and if they had really screwed up their courage and tried to overpower him by sheer force of numbers, he would simply have climbed a tree. But now it was different. The lynx trembled, and seemed to shrink to half his normal size; and then, as all the horror and the hopelessness of it burst upon him, he lifted up his voice in such a cry of abject fear, such a wail of utter agony and despair, as even the Great Tahquamenon Swamp had very seldom heard.

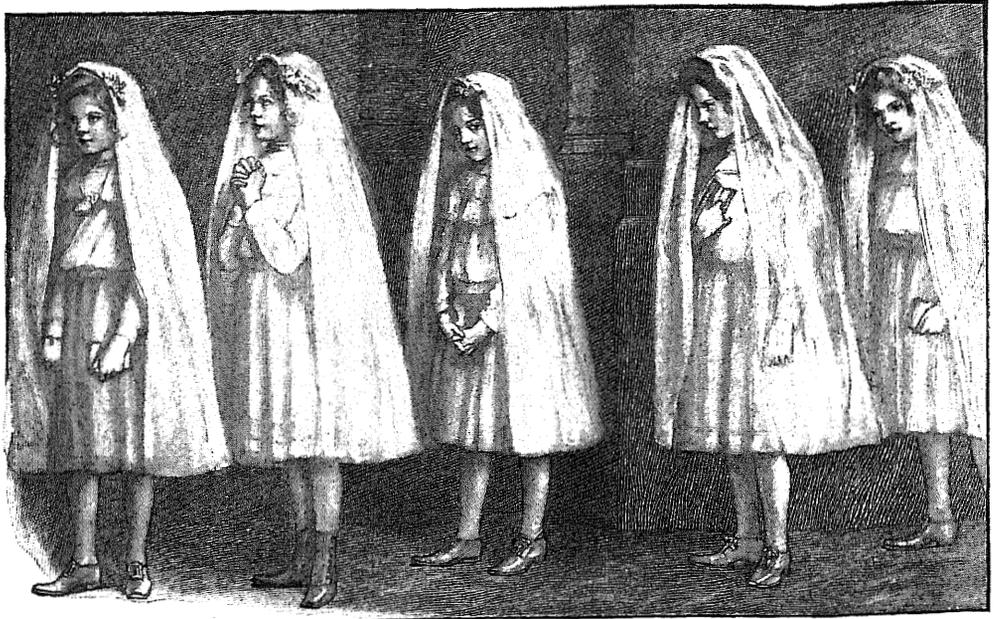
And yet when the last moment came, he braced up and gave a good account of himself. At least that was what the trapper decided when he came a few hours later and looked the ground over. The lynx was gone—

not even a broken bone of him was left—but in the trodden, red-stained snow there was the record of an awful struggle. There was something heroic about him, after all.

Once more, in the same old hollow tree by the Glimmerglass, a big gray cat lay down in a lonely bed, and rose again to take up a double burden of toil and care. For such is the way of the woods.



"Growled and snarled with fear and rage and pain."



ALL THE WINDS OF DOCTRINE

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN



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 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 oneself, 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, who, in the shape of little girls, fled shrieking before the onslaught.

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.

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.

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

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

"It's ham," said Rebecca Steinam.

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.

But to Emmy Lou biscuits and ham had lost their savor. Mary Agatha and Rosalie abjured biscuits, and Rebecca had drawn back at ham.

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 laboring 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.

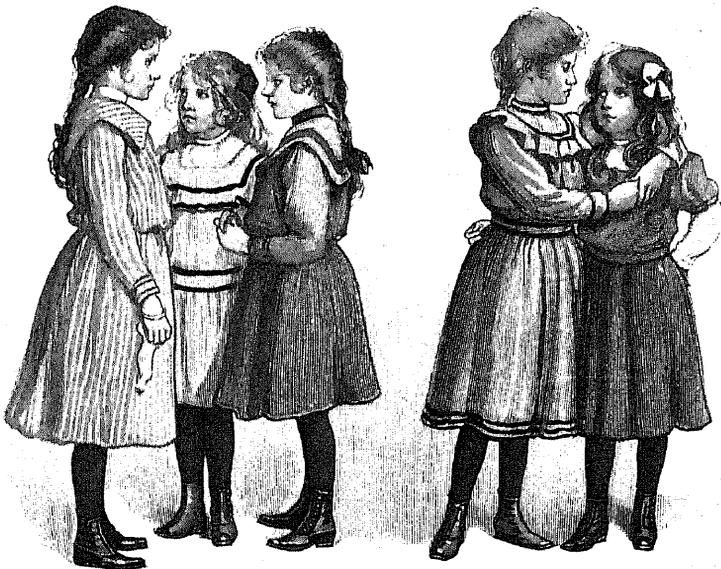
And high as are the peaks of the Fifth Reader Heights, Mary Agatha stood on one yet higher. Mary Agatha went to Church, not only on Sundays, but on Saints' days. Mary Agatha loved to go to Church.

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

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 Reve-



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

lation. 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.

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."

Then it was so. One felt confidence in Miss Fanny's statements. Miss Fanny walked lightly, she laughed in her eyes, she spoke her mind. But one did not cherish it 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.

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 German-

berg. They, too, were making ready for Confirmation.

Again Miss Fanny reminded them all of Examination.

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. The next day she brought a note from her Mamma. She told Emmy Lou about it. It asked that Sadie be excused for missing. Because of the Revival at Sadie's 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."

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?

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 Con-



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

firmation, she was trying to keep her mind from secular things, and a seat to herself would help her to do it.

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.

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 coloring and diversity more complex and perplexing.

Miss Fanny read Mary Agatha's note. Miss Fanny 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?

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.

"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 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 hers. 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 color. Something quivered. It burst forth. It was music. It was almost as if it hurt. One drew deep breath and shut one's eyes a moment because it hurt. One opened them. The aisles were filled with little girls in misty white and floating veils, stealing forward.

And Mary Agatha was among them.

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

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. 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.

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.

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 all. Emmy Lou 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. 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.

Emmy Lou felt anxious. She had been offered a button first and had taken it gratefully. 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 Steinam lifted her black eyes. She gave her beringed little hand a dramatic and conclusive wave. "You're all of you Gentiles," said Rebecca.

Emmy Lou left the group. As Animal, Biped, Intermediate, Low



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

Church, Episcopalian, Gentile, and possibly Heretic, she went upstairs to seek the Dictionary. It was a moment of doubt and perplexity. With laboring 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.

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.

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.

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—

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.

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



"She and her index finger pored over the page."

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. 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. Emily 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 Miss Fanny 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.



REQUIESCAM.

BY JULIAN HINCKLEY.

As sinks the ship at sea,
When all is still and the evening dark makes
haste,
So let my passing be
Into the bosom of that unfathomed waste
Where dwell the mingled races of the globe.
After this voyage short,
In peace may I take up my destined robe,
For aye in port.

Nor, when my days are gone,
Let as a derelict my evil float.
Let not the ocean mourn
O'er harm surviving death. Be there no mote
Of discontent left on the tide of man;
But o'er that ocean's breast
Let ripples spread in peace 'neath Heaven's
span,
When I shall rest.



THE CONFINES OF CONSISTENCY

BY GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

Illustrated by C. L. Hinton

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 Parlor;—and there being a pupil more than there were accommodations, and Emmy Lou being the newcomer, her portion was a rock-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 parlor 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 bridged. 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 MacLaurin, which has its drawbacks; for she sometimes fails to recognize 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 calcimined 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 Mussalmen, 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.

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

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 ladies," many times a day, but after a brief pause one returned to pleasant converse with a neighbor.

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 favorite, whereupon, she, pleased and fluttered, 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 MacLaurin to give attention.

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 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."

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

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 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."

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 ruffled, 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

It was the teachers who were laughing now, while Mr. Page, running his fingers through his hair, wore a smile—arrested, reflective, considering.



"One finds oneself dreaming, and watching the clouds through the school-room window"

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."

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.

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 one 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, some one 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 MacLaurin?" 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.

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. "Are—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.

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 were 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 tole' how they've kep' it from de chile."

Emily Louise was swallowing hard. "Then—then—am I a Republican?" Her voice sounded way off.

Aunt M'randa turned a scandalized 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 it's sinnahs is lumped wī Publicans—po' whites, an' cul'd folks an' sech?"

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' wī yer mouf' gapin' at de 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 hawn y'other side de Ohier River, 'ceptin' was an acci-dent? Des tell me dat? But dere's 'nough quality dishere 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.

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 the 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."

Hereshepaused, pen suspended; for the full meaning of a statement in the History spread 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 concen-

tration 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 the Exceptions were



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

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 procession; 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 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 rec-

ognized her limitations. Some are born to prose and some 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 MACLAURIN.

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 signaling and labial dumb show, Emily Louise implored enlightenment.

"Ours is the honor 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.

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 humor, "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 MacLaurin arose.

Was retribution following thus fast because of that subterfuge of Mugwump? Alas for that conscientiousness of which she



"For one's feelings in verse, one paid a pie"

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.

But the head of Isobel was erect, and her eyes flashed triumph; her 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 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 Louise'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."

"And then?" Aunt Louise was breathless with attention.

"She kissed me," said Emily Louise.

Aunt Louise gave a little laugh of grati-

fication and pride. "The wife of the President—why, Emmy Lou—"

"I'll write to her Aunt Katie this very afternoon," said Aunt Cordelia.

But 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 center of a homeward group jostling for place beside her. Hattie had carried her books, Rosalie her jacket. William had nodded to her at the corner 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.

The sun went down; the dusk grew chill. Emily Louise sat on the door-step, chin in palm.





A BALLAD IN PRINT O' LIFE

BY GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

Illustrated by Charles Louis Hinton

“ ‘ If you're not pretty, you've got to be smart! ’ ”

DDOUBLE names are childish things; therefore Emmy Lou entered the High School as Emily 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 incompleting 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 Zoölogy now.

Classes went to the laboratory for this subject, filing into an amphitheater of benches about Miss Carmichael, who stood in the center 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 curttness 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, polysyllabic 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 humor 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 humors.

"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's 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?"

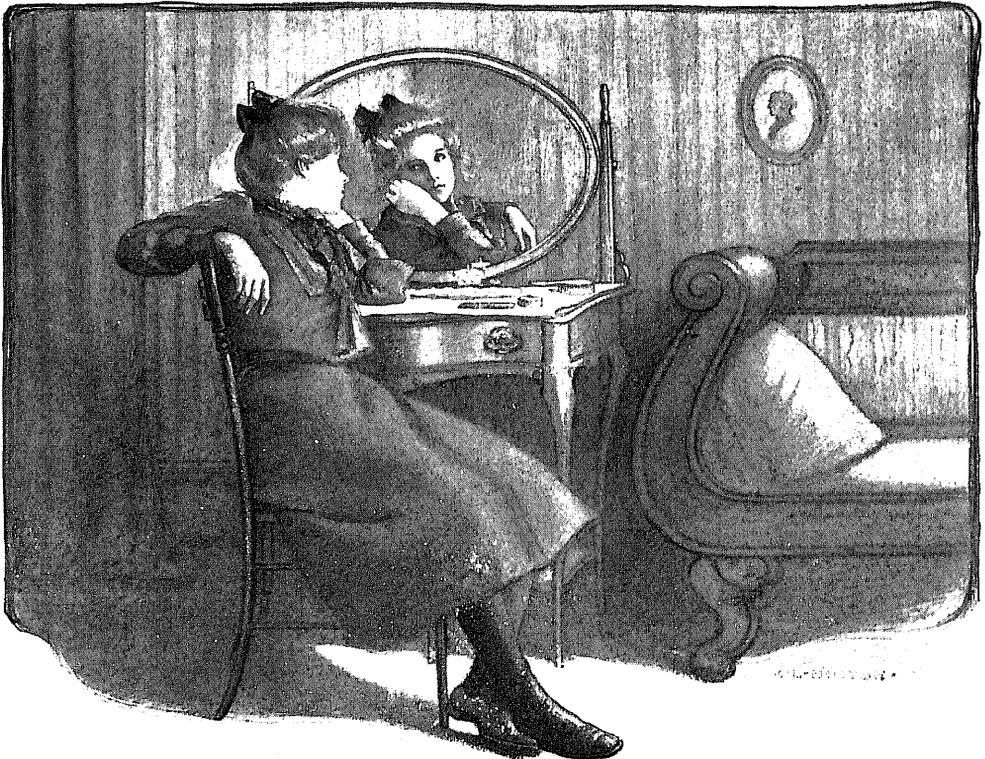
"God," said Emily desperately.

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

"Wondering if she was pretty"



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.

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 centering 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—

She turned quickly and hid her face against the sofa. Emmy Lou had met Self.

But later she almost quarreled with Aunt Cordelia about the sailor suit.

One day at recess a newcomer 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 newcomer's face brightened. "They give long recesses," she said.

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 newcomer, joined the promenade about the basement.

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.

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."



"Loves to be the one to jump and pick it up"

"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.

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 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 wind-swept 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 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 centered 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 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



"Took from her Latin Grammar a penciled paper, . . . and tore it into bits"



"SHE TOOK UP HER VERSE WHERE
WILLIAM HAD INTERRUPTED."



“‘UP?’ said Hattie. ‘What’s the up for?’”

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.

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:

“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.

“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 penciled paper, interlined and much erased, and tore it into bits—viciously little bits. Then she went and put them in the waste-paper basket.

"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, "its True."

She took it to Hattie, from some feeling that she was mixed up in this thing. Hattie closed her Algebra, keeping a 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.



Sancta Humilitas

BY CHARLES FRANCIS SAUNDERS

KEEP, Lord, Thy child in poverty
If wealth must dim his eyes
To the beauties of Thy pictured earth,
To the glory of Thy skies.

And in Thy mercy send defeat
If victory's fruit must be
Indifference to his neighbor's need—
If victory cost him Thee!

ent man, indeed, who had not fallen upon his knees in spirit, in company with this little household of faith, in mute recognition of the love and peace and order that crowned his days.

He kissed the laughing children as they clung to him, before she turned down the light. When she came out of the room he was waiting for her. He put his arm around her as he

said, with the darling tenderness that made her life:

"Come along, old sweetness. We've got to go down and stir up those lunatics again. Call *that* 'the happiest time of your life!' We know better than that, don't we, petty? I'll tell you what it is: I'll go to church with you next Sunday, if you say so!"

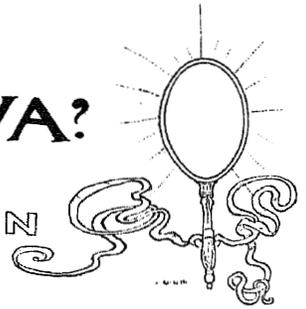


VENUS OR MINERVA?

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

Illustrated by C. L. Hinton



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 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 MacLaurin.

The year brought further distinction. Along in the term Miss MacLaurin received notification that she had been elected to membership in the Platonian Society.

"On account of recognized literary qualifications," the communication set forth.

Miss MacLaurin 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 MacLaurin looked upon this opening into Platonian.

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 portal stood open to Miss MacLaurin.

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.

Miss MacLaurin 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 honor because it was not their honor?

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 MacLaurin, 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 honors. Hattie meant to be valedictorian some day, nor did Miss MacLaurin doubt Hattie would be.

Rosalie's was a different field. Hers was strewn with victims; victims whose name was Boys.

It was Rosalie's field Miss MacLaurin in her heart longed to enter. But how did Rosalie do it? She raised her eyes and lowered them and the victims fell. But every one could not be a Rosalie.

And Hattie looked pityingly upon Rosalie's way of life, and Rosalie laughed lightly at Hattie.

Miss MacLaurin 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 MacLaurin is becoming sensitive because there is 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."

Miss MacLaurin, 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 MacLaurin. 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 humor," said Uncle Charlie, as though one had spoken.

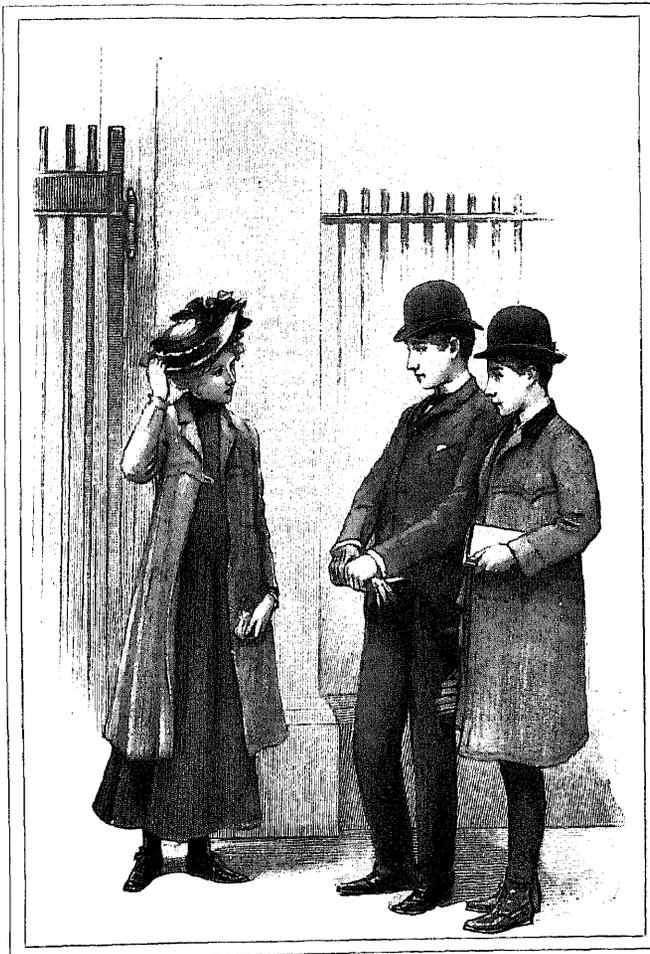
Emmy Lou smiled absently. Some of Uncle Charlie's joking which she was used to accepting as mystifying.

But it was funny about Rosalie and Hattie; she was smiling again, and she felt patronizingly superior to them both.

Miss MacLaurin 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

"At the High School gate Miss MacLaurin raised her eyes again"



things were different. William and the other boy joined her, William taking her books, while they all walked along together.

Miss MacLaurin 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 her look better.

Her spirits soared intoxicatingly. This was a new sensation. Miss MacLaurin 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 MacLaurin feel daring. She looked up—suddenly—and met the other boy's glance. 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 MacLaurin 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 the brain. Intuitively Miss MacLaurin 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 each 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 MacLaurin was conscious that, for her part, she compre-

hended 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 lead 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.

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 the worth of it?

Miss MacLaurin 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 MacLaurin's cheek quite red; it was her blush when the boy joined them.

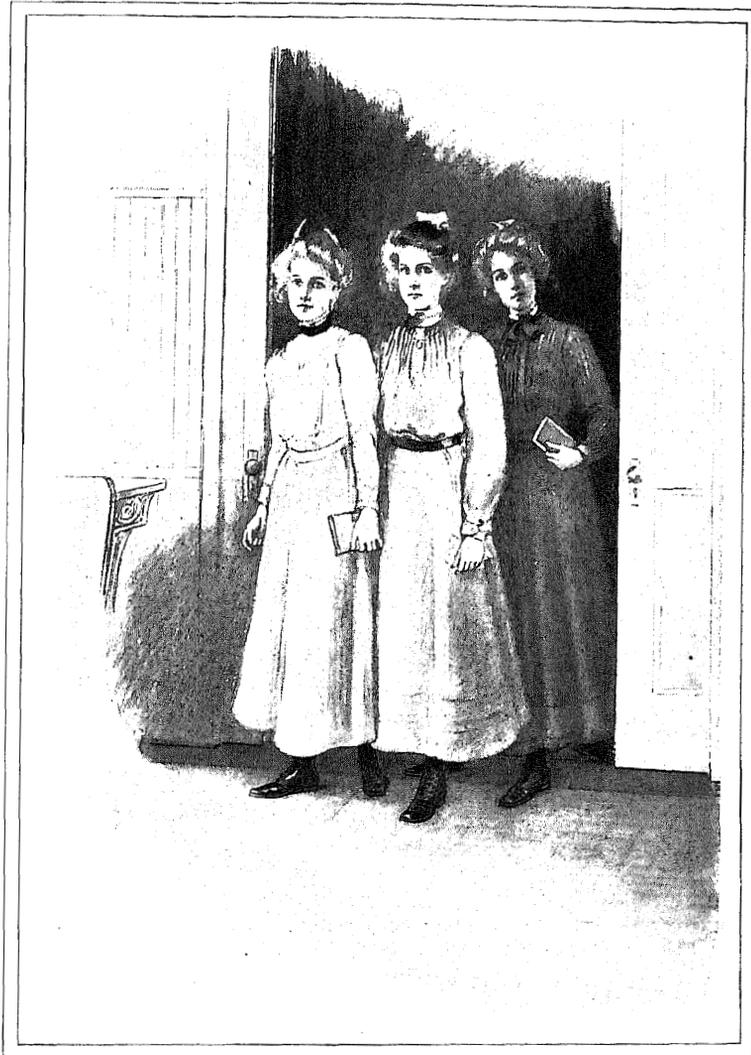
A few steps farther on they met Miss Kilrain, the new teacher at the High School. It was just as Miss MacLaurin was laughing an embarrassed laugh to hide the blush. Miss Kilrain looked at them coldly; one was conscious of her disapproval.

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.

She also breathed from her diaphragm, and urged her pupils to try the same.



"The three newly elect mounted the stairs to the Platonian doorway"

"Don't you do it," Rosalie cautioned Emily; "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 a fight for them. The papers had been full of it and Emmy Lou had read the particulars of it.

A Mr. Bryan had been in favor 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 lubricate 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 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 textbooks—she understood now, of course.

But the old books went and the new ones came, and Miss Kilrain with them.

She entered 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 rank below, felt that. It was as though the faculty closed in upon themselves and left Miss Kilrain with her *Modern Methods* outside and alone.

But she showed a proper spirit, and proceeded to form her intimacies elsewhere, becoming 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 honor.

But she surprised them. She did come; she came tipping 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 pre-

tend." But in the full illusion of the game, 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 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 named Chester.

Miss MacLaurin, 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 favor of it, for she was one who would shine.

Miss MacLaurin did not express herself, but when it came to the vote, Miss MacLaurin said "Aye."

The "Ayes" had it.

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 her 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 gentleman of the Male High School. It could but lead to frivolity, and she was sorry to see so many in favor 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 MacLaurin.

Miss Kilrain then went on to say that she had taught in another school, a school where

the ideals of Higher Education were being realized 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 recognized in the Platonian Society, Miss Kilrain now proposed that 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 recognized 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 who must lead, at something; if she could not be lead-

er on the rostrum she descended to the ranks.

Miss MacLaurin was deeply interested and felt she had a right to be, for these things, newspapers and such, were in her family. Considering her recognized literary qualifications she even had secret aspirations toward a position on the staff. On a scrap of paper



"She stood, fingering the window curtain, irresolute"

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 MacLaurin heartily endorsed 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 favorite with Miss Kilrain. Hattie, the hitherto shining light, was detailed to secure subscribers. Was this all that honors in Algebra, Latin, and Chemistry could do for one?

Miss MacLaurin 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 MacLaurin to attend to. Miss MacLaurin 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.

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 his pocket and pursed his lips as he looked down on them.

"And what am I to get, if I give you the advertisement?" he inquired. 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.

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 he.

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 down-town, 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.

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 realized.

"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 it 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.

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."

"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 MacLaurin was right about it; the debate did not take place. Platonian affairs seemed suddenly tame. Would a strictly feminine Olympian 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."

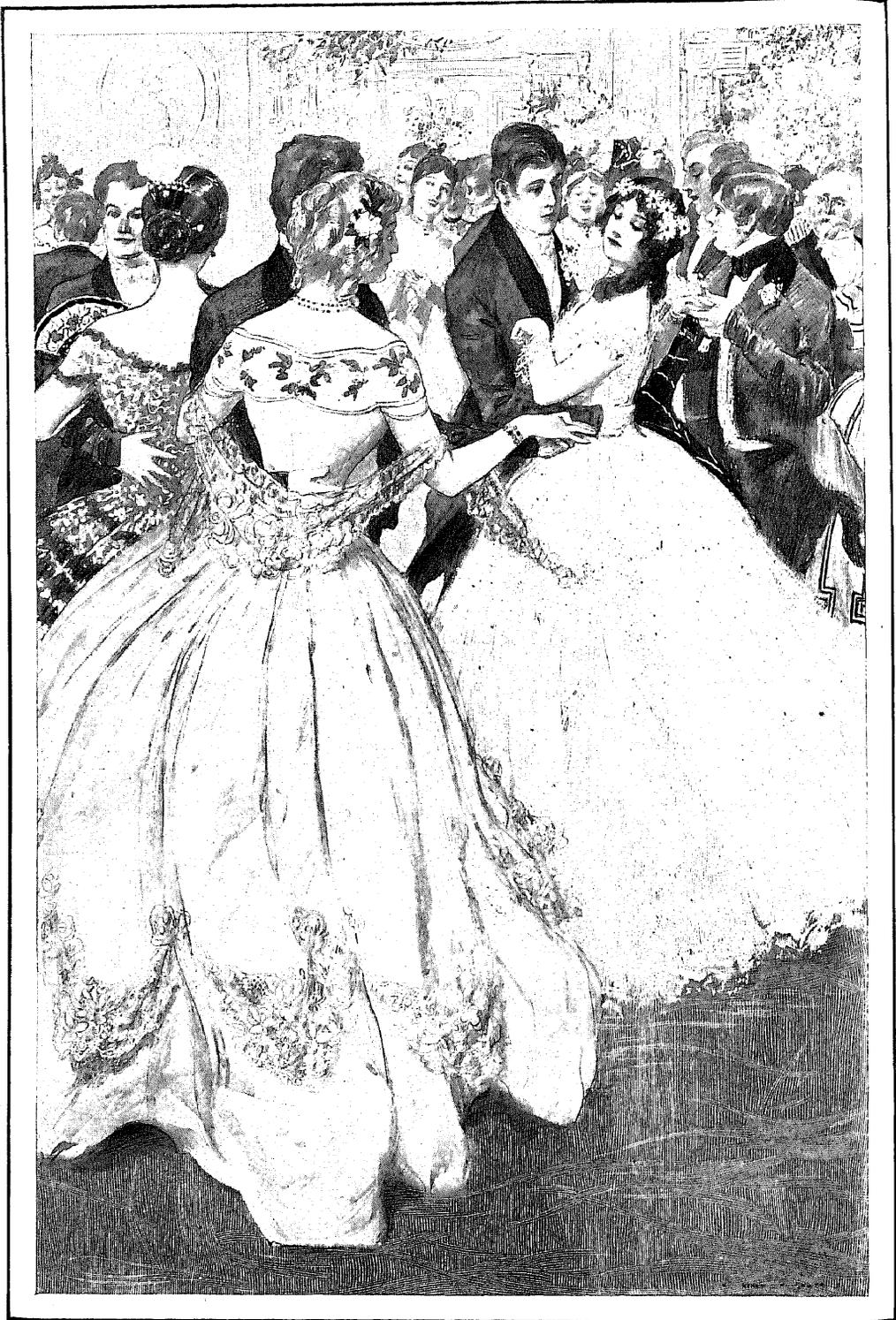
Which was doubly true, for both William and Chester had asked her. She was used to having William say he'd come round and go along; she had had a boy join her and walk home—but this—

"You can't do it all," said Aunt Cordelia positively. "That Society keeps you till dark."

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.

Late that afternoon Miss MacLaurin dropped a note in the post. It was a note tendering her resignation to the Platonian Society.





"A buzz of whispering . . . followed Miss Carewe and her partner around the room"

Drawn by HENRY HUTT

See page 443

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Lena known that, her blood would have never stained the village green. Her legs——”

“She’s coming right here,” he cried, his eyes fixed on the winding path, “that lady that was in the hammock. We can go to the locust grove now! Come on!”

I turned quickly. Yes, it was she. Across the green grass she was coming to me.

“It’s too late,” I said very kindly. “Much, much too late. It would be lonely there besides, and ants and things would get upon our clothing.”

“Then I guess I’ll go back to the hotel,” he said. “You won’t mind; will you? She’ll come and talk to you, and I’d like to give the other boys some candy.”

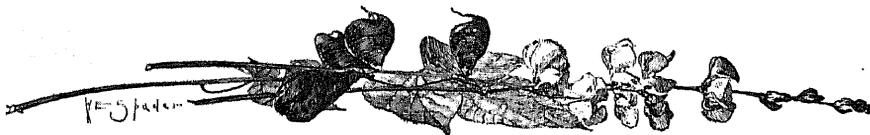
I gathered up his pink box of red candy and put it into his hands.

“Give them all some,” I said. “If what you have is not enough, get some more. Get them all that they can eat.”

“Really?” he asked, incredulously. “They can eat a good deal, you know. That Thompson boy——”

“Is honest and deserving,” I finished. “Get a separate box for him. Hurry, or all the best boxes will be gone.”

He did not wait to hear more. Running swiftly, he would have passed her, but she put out her hand and stopped him, and although he did not then wear the garb that custom had made the warrant for that act, she kissed him; then, with eyes that were black and shining like the spangled butterfly she had worn in her hair, she gathered up her skirts and came towards me.



A LOVE LETTER TO EMMY LOU*

BY GEORGE SIEBEL

DEAR LITTLE EMMY LOU:
I have read your book, Emmy Lou, and am writing you this letter to tell you how much I love you. In my world of books, I know a great host of charming ladies, Emmy Lou; some very beautiful, some very noble; proud and courtly dames of chivalry’s ages, lovely and heroic maidens of every clime and every time; some with hair burnished like gold, Emmy Lou, some with raven tresses; some gay as the lark, Emmy Lou, some pious as saints; some full of learning like Romola and Hypatia, some with hearts of love like Helen Castlewood and the fair Jehane; a great assemblage of lovely ladies, Emmy Lou, crowned with beauty and garlanded with grace that have inspired the hearts of poets to song and the hearts of warriors to battle, but, Emmy Lou, I love you better than all of them, because you are the dearest little girl I ever met.

I felt very sorry for you when the boy in the Primer World, who could so glibly tell the teacher all about the mat, and the bat, and

the black rat, and the fat hen, hurt your chubby fist by snapping an india-rubber band. I do not think he atoned quite enough when he gave you that fine long new slate pencil, grandly encased for half its length in gold paper, nor when he sent you your first valentine. No, he has not atoned quite enough, Emmy Lou, but now that you are Miss McLaurin you will doubtless even the score by snapping the india-rubber band of your disdain at his heart. But only to show him how it stings, and then, of course, you’ll make up for the hurt and be his valentine—won’t you, Emmy Lou?

You found, in that Primer World, that many things were strange. “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—wasn’t it, Emmy Lou?

And to be told crossly to sit down was bewildering, when in answer to c, a, t you said “Pussy.” For there was Pussy washing her face on the chart, and Miss Clara’s pointer pointing to her.

*This was published as a review in the Pittsburgh “Gazette,” November 1, 1902, and is here republished through the courtesy of the Editor.

But you have found many other strange things in this mysterious world—haven't you, Emmy Lou? From your first step in deductive reasoning—which told you that pencils have a way of rolling off your desk when you are gone, and that one pencil makes many stumps—to the day when you gazed so long into Aunt Cordelia's mirror and suddenly met Self, you have found your pathway in life hedged right and left with strange things—haven't you, Emmy Lou? But you looked at them so bravely and smiled so sunnily as you went on through the world—through the First Reader World, and the Fifth Reader World, and the Grammar Grade World, and the High School World—through the world of Miss Clara and the world of the Large Lady in Black Bombazine, and the rosy world of Dear Teacher, and the thorny world of Miss Lizzie, and all the other worlds—there was always courage in your smile and trust in your heart, and that is why I love you, Emmy Lou, dearest little girl of all.

I can see you now, opening your Primer at page 17, which you know by heart and identify by its picture; and I can hear you now, as your small voice drones 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.

What matter if you held your Primer upside down, as many another Emmy Lou has done while reading some equally affecting narrative? What matter, Emmy Lou, if you were small in knowledge: you were large in faith. And a glorious privilege was accorded to Hattie, who had you for her "nintimate friend." If many people took you for their "nintimate friend," Emmy Lou, you would help them very much. I wish you could be the "nintimate friend" of every Miss Lizzie who teaches in our schools—it was Miss Lizzie who threw the Green and Gold Book into the stove. It would be better for the Miss Lizzies and better for the other Emmy Lous.

If all the Miss Lizzies could read your book, Emmy Lou, how they would be changed! They would no longer be like the Cruel Stepmother, the Wicked Fairy Godmother, the grim and terrible Ogress who dwelt in her lonely castle, the school-house, while the forty little girls in the Fourth Reader were the captive Princesses, kept by Miss Lizzie until certain tasks were performed.

The years flit by, Emmy Lou, and I love you still. When you contradicted Hattie about being an Animal and then had to confess on paper that such you were; when you and your index finger pored over the dictionary's pages to discover whether you were also a Heretic; when you made the humiliating discovery, for a Southern girl, that you were a Republican because your papa was one—in all these anxious and solemn moments my heart went out to you, Emmy Lou.

And when, at twelve years, you find yourself dreaming, Emmy Lou, and watching the clouds through the school-room window, still I love you, Emmy Lou—for your conscience, which William told about in his essay. You remember, the two girls who met a cow. "Look her right in the face and pretend like we aren't afraid," said the biggest girl. But the littlest girl—that was you—had a conscience. "Won't it be deceiving the cow?" she wanted to know. Brave, honest Emmy Lou!

In every disillusionment—the world has so many—I feel with you, Emmy Lou. How often the world slaps our ideals in the face, as when Hattie told you Miss Beaton was going to be married, and you, shocked, hurt, told the romance you had woven about her. "She was going to be married," you said, "and—he—he never came—he was dead." "No such thing," said Hattie; "he runs a feed store next my father's office."

Yes, I love you, Emmy Lou, better than all the proud and beauteous heroines in the big grown-up books, because you are so sunshiny and trustful, so sweet and brave—because you have a heart of gold, Emmy Lou. And I want you to tell George Madden Martin (who, I hear, is really Mrs. Atwood R. Martin) how glad I am that she has told us all about you, the dearest little girl since Alice dropped down into Wonderland—yes, I love you even better than Alice, Emmy Lou.

But here I am still calling you Emmy Lou, and you have budded into Miss MacLaurin, and are receiving attentions from William and Chester; your mirror has told you that you are pretty, and you have had strange heart-flutterings, and your eyes have sought the ground, and your cheeks have blossomed pink. I fear, Emmy Lou, that ere long you will think more of William or of Chester than of any book lover's protestations. So, good-by, Emmy Lou—be assured that you have my heart, and that I will love you ever.

Good-by, Emmy Lou!

spice-cake that Mary Ann always made herself because Alonzo was never satisfied with any other. She had brought food enough, though at first he did not think so, and at the end appeared a bottle of coffee, strong and bright-flavored with just enough sugar in it, the best coffee that Alonzo had ever tasted. It renewed their cheerfulness when Mary Ann divulged the secret of its possession and explained how she had concealed it all the way in the shawl she carried. They laughed and talked together like a boy and girl; the soft air blew in their faces, and it was fragrant with all the spicy fragrance of the spring, of the fields that lay below, warm in the midday sun and cool with the forest airs that drew down from the deep pine and hemlock woods, which still kept the dark secrets of winter.

At last, with one consent, they rose; by

this time spring clouds thicker than any in the morning sky were hiding away the sun's warmth and brightness. The elderly man and woman stood there a moment, looking again at the village, where the plain, forsaken houses stood together like a forlorn, unshepherded flock above the river, so small, so meagre, so incapable of charm and pleasantness, for it was not yet the time when June would lend even this dull village some beauty of vines and thick leafage.

"I wonder if there's any young couple there now, starting out just as we did, without any more than we had, and just as full of ambition?" whispered Mary Ann.

Alonzo Hallett smiled cheerfully. "Well, I hope so, bless their hearts!" he said.

Then Mary Ann took his arm and they started back along the foot-path, to take the trolley car again, and go home together.

THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

*"Love is enough: ho ye who seek saving,
Go no further: come hither: there have been who have found it,
And these know the House of Fulfilment of craving;
These know the Cup with the roses around it;
These know the World's Wound and the balm that bath bound it."*

WILLIAM MORRIS.

PART I — ALEXINA

— "Elements, breeds, adjustments . . .
A new race dominating previous ones."

WALT WHITMAN.

CHAPTER I



ARRIET BLAIR was seventeen when she went with her father and mother and her brother Austen to New Orleans, to the marriage of an older brother, Alexander, his father's business representative at that place. It was characteristic of the Blairs

that they declined the hospitality of the bride's family, and from the hotel attended, punctiliously and formally, the occasions for which they had come. It takes ease to accept hospitality.

Alexander Blair, the father, banker and capitalist, of Vermont stock, now the richest man in Louisville, was of a stern

ruggedness unsoftened by a long and successful career in the South, while his wife, the daughter of a Scotch schoolmaster settled in Pennsylvania, was the possessor of a thrifty closeness and strong, practical sense.

Alexander, their oldest son, a man of thirty, to whose wedding they had come, was what was natural to expect, a literal, shrewd man with a strong sense of duty as he saw it. His long, clean-shaven upper lip, above a beard, looked slightly grim, and his straight-gazing, blue-gray eyes were stern.

The second son, Austen, was clean-featured, handsome and blond, but he was also, by report, the shrewd and promising son of his father, even as his brother was reported before him.

Harriet, the daughter, was a silent, cold-looking girl, who wrapped herself in reserve as a cover for self-consciousness, but, observing closely, thought to her own conclusions. She had a disillusioning way of baring facts, in these communings, which showed life to her very honestly but without romance or glamour.

At the wedding, sitting in her white dress by her father and mother in the flower-bedecked parlors of the Randolphs, Harriet looked at her brother, standing by the girl of seventeen whom he had just married, and saw things much as they were. In Molly, the bride of an hour, with her child's face and red-brown hair and shadowy lashes, she saw a descendant of pleasure-loving, ease-taking Southerners. Molly's father, from what Austen had said, was the dispenser of a lavish and improvident hospitality and a genial dweller on the edge of bankruptcy, while the mother, a belle of the '40's, some one had just told the Blairs, seemed just the woman to marry her only child to a man opposed to her people in creed, politics, and habits—which in 1860 meant something—but son of one of the richest men in the South.

Harriet ate her supper close by her father and mother. She did not know how to mix with these gay, incidental Southerners, and sitting there, went on with her communings. She could explain it on the Randolph side, but why Alexander was marrying Molly she could not understand. Shy and self-conscious, she knew vaguely of a thing called love. She had met it in

her reading rather than seen its acting forces anywhere about her. To be sure, her brother Austen had been engaged to a Miss Ransome, of Woodford County, a fashionable Kentucky beauty. The Blairs were a narrowly religious people. Harriet, a school-girl then, had stood at the window of the stately new stone house in Louisville which the Blairs called home, and, watching the fashionable world flow in and out of the high old brick cottage across the street, where Miss Ransome spent much time with a great-aunt, had wondered.

But love had not proved such a factor after all. Austen's engagement had been broken.

Harriet went back to Kentucky with the question of Alexander and Molly still open.

A year later her father went South again. War was loudly threatening, and he had large interests in Louisiana and Mississippi. There was a certain sympathy and understanding between the grim-lipped man and his daughter, and he suggested that she go with him and see the child newly born to Alexander and Molly.

But, reaching New Orleans to find his son gone to Mobile, on the same business, Mr. Blair decided to join him, and Molly being about to leave for her father's plantation with the baby and nurse, that she might the more rapidly convalesce, it was decided that Harriet accompany her.

The two weeks at Cannes-Brulee were strange to the girl, thus introduced to a Southern house overflowing with guests and servants, and she moved amid the idling and irresponsibility, the laughter and persiflage, with a sense of being outside of it all, and the fault, try as she would, her own.

This feeling was strongest that Sunday afternoon when the gayety and badinage seemed to center about a new arrival, a handsome, silver-aurooled Catholic priest, confessor to half the parish. Genial, polished, and affable, his very charm seemed to the Calvinistic-bred Harriet to invest him the more with the seductions of Romanism, as she had been taught to regard them.

There were music, cards, a huge bowl frosted with the icy beverage within, and to the stunned young Puritan the genial little priest in the midst seemed smiling a bacchanalian benediction over all.

Suddenly above chatter and music Molly's voice arose, gay but insistent—Molly there in the big chair, pale and big-eyed, her strength so slow to return, herself a child in her little muslin dress.

"Baby is four weeks old," Molly was declaring, "and here is Father Bonot from service at Cannes-Brulee and so with his vestments. I'm here and Harriet's here, and mamma's here, and everybody else is a cousin or something. I'm sure I don't know when I can get to church. P'tite shall be baptized here, now."

And before the slower comprehension of the dazed Harriet had grasped the meaning of the ensuing preparations—the draping of the pier-table, the lighting of waxen candles—a sudden silence had fallen; the gay abandon of these mercurial Southerners had given place to reverent awe, even to tears, as the new-born representative of the Puritan Blairs was brought in, in robes like cascades of lace, while of all that followed, the one thing seeming to reach the comprehension of Harriet was the chanting monotone of Father Bonot saying above the child, "Mary Alexina——"

Later Molly and Harriet went back to New Orleans, to find Alexander there but his father gone up to Vicksburg. Molly was to keep Harriet with her until his return.

Only the girl knew what it meant to find herself near her brother. It was as if here was something sane, rational, stable, by which to reestablish poise and standards. Harriet would have trembled to oppose her brother, so that to see Molly and Alexander together was a revelation. His sternness and his displeasure alike broke as a wave upon Molly, and as a wave receded, leaving her, as a wave would leave the sand, pretty and sparkling and smiling. Other things were revelations to Harriet too.

Going down to breakfast one morning, she found her brother clean shaven, immaculate, monosyllabic, awaiting the overdue meal. The French windows were open to the scent of myriads of roses outside, and also to the morning sun, far too high. The negro servants were hurrying to and fro, Molly nowhere visible.

Later, as the dishes were being uncovered, she appeared, her unstockinged little feet thrust into pretty French slippers, and her cambric nightgown by no means

concealed by a negligée, all lace and ribbons, hastily caught together. Yet she was pretty, pretty like a lovely and naughty child.

Nor did the embarrassment of Harriet, the presence of the servants, or her husband's cold preoccupation with his breakfast, disturb Molly, who trailed along with apparent unconcern until, reaching his elbow, she threw a wicked glance at Harriet, then kissed him on that spot on his head which, but for a few carefully disposed strands, must have been termed bald.

At the thing, absurd as it was, there swept over Harriet the hot shrinking of one made conscious of sex for the first time. With throbbing at throat and ears, she gazed into her plate, her feeling, oddly enough, centering in keen revulsion against her brother.

But Molly was dragging a chair to his elbow. "What's the fricassee made of, Alexander?"

And, her husband vouching her no reply, she slipped an arm about his neck, and, leaning over, drew his fork to her mouth and tasted the morsel thereon.

Then she turned her head sideways to regard him. "Don't frown it back, Alec, the smile I mean. I adore you when you don't want to and have to let it come. Acknowledge now, this is the way to breakfast."

And Harriet, who had been led to regard playfulness as little less than vice, was conscious of Molly trying to force a ripe fig between Alexander's lips, repressed thin lips upon which softening sat as if afraid of itself and her.

"You see," Molly was explaining, "I couldn't get down sooner. P'tite was making the most absurd catches at her mosquito bar, and Celeste refusing to laugh at her. You haven't finished your breakfast? Why must you always hurry off? No,"—her hand against his mouth—he, risen now, she on a knee in her chair, clinging to him; "don't tell me any more about Sumter having been fired upon, and your being worried over business. I hate business. What's anything this moment, if you would only see it, compared with me, and ripe figs dipped in cream?"

And then the triumph of her laugh, as, his arms suddenly around her, he grasped her, lifted, enfolded her for a moment,

then as fiercely put her from him and went out, leaving Harriet sick, shaken, at this sight of human passion seen for the first time.

The following day Harriet's father returned and she went home.

When she next saw her brother it was in Louisville where he was driven back to his own people by reason of his Northern creed and sympathies. His father-in-law had been among the first to fall in defense of the Confederacy, and with Alexander, now, was his mother-in-law, widowed and dependent, and a wife in this sense changed from child to woman:—that she was a fiercely avowed Southerner to the fiber of her.

With his little family he remained in Louisville a year. If his own people wondered at the extravagance of his wife and mother-in-law at a time when incomes were so seriously shrunken, Alexander was too much a Blair for even a Blair to approach the subject.

The child was sent daily to his mother's— he saw to that—a pretty baby, the little Mary Alexina, and robed like a young princess; but beyond this he seemed to discourage intimacy between the households. Certainly there was no common ground, the business judgment, large experience, and the integrity of the Blairs being in the constant service of the Government, while rumor had it that the home of young Mrs. Alexander Blair was the social rallying place for Southern sympathizers generally.

Suddenly, in the midst of big affairs, Alexander arranged otherwise for the maintenance of his wife's mother, whom it was his to support for the few remaining years of her life, and went to Europe with Molly and the child. Long after it came to Harriet's hearing that the frequent presence of a young Confederate officer at his house had led to the step.

It was four years from this time, in 1867, that Alexander Blair, the senior, died, to be shortly followed by his wife.

Though the son Alexander returned to Louisville of necessity, following these events, he left Molly and the child in Washington with some of her people there. And though his interests became centered in Louisville again, he never brought his family back, but went and came between the two places. In domestic infelicity it is our own people we would hide it from

longest. It was two years after, in '69, that Alexander met his end with the shocking suddenness of accidental death as he was returning East to Molly and the child.

CHAPTER II

The leisure of a summer evening had fallen with the twilight. Along that street in Louisville wherein stood the Blair house, with its porte-cochère, its splendid lawn, its carriage driveway issuing through a tall, iron gate, front doors were opening and family groups gathering. The yards wore the fresh green of June. A home coming crumple-horn ambled by, her bag swinging heavily. In the South, in 1870, cities were villages overgrown.

In the parlor of her home, Harriet Blair sat awaiting the arrival of her brother Austen from Washington, where he had gone to bring back their dead brother's child.

Harriet, at twenty-six, in lusterless mourning, was handsome and, some might have said, cold. Her face was finely chiseled and framed with light hair waving from its parting in curves regular as the flutings of a shell. There was a poise, a composure about this Harriet, making her unlike the tall, shy girl of nine years before.

As the bell rang she laid down her book and rose, and a second later Austen entered, leading a little girl with a round short-cropped head. His eyes met his sister's in greeting, then he loosed the child's hand. "This is your Aunt Harriet, Alexina," he said, and stepped across the room to stand before the mantel and watch the two.

Harriet bent and kissed the small cheek. Demonstration, even to this extent, meant much for a Blair. Then she crossed the room. She was more than ordinarily tall for a woman, with form proportioned to length of limb, and the beauty of her carriage gained by her unconsciousness of it.

Having pulled the bell-cord she came back, smiling, calmly expectant, looking from Austen to the child, who, seated now on the edge of a chair, was regarding her with grave eyes.

"She has a strong look of Alexander," said Harriet, consideringly, "and a little look of you—and of me. She is a Blair, though I can see her mother, too, about the mouth."

The child moved under the scrutiny, but her gaze, returning the study, did not falter.

Harriet laughed; was it at this imperturbability? "I think," she decided, "we may consider her a Blair." Then to the white maid-servant entering: "You may order supper, Nelly, for Mr. Blair and myself. This is Alexina, and, I should say, tired out. Suppose you give her a warm bath and let her go right to bed—have you her trunk key, Austen?—and I will send a tray up with her supper afterward."

Then, as Nelly took the key and went out, Harriet addressed her brother. "For, apart from the hygienic advantages of the bath before the supper, I confess," with faintly discernible amusement, "to a fancy for the ceremony as a form, so to speak, emblematic of a moral washing and a fresh start." She ended with a raising of her brows as she regarded her brother.

Austen Blair had no use for levity. Mild as this was, he dismissed it curtly. "I would suggest," he said, "that you avoid personalities; it can but be injudicious for any child to hear itself discussed."

Again Harriet laughed; she was provokingly good-humored. "Coming from her nine years of life beneath Molly's expansive nature, I don't think you need fear for what she'll gather from me." She took the child's hand and lifted her from the chair. "Here is Nelly, Alexina; go with her and do what she says. Say good-night to your uncle. Supper, Austen."

The dining-room being somber, one might have said it accorded with the master, whose frown had not all cleared away.

Harriet was speaking: "What of Molly? Was there a scene at parting with her voluntarily given-up offspring? For her moods, like her tempers, used to delight in being somewhat inconsistent and mixed."

"She has in no way changed," replied Austen. Was it this flat conciseness in all he said that made levity irresistible to Harriet in turn? "My interview with her was confined to business. That ended, she told me, as an afterthought, apparently, that the colored woman was going to remain with her, and she supposed Alexina could manage on the train. She also told me that her husband had severed connection with

the legation and was going back to Paris. Alexina was not with them at the hotel, but with her uncle, Senator Randolph, from whose house Molly was married."

"And Molly's parting with the child—"

"Was a piece with it all, tears and relief, just as you would have expected."

"And the husband's, this Mr. Garnier's attitude?"

"Was enigmatical; how far he understands the situation I had no means of judging."

"I'm sorry for the child, though," said Harriet suddenly, "for if there is anything of Molly in her, life according to the Blair standard may pall, and," whimsically, "her mixture of natures be vexed within her."

Austen took the Blairs seriously, and at any time he disliked the personal or the playful. He spoke coldly. "Having given the child over to you from the moment of arrival, of this initiatory tone you are taking I shall say no more. Duties you assume you do best your own way."

Harriet arched her brows. "You mean, having found better results followed the withdrawal of your oversight of me as mistress of our house, you are going to let me alone in this?"

"Exactly," said her brother, "and therefore on the subject, now or hereafter, I shall say no more." And it was eminently characteristic of him that he never did.

Meanwhile up-stairs the child had gone through with the bath and the supper like an automaton in Nelly's hands.

"She said 'yes' when I asked her anything," Nelly reported later to the cook; "or she said 'no.' And her lips were set that hard she might a'most have been Mr. Austen's own child."

And that was all Nelly saw in the little creature she tucked into the huge square bedstead under the bobinet mosquito bar. But no sooner had Nelly's footsteps ceased along the hall than the child, as one throwing off an armor of repression, rolled out of the high bed and from under the bar, flinging and disarranging the neat covers with passionate fury, sobbing wildly. A bead of gas lit the room. She pattered across the floor to the opened trunk, and when the little figure, stumbling over its gown, stole back to bed, a heart-rendingly battered, plaster-headed doll was clasped in its arms. And, as the voices of children

at play on the sidewalk came up through the open windows, the child, shaken with crying—the more passionate because of long repression—was declaring: “Sally Ann, baby, I couldn’t never have given you up, not even if I was your own truly mother, Sally Ann, I couldn’t, never.”

CHAPTER III

Down-stairs the evening passed as evenings usually did when Harriet and Austen were alone. There were not even the varyings from parlor to front door that the heat seemed to necessitate for the rest of the neighborhood. Front porches are sociable things. The Blairs’ was the only house on the street without one.

The evening passed with the brother and sister at opposite sides of the black marble-topped table in the long parlor, she embroidering on a strip of cambric with nice skill, he quickly and deftly cutting the wrappers and pages of papers and magazines accumulated in his absence. To undertake just what he could do justice to and keep abreast of it, was the method by which he accomplished more than any two men, in business, in church affairs, in civic duties, for the man took his citizenship seriously. Both brother and sister had been raised to economy of time, yet sometimes she mocked at herself for her many excellencies and sometimes sighed, while he——

At ten o’clock Harriet rolled her work together and said good-night, ascending the crimson carpeted stairway with the unhurried movement of an Olympian goddess; that is, if an Olympian goddess could have been so genuinely above concern about it.

Her room, a front one on the second floor, had a look of spaciousness and exquisite order. She moved about, adjusting a shade, setting a gas-bracket at some self-imposed angle of correctness, giving the sheets of the opened bed a touch of adjustment.

It was the price paid for the free exercise of individuality. Already, at twenty-six, ways were becoming habits.

These things arranged, she passed to the adjoining room, from to-night given to Alexina. Turning up the gas, Harriet glanced about at Nelly’s disposition of things, then moved to the bed.

Whatever were the emotions called forth by the relaxed little form, softly and regularly breathing against a battered doll, or by the essentially babyish face with the fine, flaxen hair damp and clinging about the forehead, the Blairs were people to whom restraint was second nature. Whatever Harriet felt showed only in solicitude for the child who had thrown aside all cover. But as she drew the sheet and light blanket up, her hand touched the smoothness of a bared little limb. It brought embarrassment. She had but once before touched the bareness of another’s body, and that her mother’s, and in death.

Was it shame, this surging of strange hotness through her?

The refuge of a Blair was always action. She stepped to the bay of the room and drew the shutters against the night-wind.

Between the windows stood the bureau. Harriet paused, arrested by a daguerreotype in a velvet case open upon it. The child must have left it there. She sat down, and laying the picture on her knee, regarded it, her chin in her palm.

It was the face of the father of the sleeping child, dead less than a year, for whom his sister was wearing this black, trailing in folds about her.

And looking on his face, she recalled another, exquisite in pallor, with the shadowy lashes, the face of Molly, who ten months after Alexander’s death had married again; and not only married but given up her child. Had it been the purpose of Alexander to test Molly for the child’s sake? Molly had been given her third and the child the same, with Austen as executor and guardian. In the event of Molly marrying again, she had been given choice. She might relinquish all right in the remaining third and keep the child, or by giving up the child could claim the portion. And the estate was large. In ten months Molly had chosen.

And yet, thinking of these things, Harriet bade herself be just—chief tenet in the Blair creed. Was she so certain Alexander had been altogether unhappy in his marriage? May not compensations arise out of a man’s own nature if he cares for the woman? For Harriet no longer asked why her brother had married Molly. She knew, knew that the thing called love is stronger than reason, than life—some even claimed, than death. Not that she knew it

of herself, this calm, poised Harriet, but, watching, she had seen its miracles.

And out of this Alexander may have drawn his compensation, for, stronger than the hourly friction of his daily life, stronger than the hurt of outraged conventionality, thrift, and pride, stronger than the jealousy which must have often assailed him, had not love survived in Alexander to the end, love that protected and concealed Molly's failings from his own people?

Suddenly, over Harriet swept the breath of roses coming into an open breakfast room, and she saw a stern-lipped man lift, enfold a child-woman to him for a moment, and as fiercely put her from him and go out.

Harriet, breathing quickly, put her brother's picture back, and going to the bed, lifted the bar and drew the sheet again over the child. Then she stood looking down. What manner of little creature was this child of Alexander and Molly?

Glancing about to assure herself all was in order, she put out the light, and, with hand outstretched against the darkness, moved to the door, when there swept over her again the vision of Molly clinging to Alexander, and again she felt the surrender of the man, the fierce closing of his arms, and again she was shaken by his passion.

And even after she reached her room and sat down at her desk to the ledger of household accounts, it came over her, and she paused, her hand pressed to her hot cheek.

But that a little creature had cried itself to sleep in the next room she did not dream. She would have cried herself, had she known it, she, to whom tears came seldom and hard. But she was a slow awakening soul, groping, and she did not know.

CHAPTER IV

The next morning Harriet sat in Alexina's room putting criss-cross initials on a pile of unmarked little garments. It was part of the creed that clothes be marked.

Presently, as the child came to her aunt's knee for a completed garment, Harriet laid a hand on the little shoulder. Demonstration came hard and brought a flush of embarrassment with it.

"Alexina," she said, "you haven't mentioned your mother!"

The child stood silent, but there came a repeated swallowing in her throat, while a slow red welled up over the little face.

Harriet had a feeling of sudden liking and understanding. "You would rather—you prefer not?"

The child nodded. But later, as if from some fear of appearing unresponsive, she brought an album from her trunk and spread it open on Harriet's knee. She seemed a loyal small soul to her kinsfolk, mainly her mother's people, and turning the leaves went through the enumeration.

At one page—"Daddy," she said.

"Daddy" applied in a baby's cadence to Alexander! Daddy! It was a revelation of that part of her brother's life which Harriet had forgotten in accounting assets. "Daddy," called fearlessly, with intonation all unconsciously dear and appealing. And Alexander had been that to his child!

There was no picture of Molly, but there was a torn and vacant space facing Alexander. Had the child removed one? She bore resentment then? Harriet had no idea how far a child of nine could comprehend and feel the situation.

She would have been surprised at other things a child of nine can feel. If the routine of the house dragged dully to Alexina, Harriet never suspected it. The personal attention was detailed to Nelly, who divined more—Nelly, the freckle-faced, humorous-eyed house girl, taken from the Orphans' Home and trained by Harriet's mother. But then Nelly had been orphaned herself, and had known those first days following asylum consignment and perhaps had not forgot. Her sympathy expressed itself through the impersonal, the Blair training not having encouraged the other.

"Such a be-yewtiful dress," said Nelly, laying out the clothes for her charge.

Which was true; no child of Molly's would have suffered for clothes, Molly loving them too well herself.

"And such be-yewtiful slippers," said Nelly, with Alexina in her lap, pulling up the little stocking and buttoning the strap about the ankle.

Alexina's hand held tight to Nelly's hard, firm arm, steadying herself. Perhaps she divined the intention. "Can I come too, when you go to set the table?" she asked.

But Harriet never suspected. Nor again, that evening while she and Austen read under the lamp, did Harriet know that

Alexina, standing at the open parlor window gazing at the children playing on the sidewalk, was fighting back passionate tears of an outraged love and a baffling sense of injustice.

All at once a child's treble came in from the pavement.

"Can't you come play?"

Alexina turned, with backward look of eager inquiry to her aunt, who had come behind her to see who called.

"As you please; go if you want to," said Harriet good-humoredly.

Austen, too, glanced out. Tiptoe on the stone curbing of the iron fence perched a little girl, spokesman for the group of children behind her.

"Who is the child?" he asked his sister.

"Her name is Carrington. She is a grand-daughter of the old Methodist minister who lives at the corner; secretary of his church board, or something, isn't he? I've noticed two or three little Carringtons playing in the yard as I go by, and all of them handsome."

Austen placed them at once. The child's mother was the daughter of the old minister, and, with husband and children, lived in the little brown house with him. An interest in the details of the human affairs about him was an unexpected phase in Austen's character. He liked to know what a man was doing, his income, his habits, his family ties.

"I know Carrington," he remarked; "he is book-keeper for Williams, a good, steady man. As you say, a handsome child, exceedingly so."

Harriet watched until the little niece joined the group outside. "Gregarious little creatures they seem to be," she remarked. There was good-humor in her tone, but there was no understanding.

The next day was Sunday. On Monday it rained. Tuesday evening Alexina stood at the parlor window as before, looking out. The little figure looked very solitary.

"May I go play?" suddenly she asked. The voice was low, there was no note even of wistfulness, it was merely the question. There are children who suffer silently.

"Why not?" Harriet rejoined, looking up from her magazine. She was the last person to restrict any one needlessly.

The little niece went forth. The children had not come for her again. Perhaps

they did not want her, but, even with this fear upon her, go she must.

At the gate she paused, and with the big house in its immaculate yard behind her, gazed up and down.

It was a quiet street, with the houses set irregularly back from fences of varying patterns, and the brick sidewalks were raised and broken in places by the roots of huge sycamores and maples along the curbs.

But the cropped head of Alexina turned this way and that in vain. The street was deserted, the stillness lonesome. She swallowed hard. She knew where the little girl named Emily lived, for Emily had pointed out the house that first evening as they ran past in play. Alexina slowly crossed the street. Emily might be at her gate.

But first, as she went along, came a wide brick cottage, sitting high above a basement, a porch across the front. Alexina gazed in between the pickets of the fence. It seemed nice in there. The ground was mossy under the trees, and the untrimmed bushes made bowers with their branches. She would like to play in this yard. Her eyes traveled on to the house. A gentleman sat in a cane arm-chair at the foot of the steps, smoking, and on the porch was a lady in a white dress with ribbons. The house looked old and the yard looked old, and so did the gentleman, but the lady was young. Maybe she was going to a party, for it was a gauzy dress and the ribbons were rosy.

Alexina liked the cottage and the lady, and the big, wide yard. Somehow she did not feel as lonesome as she had. She started on to find Emily. But at that moment the gate of the cottage swung out across her path. How could she know that the boy upon it, lonely too, had planned the thing from the moment of her starting up the street?

"Oh," said Alexina, and stopped. She looked at the boy, uncomfortably immaculate in fresh white linen clothes, but he was absorbed in the flight of a bird across the rosy western sky.

"Come and play," said the straightforward Alexina. Companionship was what she was in search of.

The boy, without looking at her, shook his head, not so much as if he meant no, but rather as if he did not know how to say yes.

Perhaps she divined this. Approaching the gate and fingering its hasp, she asked, "Why?"

The boy, assuming a sort of passivity of countenance as for cover to shyness, kicked at the gate, then scowled as he twisted his neck within the stiff circle of his round collar. He had the combative air of one who wars against starch. "There's nobody to play with," he said; "they've all gone to the Sunday-school picnic. I don't go to that church," nodding in the direction of a brick structure down the street.

"You go to the same one as my Aunt Harriet and my uncle," Alexina informed him. "I saw you there. Your name is William. I heard the lady calling you that, coming out."

The gate which had swung in swung out again, bringing the boy nearer this outspoken little girl, whose unconsciousness was putting him more at his ease. He had seen her at church, too, but he could not have told her so.

"What's the rest of your name; William what?"

Such a question makes a shy person very miserable, but the interest was pleasing.

"William Leroy," said the boy tersely. Then, as if in amend for the abruptness, he added: "Sometimes they call it the other way, King William, you know."

"Who do?"

"Father and mother."

"You mean when you're pretending?"

The gate stopped in its jerkings. There had been enough about the name. He was an imperious youngster. "No, I don't," he said; "it's William Leroy backward."

The little girl looked mystified, but evidently thought best to change a subject about which the person concerned seemed testy. "I saw one once," she said sociably; "a real one. He was in a carriage, with horses and soldiers, and a star on his coat."

"One what?" demanded the boy.

"A king, a real one, you know."

Now, this princeling on the gate knew when his own sex were guying and he knew the remedy. He did not know this little girl, but he would not have thought it of her.

"A real — what?" he demanded.

"A real king, but they don't say king; they say 'l'empereur.'"

William looked stern. "I don't know what you mean," he returned; "where did you see any king?"

The grave eyes were not one bit abashed. "In Paris, where we lived," said the little girl. "There was a boy named Tommy, watching at the hotel window too, and he said, 'Vive le roi,' and Marie, my bonne, she said, 'Sh—h: l'empereur!'"

The effect of this was unexpected. The boy, descending from the gate, turned a keenly irradiated countenance upon her. "Do you mean Paris, my father's Paris, Paris in France?"

"Why," said the little girl, regarding him with some surprise, "yes." For he was taking her by the hand in a masterful fashion.

"Come in," he commanded. "I want you to tell father; that's father there."

But Alexina, friendly soul, went willingly enough with him through the gate and up the wide pavement between bordering beds of unflourishing perennials.

"Listen, father," William Leroy was calling to the gentleman at the foot of the steps; "she's been in Paris, your Paris."

The gentleman's ivory-tinted fingers removed the cigar from his lips. As he turned the western light fell on his lean, clean-shaven face, thin-flanked beneath high cheek bones. From between gray brows thick as a finger, rose a Louis Philippe nose, its Roman prominence accentuated by the hollowness of the cheeks. The iron-gray hair, thrown back off the face, fell, square-cut, to the coat collar behind.

Never a word spoke the gentleman, only; cigar in hand, waited, eagle-countenanced, sphinx-like. Yet straight Alexina came to his side and her baby eyes, quick to dilate, now confidently calm, met the ones looking out piercingly from their retreat beneath the heavy brows. Quite as a matter of course a little hand rested on his knee as she stood there, and equally as naturally, his face impassive, did the fingers of the gentleman close upon it.

A silent compact, silently entered into, for before a word was interchanged, the animated contralto of the lady came down from above.

"Who is the little girl, son? What is your name, dear?"

Son's wince was visible. He had no knowledge of the little girl's name, but he did not want to say so.

But she was answering for herself, looking up at the pretty lady, dressed as though for a party. "It's Mary Alexina Blair,"

she was saying, "but my Aunt Harriet says it's to be just Alexina now."

"Oh," said the lady. There was a little silence before she spoke again. "It must be Alexander Blair's child, Georges. Come up, dear, and let me see you."

But King William, balancing himself on the back of his father's chair, objected. "Hurry, then, mother," he demanded; "we want to play."

But Alexina had gone up the steps obediently. The eyes of the lady were dark and slumberous, but in them was the slightly helpless look of short vision. She drew the child close for inspection.

The fair hair, the even brows, the clear-gazing eyes, she seemed to have expected, but the dilation in those same wondering eyes raised to hers, the short upper-lip, the full under one that trembled, these the lady did not know. "A sensitiveness, a warmth," she said, half aloud. What did she mean? Then she raised her voice.

"See, Willy Leroy, how she stands for me, while you pull away if I so much as lay my hand on you."

"But you look so close," objected Willy, "and you fix my hair, and you say my collar ain't straight. You've seen her now, mother; you've seen her close. I want her to come sit on the step."

"Go then, little Mary Alexina Blair," said the lady; "he's a little ingrate whose mother has to barter with him for every concession he makes her." And smiling at herself, her face alight and arch with the animation of her smile, Charlotte Leroy sat back in the scarlet settee and re-spread her draperies as a bird its plumage, touching the ribbons at her waist and throat, resettling them with the air of one who takes frank pleasure in their presence and becomingness. This done, she viewed her hands, charming hands heavy with costly rings, and finally, reassured at all points, she relaxed her buoyant figure and looked around with smiling return to her surroundings. It was for no party she was dressed, but for her own satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

"Your initials spell Mab," King William was telling Alexina as they sat on the step; "that means you'll be rich. Mine don't spell anything. I'm named for my grandfather up in Woodford, William Ransome.

He's dead. Father's don't either — Georges Gautier Hippolyte Leroy. His father ran away from France because he was a Girondist, and came to Louisville because it was French. Father's been to Paris too; haven't you, father?"

The gentleman thus adjured removed his cigar and addressed his wife. "It begins to amount to garrulity. If the opposite sex produces this at ten, what are we to expect later on?"

Mrs. Leroy's voice had a note of defense in it, as if she could not brook even humorous criticism of the boy. It was plain where the passionate ardor in her nature was centered. "I'm glad, I'm glad to see it," she declared. "I was afraid it was not in him. I was beginning to fear he was a self-sufficient little monster."

But her son was continuing the family history. "Mother's name was Charlotte Ransome; wasn't it, mother? When I'm a man I'm going to buy my grandfather's stock farm back, and we'll live there; won't we, mother?"

But the impulsive Charlotte, veering around, here took her husband's side. "I'm going to — I'm going to," she mimicked the boy, then began to chant derisively as in words familiar to both.

*"And if you don't believe me
And think I tell a lie —"*

But it only gave him an idea. He was not often a host, it was going to his head. "Wait!" he ordered, to whom it was not quite clear, and tore into the house, to be back almost at once, bearing a beribboned guitar.

"Now," he said, depositing it upon his mother's lap; "now, sing it for her; sing it right, mother. It's the 'Ram of Derby.'" This to Alexina, with a sudden shyness as he found himself addressing her.

But she, unconscious soul, did not recognize it, hers being an all-absorbed interest. Reassured, young William went on.

"There was a William Ransome once, when he was little, sat on General Washington's knee, and General Washington sang him 'The Ram of Derby.' Go on, mother, sing it."

And Charlotte, with eyes laughing down on the two upturned faces, "went on," her jeweled fingers bringing touch of a practiced hand upon the strings, her buoyant figure responsive to the rhythm, while

into the Munchausen recital she threw a dash, a swing that rendered the interest breathless.

*"There was a Ram of Derby
I've often heard it said,
He was the greatest sheep, sir,
That ever wore a head.
And if you don't believe me
And think I tell a lie,
Just go down to Derby
And see as well as I.*

*The horns upon this ram, sir,
They reached up to the sky,
The eagles built their nests there,
For I heard the young ones cry,
And if you don't believe me, etc., etc.*

*The wool upon this ram, sir,
It grew down to the ground,
The devil cut it off, sir,
To make a morning gown,
And if you don't believe me, etc., etc."*

And so on through the tale. King William at her knees, clapped his hands. Alexina, by him, clapped hers too, for joy of companionship, while the third listener sat with unchanging countenance below. But he liked it, somehow one knew he liked it, knew he was listening down there in the dusk.

Perhaps Charlotte knew it too. The vibrant twang slowed to richer chords, broke into rippling chromatic, caught a new measure, a minor note, and her contralto began :

*"I am going far away, far away to leave you
now,
To the Mississippi River I am going——"*

But this was only so much suggestion for her son's active brain. "Tell her, mother," he begged, pulling at Charlotte's sleeve; "tell her about the 'King William.'"

"And it has lain dormant, this egotism, unsuspected," came up from out of the dusk.

Charlotte's fingers swept the chords, her eyes fixed adoringly on her little son's face, the while she sang on, absently, softly :

*"Down in my ol' cabin bome,
There lies my sister an' my brother,
There lies my wife, the joy of my life,
An' the child in the grave with its mother."*

But King William, far from being harrowed by the woeful enumeration, laid an imperious hand on the strings. "Tell her, mother; I want you to tell her."

"Come then, and kiss mother, and I will."

He moved the intervening step and submitted a cheek reluctantly. "Just one, and you said you'd tell."

But Charlotte, imperious now herself, waved him off; she'd none of him now. "It's because he's a vain boy, little Mary Alexina Blair, and filled with self-importance that he wants you to know. And he only wants me to tell you because he has not quite the assurance to do it himself. That is why he wants me to tell about the great, white-prowed Argo——"

"We call them bows, not prows," came up out of the dusk.

But she refused the correction. "—the white-prowed Argo that is building across the river, to go in search of a golden fleece for little Jason here, a boat large, oh larger even than those other boats of little Jason's father, the Captain, down there, which used to float up and down the Mississippi, and which vanished one day into the maw of the Confederacy——"

But Jason was lifting his voice. "Not that way; make her stop, father; that ain't the way!"

But mother was not to be hurried out of her revenge. "And this big white ark is one day going to float off on the flood of Hope, bearing Jason and his father and his mother, the last plank of fortune between them and——"

Jason was beating with his hands on the step. "Make her stop, father; make her tell it right; she don't understand what mother means. Do you?" with an appeal to the absorbed Alexina.

That small soul jumped. She looked embarrassed to know what to say. Direct admissions are not always polite. "I had an ark once," she stated, "but I sucked the red off Noah, and Marie, my bonne, took it away."

Leaning down, Charlotte Leroy swept the baby-voiced creature up into her lap. There was a passion of maternity in the act. "You innocent," she said, and held her fast.

It was nice to be there; the ribbons and the lacy ruffles were soft beneath her cheek, and the dark eyes of the lady were smiling down——

The child turned suddenly and clung to Charlotte with passionate responsiveness.

"It's about the boat his father is building, Willy wants you to know, little Mab," the lady was telling her, "and how, the other day, the Captain down there and Willy and I and our friends went aboard her, on the ways at the shipyard over the river, and how, at the ax-stroke, as the boat slid down and out across the water, Willy broke the bottle on her bow and christened her 'King William.'"

"Just so," came up in the Captain's voice.

The moon was rising slowly.

"There's some one at the gate," cried Willy.

"It's for me," said Alexina, starting up; "it's Nelly and she's hunting me."

Later, Nelly, leading her across the street, was saying, "I don't believe Miss Harriet is going to like it when she knows where you've been."

"Why?"

But Nelly couldn't say, "except that they're the only ladies on the street not knowing each other."

The two went in. Alexina dropped Nelly's hand and walked into the parlor and across to Harriet's knee. Austen sat reading on the other side of the table.

"I've been over to a boy's house," said Alexina; "his name is King William and their other name is Leroy."

Harriet held the cambric strip of embroidery from her and viewed it. "Austen," she asked, "is Alexina to play indiscriminately with the children on the square?"

Austen looked across at his sister. "It is within your authority to decide," he returned, "but I know of no reason why she should not."

Harriet made no response. Outwardly, she was concerned with some directions to Nelly, waiting to take the child to bed, but inwardly she was wondering if Austen ever could have cared for this Charlotte Ransome.

He sat long after Harriet had gone. Then, rising abruptly, he went out the front door and walked to the corner of the house. The light was out in the coachman's room above the stable, and the master could go to bed secure that his oil was not being wasted.

That was all, yet he did not go in. The night was perfect, full of moonlight and the scent of earth and growing things.

It was so still the houses along the street seemed asleep.

Almost furtively, the gaze of Austen lifted to the cottage, dark and silent across the way. He had been the one who would not forgive; the other had been only an impetuous girl.

He stood there long. Perhaps his face was colder, his lips pressed to a thinner line; perhaps it was the moonlight. Then he turned and went into the house.

CHAPTER VI

Alexina came to Harriet with information.

"Emily goes to school to her aunt, and King William goes there too."

"Do they?" returned Harriet. Her interest was good-humored rather than ardent.

"I'd like to go too," said her niece.

"Oh," from Harriet, understanding at last; "but isn't school about over?"

"There's two weeks more."

"If it will make you happy, why not, if the teacher does not object?"

So Alexina went with Emily to school. King William was there, but he hardly noticed her; he seemed gloomy and given to taking his slate off into corners.

"He don't want to come," explained Emily; "he's the only boy."

"Then what does he come for?" queried the practical Alexina.

"His mother won't let him go to a public school."

There was more to be learned about William. He fought the boys who went to the public school, because they jeered him in his ignominy. Alexina saw it happening up the alley but, strangely enough, when William appeared at school he seemed cheered up, though something of a wreck.

Out of school, Alexina often went over to Emily's house to play. There were no servants there, but her mamma beat up things in crocks, and her great-aunty, a brisk little old woman with sharp eyes, made yeast cakes and dried them out under the arbor and milked the cow, too, and Emily's little brother, Oliver, carried milk to the neighbors. Once, in the oil-cloth covered kitchen, Alexina was allowed to wield a mop in a dish-pan and, still again, to stir at batter in a bowl.

In the room which would have been the parlor in another house, Emily's grandfather Pryor, sat at a table with books

around him, and wrote on big sheets of paper in close writing. He was a stern old man and his hair stood out fine and white about his head. Once, as she passed across the front porch, he looked at Emily, then stopped, pointing to the chain about her neck. It was Alexina's little gold necklace which Emily had begged to wear.

"Take it off," he said.

Emily obeyed, but her cheeks were flaming, and when he had gone she threw her head back. "When I'm grown, I mean to have them of my own, and wear them, too," she said.

Emily seemed happier away from home. "Let's go over to your house," she always said. She liked grown people, too, and Uncle Austen once even patted her head, and after she had gone said to Aunt Harriet: "A handsome child, an unusually pleasing child."

But while Alexina played thus with Emily, more often she trudged across to King William's.

The nature of engrossment was different over there. Often as not it was theology, though this, to be sure, was the Captain's word for it, not his son's.

Willy's mother, like Aunt Harriet, was a Presbyterian. "If I had been a better one," she lamented to her husband one evening, "I would know how to meet his questions now. You don't take one bit of the responsibility of his religious training, Captain Leroy."

The creed of King William's mamma, when she came to formulate it, seemed a stern one, and it lost nothing in its setting forth by reason of her determination to do her duty by her son.

"Thank Heaven I had to sit under these things when I was a child, however I hated it then, or I could not do my part by him now," she told the Captain. "I want him," fervently, "to be everything I am not."

"Which might," suggested the Captain, "be a prig, you know."

But King William, listening, drank in these things. He had a garden patch in the back yard and knew the nature and habits of every vegetable in it. He was strictly a utilitarian and weeded out sickly plants and unknown cotyledons with a ruthless hand.

Alexina expostulated. "Maybe it hurts 'em," she feared.

"Maybe it does," said the inexorable William; "but they are like the souls born to be damned. Put 'em on the brush pile there, and after a while we'll burn 'em."

At other times the yard was a sea-girt coral reef and they the stranded mariners. Generally Alexina accepted everything. The stories were new to her. But when she did have knowledge of a thing she stood firm; for instance, about the ocean, that you could not land every few moments of your progress and throw out gang-planks.

"For I've been there," she insisted, "and you couldn't, you know."

At times they adjourned to the commons behind the stable which, in reality, were plains frequented by Indians, or, if the yard palled or rain drove them in, there was a fat, black, plausible Aunt Rose in the basement kitchen to talk to, and if Aunt Rose proved fractious and drove them out together with her own brood, generally skulking around, before a threatening dish-rag or broom, there was Charlotte to be beguiled from more serious occupation into doing her son's bidding.

Charlotte was always busy. The cottage and all in it had come to her from her father's aunt. She had been accustomed to seeing the windows, the furniture, the mirrors, the silver door knobs shining. Therefore, she knew such things ought to shine, and since there was no one in these days but herself to do it, she cleaned, polished, rubbed, and went to bed limp.

One afternoon in the late fall the children sought her. She was pasting papers over glasses of jelly. "We went over the river to see the boat yesterday," King William was saying to Alexina as they came in. "Tell her about it, mother; about the gold star at the bow——"

The papers did not want to stick. "He's a bad boy, little Mab," Charlotte informed her. "He made me take him over before he'd promise to go to the party he's asked to. He wants to be a little boor who won't know how to act when he grows up."

"I'm never goin' to parties when I'm grown up, so what's the use learning how to act at 'em now?" argued her son.

Charlotte dropped a mucilaged paper. "But you promised," she reminded him anxiously; "you promised——"

"Oh, well——" admitted her son.

Charlotte kept a fire in her parlor. Coal was at a fabulous price in the South that

winter, but she had never known a parlor without a fire. Here she and the children sat in the afternoons. Often the Captain, returning early, joined them there.

"Georges," said Charlotte upon one of these occasions, "we are poor."

The Captain smoked in silence. Perhaps he had realized it before. His keen eyes however were regarding her.

"But," said Charlotte, "we go on acting as though we were rich."

"Just so," said the Captain.

"When your trousers get shabby, you order more like them. Did you ever ask your tailor if he has anything cheaper?"

Now, trousers of that pearl tint peculiar to the finest fabrics were as characteristic a part of the Captain's garb as were the black coat, the low cut vest, the linen cambric handkerchiefs, like small tablecloths for size, the tall silk hat, and the Henry Clay collar above the black silk stock.

"Did you ever ask him if he had anything cheaper, Georges?"

"I can't say," admitted Georges, "that I ever did." For the Captain had never asked his tailor a price in his life. When the bill came he paid it. But it takes income to meet eccentricities of this sort, while now —

Did the Captain, glancing from his wife to the boy on the floor, seem to age, to shrink in his chair? For Charlotte was thirty-two and the boy was ten and the Captain nearing sixty.

"And when your shirts and Willy's things and mine give out, I've been going right on to the sisters ordering more. Convent prices are high, Georges."

The Captain had nothing to say.

"Adele has been telling me that she cuts down her eldest boy's things for the little one." Adele was the widow of a Confederate general. "So I borrowed her patterns. Listening to Adele talk, I realized, Georges, that you and Willy and I have to learn how to be poor."

It was at this point that Charlotte brought forth from the chair behind her a voluminous broadcloth cape, such as men then wore for outer wrap, and spread it on the mahogany center-table.

"It's perfectly good, if you did discard it, and I'm going to cut it into something for Willy. I didn't tell Adele I never had tried, she is so capable, but I borrowed her

patterns." And Charlotte brought forth a paper roll.

The Captain, in the arm-chair, sat and watched. Alexina, from his knee, where he had a way of lifting her, watched too. Willy, from a perch on the arm of the sofa, offered suggestions.

This was early in the afternoon. At six o'clock, the Captain, lighting another of an uninterrupted series of cigars, was still watching silently. On the sofa sat Charlotte, in tears. On the table, tailor fashion, sat King William, sorting patterns, while Nelly, who had come for Alexina, stood by and directed,

"How does he know?" Mrs. Leroy, watching her son a little anxiously, asked the Captain. "I wouldn't like him to develop such a bent. He doesn't get it from you — or from me."

"I look at my legs," said William, "and then I build it that way."

Another afternoon the Captain looked up from his smoking and spoke to Charlotte. The children were on the floor turning the pages of a picture paper.

"We have succeeded in securing the loan on a mortgage on the boat. Cowan arranged it through his bank. It was at a higher rate than we had agreed on, but we'd lost all the time we could spare. We'll push ahead now and have things finished by spring."

That night, over at the Blairs', as Alexina climbed into her place at the table Austen was speaking to Harriet. "You remember I told you I was looking for an investment of the proceeds of those bonds of Alexina's, which matured the other day? This morning I took a mortgage on a boat Cowan is building at his yard."

Alexina heard her name, but did not understand.

CHAPTER VII

There came a day the following spring when Alexina, seeking her aunt, wept.

Harriet gazed at her dismayed, at a loss. Heretofore Alexina had taken her tears to Nelly or had kept them to herself.

"They are going away," she said, "King William and them; going in the boat."

This, as a matter to cry about, was a mystery to Harriet. "Going where?" she asked.

"To get the golden fleece," her weeping niece assured her.

"Well," said Harriet amused, "let us hope they may find it, but why the tears?"

Alexina got up and carried her tears to her own room. It spoke her infantile capacity to discriminate that she bore away no resentment; there are things that the Aunt Harriets with the best wills in the world need not be expected to understand.

King William's mother, telling her, had held her tight and rocked her; King William's father, when he saw her lip trembling afterward, had lifted her on his knee.

Going into the big, high room which was her own, Alexina shut the door. Then she cast herself on the floor. A little hand, beating about wildly, came upon Sally Ann, lying unregarded there. Gathering her in fiercely, presently the sobs grew quieter. Later she wiped her eyes upon her child and, kissing her tenderly, put her down, and went over to King William's; the time was short and she could have Sally Ann afterward.

The next day the cottage was closed and the shutters made fast. Alexina felt lonesome even to look over there, and Sally Anns are but silent comforters.

But in a year the Leroy's came back from St. Louis, between which city and New Orleans the splendid new "King William" had been plying. The judgment of Captain Leroy had been at fault, which is a sad thing when a man is sixty. The day of the steamboat had passed, because that of the railroad had come. The "King William" as a venture was a failure.

So, one morning, the cottage windows were open to the Virginia creeper outside them. Nelly whispered the news to Alexina at breakfast, and the child could not eat for hurry to be through and go over.

It was as if King William had been watching for her, for he came running to the gate and took her hand to conduct her in. He was taller and thinner, and looked different. Neither could find anything to say on the way.

Charlotte was sitting in the parlor, her wraps half-removed. They had only just arrived, and the stillness and closeness of a newly opened house was about. "How

does one pack furniture for moving, Willy?" Charlotte began as he appeared.

But he was bringing Alexina. "Tell her about it, mother," he said, "so she'll know."

Charlotte, brightening, held out her arms. Then, having lifted the child to her lap and kissed her, her face grew wan again. "There was no fleece for Jason, little Mab; there is no Land of Colchis, never believe it. And those seeking, like Willy and me, are like to wander until youth and hope and opportunity are gone."

She was crying against a little crooked head. King William stood irresolute, then put an arm around her. "Not that way, mummy; don't tell it that way." But control had given way. "And there is nothing for little Jason. He must go and fight with his bare hands like any poor churl's child—oh, Willy, Willy, my little son——"

Alexina in her lap, sat very still; King William was staring hard into space.

Charlotte went on. "We are going away, little Mab, Willy and his father and I; going away for good. Every thing that ever was ours, this cottage and all, is gone. We are going to a place in the South called Aden, where there are a few acres that still are ours, only because they would not sell."

A moment they all were still. Then the little breast of Alexina began to heave. The Leroy's had never seen her this way. Sally Ann had, many times, and Nelly, once or twice. She threw herself upon Charlotte. "I want to go too; I want to go; I hate it—there," with a motion of self towards the big, white house visible through the window. "I hate it, and I want to go too."

They were all crying now. Suddenly King William stood forth in front of the child. "When we get rich, I'll come for you," he said.

The practical Alexina looked through the arrested tears as she sat up. "But if you don't get rich?" she questioned.

Charlotte laughed. She was half child herself. The laugh died. The other half was woman. "Then he won't come; if he is the son of his father, he won't come."

(To be continued)

together, while I rustle around fer fresh tea. Mis' Thomas, get Mis' Benson a clean cup."

For a moment or two Mrs. Nitschkan cowered in her chair, pulling with trembling fingers at her torn coat sleeve. Then, throwing her apron over her head, she broke into wild sobbing, which alternated with a rasping and mirthless laughter. "The 'strikes,'" said Mrs. Evans composedly, pouring boiling water in the tea-pot. "It'll be a relief fer her; jus' let her be."

"How'd ever we poor women bear our lives if it wasn't fer 'em?" murmured Mrs. Thomas. "Lay off your hat, Mis' Benson," she continued in a voice which was as oil. "How's your health, now? If it's the lungs, this is jus' the place fer 'em. If it's your liver, well, I'd say a cup of sage tea night an' mornin'. Oh, you got your hand tore, didn't you?" Why, it's a real bad scratch. Let me rub in a little 'Rocky Mountain' salve—do."

"You're all very kind," said the missionary, burying the hatchet in one of her

charming smiles. "I am sure I shall be happy here."

"Well, woman dear, what are we on earth for? To do fer others, I say," broke in Mrs. Nitschkan, who, despite her disheveled appearance, had quite recovered herself and was even more desirous than her sisters to ignore the past.

But Frances Benson was not one to be misled by April sunshine. She therefore hastened to make hay while the weather was propitious. "Will all you ladies be at the meeting to-night, prepared to assist me in every possible way?" looking from one to the other.

"Well, I guess yes," said Mrs. Nitschkan heartily, speaking for all. "You can depend on us, Mis' Benson, now and hereafter. As the Bishop said to me the other day settin' in that very chair you're in, an' a-smilin' that sweet smile of his'n: 'Some missionaries,' he says, 'has tact, an' some has common sense; but I do believe there ain't one of 'em but what's a plant my Father planted.'"

THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

SYNOPSIS OF FORMER CHAPTERS: *Alexander Blair, eldest son in the Blair family, of stern Vermont stock, but settled in Louisville, marries Molly Randolph, a young pleasure-loving girl of New Orleans. The Civil War widens the breach that has begun to exist between the repressed, gloomy husband and the somewhat frivolous wife. Alexander dies suddenly. Molly remarries soon after and gives up her little daughter, Alexina, into the keeping of the Blair family, now consisting of Austen and Harriet, brother and sister of Alexander. Aunt Harriet, though loving at heart, has the Blair repression of feeling, and Alexina is somewhat unhappy, the one bright spot in her existence being her acquaintance with "King" William, the little son of the Leroy's. The Leroy's, however, lose their fortune, and leave Louisville. Alexina is sent away to school.*

PART II

"Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone."—EMERSON.

CHAPTER I



LEXINA BLAIR, at twenty, returned from school to her uncle's home with but small emotion, as, at fourteen, she had left with little regret. Yet the shady streets, the open front doors, the welcomes called from up-stairs windows as she passed, evidences

that she was back among her people in the South, all at once made her glad to be here.

How could she have felt emotion over a mere return to Uncle Austen's house? She might have felt enthusiasm over Nelly, but Nelly was married to the gardener at her old asylum and a Katy had taken her place. The house was the same. If only its stone

façade might be allowed to mellow, to gray a little! But, newly cleaned, it stood coldly immaculate in its yard of shaven lawn set about with clipped shrubberies. As for her uncle, Alexina found herself applying the same adjectives to him—shaven, immaculate, cold.

She wondered what he thought of her, but Uncle Austen never made personal remarks.

Aunt Harriet, on joining her niece in the East early in the summer, had looked at her consideringly. She seemed pleased.

"Why," she said, "Alexina, you are a Tennyson young person, tall and most divinely—you are a little more intense in your coloring than is usual with a Blair—I'm glad."

The somewhat doubtful smile on the girl's face deepened as if a sudden radiance leaped into it. She seized her aunt's hand. "Oh," she said, "you're very nice, Aunt Harriet."

Harriet laughed, rather pleased than not, but she still was studying the girl. "She is impulsive and she doesn't look set," the aunt was telling herself—was it gratefully? "perhaps she is less Blair than I thought."

Austen Blair now too, in fact, viewed his niece with complacency—she fulfilled the Blair requirements—but he talked of other things.

"It is the intention of your aunt and myself," he told her promptly, "to introduce you at once to what will be your social world. It is well for every one to have local attachment."

As the matter progressed it appeared that social introduction, as Uncle Austen understood it, was largely a matter of expenditure. In all investment it is the expected thing to place where there is likeliest return. Therefore he scanned the invitation list earnestly.

"She can afford to do the thing as it should be done," he remarked to Harriet.

"She? But Austen—" Harriet hesitated. "I supposed it was ours, this affair; it seems the least—"

Austen looked at her. At first he did not comprehend, then he replied with some asperity. "I have so far kept sentiment and business apart in managing Alexina's affairs."

Harriet was silenced. It was becoming less and less wise to oppose Austen. He had his own ideas about the matter. "The thing is

to be done handsomely," he set forth, "but," as qualification, "judiciously."

Therefore he stopped an acquaintance on the street a day or two before the affair. "Are we to have the pleasure of seeing you on Tuesday?" he asked, even a little ostentatiously, for the young man had neglected to accept or decline.

Austen reported the result to Harriet. "For there is no use ordering a supper for five hundred if but four hundred and ninety-nine are coming," he told her.

"No?" said Harriet.

"Exactly," said her brother.

Alexina, present at the conversation, looked from the one to the other. Uncle Austen was Uncle Austen; there was a slight lift of the girlish shoulders as she admitted this. But Aunt Harriet—

For Harriet had changed. She had been changing these past two summers. She was absent, forgetful, absorbed, even irritable. Aunt Harriet! And recalled, she would blush and look about in startled fashion.

Alexina and Harriet had been always on terms friendly and pleasant, but scarcely to be called intimate; terms that, after a cordial good-night, closed the door between their rooms. And while the girl had been conscious of a fondness for her serene and capable aunt, there were times too when, met by that same serenity, she had felt she must rebel, and in secret had thrown her young arms out in impotent, passionate protest.

But now Aunt Harriet forgot and neglected and grew cross like any one, and the sententious utterances of Uncle Austen irritated her. Alexina, going into her room one day, found her with her head bowed on the desk. Was she crying? The girl slipped out.

Was Aunt Harriet unhappy? The heart of Alexina warmed to her.

The evening of Alexina's return home Harriet had come to her door. To twenty years, thirty-eight seems pitifully far along in life, yet Harriet called up no such feeling in Alexina. No passion of living writ itself on Galatea's cheek while she was in marble, and Alexina, opening the door to the tap, thought her aunt beautiful.

"If there are callers to-night," Harriet said, "I want you to come down. My friends are not too elderly," she smiled in the old good-humored way, "to be nice to you this winter."

So later Alexina went down to the library, a room long unfurnished, now the only really cheerful room in the house. Was it because Harriet had furnished it?

The girl always had realized in an indefinite way that Harriet was a personage; later, in their summers away together, she discovered that men liked her handsome aunt.

In the library she found a group who, from the conversation, seemed to be accustomed to dropping in thus in casual fashion. There were men of capacity and presence; one felt that, even in the case of that long avowed person of fashion, Mr. Marriot Bland, who was getting dangerously near to that time of life when he would be designated an old beau. He was a personage, too, of his type. Alexina shook hands with him gaily; she had been used to his coming since she first came to live with Aunt Harriet and Uncle Austen. Harriet introduced the others. The girl's spirits rose; she felt it was nice that she should be knowing them.

And they? What does middle-age feel, looking upon youth, eager-eyed, buoyant, flushed with the first glow from that unknown about to dawn?

Oh, it was a charming evening. The girl showed she thought it so and smiled, and the men smiled too, as they joined in making her the young center. Perhaps there was a tender something in the smiles. Was it for their own good youth?

One, a Major Rathbone, stayed after the others left. He sat building little breast-works on the center table out of matches taken from the bronze stand by the lamp, and as he talked he looked over every now and then at Harriet on the other side.

In the soberer reaction following the breaking up of the group, Alexina, too, found time to look at Harriet. It was an Aunt Harriet that she had never seen before. The color was richly dyeing this Harriet's cheeks, and the jewel pendant at her throat rose and trembled and fell, and her white lids fell too, though she had laughed when her eyes met laughter and something else in the brown eyes of the Major fixed on her.

It was of Mr. Marriot Bland the Major was speaking, his smooth, brown hand caressing his clean-shaven chin.

"So cruelly confident are you cold Dianas," he was saying. "Now, even a Penelope must hold out the lure of her web to an old suitor, but you Dianas——"

Alexina laughed. She had jumped promptly into a liking for this lean, brown man with the keen humorous eyes and the deliberate yet quick movements, and now absorbed in her thoughts, was unconscious of her steadfast gaze fixed on him, until he suddenly brought his eyes to bear on hers with humorous inquiry.

"Well?" he inquired.

Now Alexina, being fair, showed blushes most embarrassingly. But she could laugh too.

"What's the conclusion?" he demanded; "or would it be wiser not to press inquiry?"

Alexina laughed again. She knew she liked this Major.

"I was wondering," she confessed. "You are so different from what I expected. I heard Aunt Harriet and Uncle Austen discussing one of your editorials, so I read it. I thought you would be different—fiercer maybe, and—er—more aggressive."

Alexina began to blush again. The Major was so edified at something that his enjoyment was suspicious.

"But no man is expected to live down to his editorials, Miss Alexina; I write 'em for a living."

He stroked his chin as he regarded her, but there was laughter too out of the tail of his eye across at Aunt Harriet, who was laughing also, though she looked teased.

Later Alexina learned more about this Major Rathbone. It was Emily Carringford who told her. Emily came over promptly the day after Alexina's return and, admitted by Katy, ran up as of old.

Alexina, hearing her name called, turned from a melée of unpacking as the other reached the open doorway.

"Oh, Emily," she said, and stood and gazed.

Emily stood too, archly, and, meeting Alexina's look, laughed. Her blush was an acknowledgment; she did not even pretend to misunderstand Alexina's meaning.

"Aunt Harriet told me how—how lovely you were, and Uncle Austen told me last night that my friend, Miss Emily, he considered an 'unusually good-looking woman—a handsome woman, in fact.'" The niece had her uncle's every conciseness of tone as she quoted. "But somehow with it all, I wasn't prepared——"

She came forward with hands out.

Emily forgot to take the hands. "Did he say that, really, Alexina?"

"Yes; why shouldn't he? Oh, Emily, it must be joy, or does it frighten you to know you're so beautiful?"

She was letting her fingers touch, almost with awe, the curve of the other's cheek.

Emily laughed, but the crimson on the cheek deepened.

"And your voice?" demanded Alexina. "I want to hear you sing. Did you get the place in the choir you wrote me about?"

"Miss Harriet got it for me; it was she who suggested it—that is, she got Mr. Blair to get it for me. It's at your church, you know."

"Uncle Austen? No? Did he, really?"

But the surprise in Alexina's voice was unfair to her uncle. To help people to the helping of themselves was part of his creed. He looked upon it as a furthering of the general social economy, as indeed he had pointed out more than once to those he was thus assisting.

But Alexina had many things to ask. She pushed Emily into a chair.

"Is it pleasant—the choir?" she began.

"Pleasant? Well," Emily looked away and colored, "I like the money; I've never been able to have any clothes before. There was a scene at home about it—my singing, I mean, in any but my own church, and for money. It was grandfather, of course; it's always been grandfather. He says it's spiritual prostitution, whatever he means by that, taking money for praising the Lord in an alien faith." She laughed in an off-hand way. "No, I'll be honest. I'd have to be sooner or later with you, anyhow. I hate it—not the work and rehearsals so much; but the being patronized. When some of those women stop me, with the air of doing the gracious thing, to tell me they have enjoyed my singing, oh, I could—" Again she laughed, but her cheeks were blazing. Then she leaned over and fingered some of the girlish fineries strewing the bed. "I hate it at home, too, when it comes to being honest about things. Six of us, with grandfather and Aunt Carrie making eight, in that little house!"

Later, Alexina chanced to refer to Major Rathbone. She spoke enthusiastically. Alexina either liked people or she did not like them.

"Hadn't you heard about him?" asked Emily in surprise. "He met Miss Harriet two years ago, and he's been coming ever

since. It's funny, too, that he should. He's *the* Major Rathbone, you know—"

But Alexina looked unenlightened.

"Why," said Emily, "the Major Rathbone who was the Confederate guerrilla—the one who captured and burned a train-load of stuff your grandfather and Mr. Austen had contracted to deliver for the government. I've heard people tell about it a dozen different ways since he's been coming to see Miss Harriet. Anyway, however it was, the government at the time put a price on his head and your grandfather and Mr. Austen doubled it. And now they say he's in love with Miss Harriet!"

In love! With Aunt Harriet! Alexina grew hot. Aunt Harriet! She felt strange and queer. But Emily was saying more. "Mr. Blair and Major Rathbone aren't friends even yet; I was here to supper with Miss Harriet one evening last winter, and Mr. Blair was furious over an editorial by Major Rathbone in the paper that day about some political appointments from Washington. Mr. Blair had had something to do with them, had been consulted about them from Washington, it seems. Major Rathbone's a Catholic, too."

It rushed upon Alexina that she had spoken to the Major of a family discussion over his editorials.

Emily stayed until dusk. As Alexina went down to the door with her, they met Uncle Austen just coming in. He stopped, shook hands, and asked how matters were in the choir.

As Emily ran down the steps he addressed himself to his niece. "A praiseworthy young girl to have gone so practically to work." Then as Emily at the gate looked back, nodding archly, he repeated it. "A praiseworthy young girl, praiseworthy and sensible," his gaze following her, "as well as handsome."

He went in, but Alexina lingered on the broad stone steps. It was October and the twilight was purple and hazy. Chrysanthemums bloomed against the background of the shrubbery; the maples along the street were drifting leaves upon the sidewalk; the sycamores stood with their shed foliage like a cast garment about their feet, raising giant white limbs naked to heaven.

There were lights in the wide brick cottage. Strangers lived there now. A swinging sign above the gate set forth that a Doctor Ransome dwelt therein.

The eddying fall of leaves is depressing. Autumn anyhow is a melancholy time. Alexina, going in, closed the door.

CHAPTER II

The Blair reception to introduce their niece may have been to others the usual matter of lights and flowers and music, but to the niece it was different, for it was her affair.

She and her aunt went down together. The stairway was broad, and to-night its banister trailed roses.

Alexina was radiant. She even marched up and kissed her uncle. Things felt actually festive.

All the little social world was there that evening. Alexina recalled many of the girls and the older women; of the older men she knew a few, but of the younger only one could she remember as knowing.

He was a rosy cheeked youth with vigorous curling yellow hair, and he came up to her with a hearty swinging of the body, smiling in a friendly and expectant way, showing nice, square teeth, boyishly far apart. She knew him at once; he had gone to dancing school when she did, and she was glad to see him.

"Why, Georgy," she said, and held out a hand. Then it was borne in upon her that Georgy wore a young down on his lip and was a man.

"Oh," she said, blushing, "I hope you don't mind?"

He was blushing too, but the smile that showed his nice spaced teeth was honest.

"No," he said; "I don't mind."

Which Alexina felt was good of him and so she smiled back and chatted and tried to make it up. And Georgy lingered and continued to linger and to blush beneath his already ruddy skin until Harriet, turning, sent him away, for Harriet was a woman of the world and Georgy was the rich and only child of the richest mamma present, and the other mammas were watching.

Alexina's eyes followed him as he went, then wandered across the long room to Emily. She had expected to feel a sense of responsibility about Emily, but Uncle Austen, after a long and precise survey of her from across the room, put his eye-glasses into their case and went to her. His prim air of unbending for the festive occasion was almost comical as he brought up youths to make them known. This done he fell back to his general duties as host.

But Alexina, watching Emily, felt dissatisfaction with her; her archness was overdone, her laughter was anxious.

Why should Emily stoop to strive so? With her milk-white skin and chestnut hair, with her red lips and starry eyes, there should have belonged to her a pride and a young dignity. Alexina, youthfully stern, turned away.

It brought her back to the amusing things of earth, however, that Uncle Austen should take Emily home when it was over. Would Emily be arch with Uncle Austen? Picture it!

Several of the older men lingered after the other guests were gone, and they, with Harriet and Alexina, had coffee in the library. The orderliness of the room, compared with the disheveled appearance elsewhere now the occasion was over, seemed cheerful, and these men friends of Aunt Harriet were interesting. The talk was personal, as among intimates. The local morning paper, opposed to Major Rathbone's own, it seemed, had taxed the Major with aspiring to be the next nominee of his party for Congress. And this was proving occasion for much banter at his expense by the other men, for the truth was the Major *was* being considered as a possibility, but a possibility tempered, for one thing, by the fact that his guerrilla past shed a somewhat lurid light upon his exemplary present.

"But why want to keep it secret as if it were something dark and plotting?" insisted Harriet Blair. "Why not come right out and admit your willingness if your party wants you?"

The men laughed in varying degrees of delight at this feminine perspicacity. The Major regarded her with somewhat comical humor, looking a little shamefaced, though he was laughing too. "For the fear my party can't afford to have me," he answered. "It takes money. They are casting about for a richer available man first, and, that failing, why——"

Here Austen Blair came in, bringing a breath of the November chill. Or was it his own personality that brought the chill, Alexina wondered. For, to do him justice, there was a distinction, a fine coldness, a bearing about him which distinguished him in any company.

Promptly on his coming the group broke up. The others passed into the hall to hunt overcoats, but the Major paused to address

Harriet, who had risen and was looking at him as he spoke. There was color in her face, and light.

"Friday evening then," he was saying, "you will go with me to hear Benton lecture?"

Austen, who had taken a cup of coffee from Alexina, looked up sharply. He put the cup down.

Harriet smiled acquiescence. "Friday evening," she agreed.

Later, in the hall, as the outer door shut behind the group of departing men, Austen turned on his sister, his nostrils tense with dilation.

"Do you realize what you are doing?" he asked. "Have you utterly lost sight of how this man was regarded by your father, if you prefer to put consideration for me out of the matter?"

Harriet continued to unfasten her long glove. The color was gone from her face, and the light, but otherwise she stood outwardly serene.

"The fight was fair," she said calmly, "and also mutual."

Her brother regarded her fixedly, then he spoke. "Though what there is to be gained in thus setting yourself in opposition to my repeatedly expressed wishes I do not"—all at once two steely points seemed to leap into the blue intensity of his gaze—"unless—in Heaven's name, Harriet, is it possible that you mean to—"

"Mean to what?" she repeated. Harriet was meeting his eyes with a look as unflinching as his. She seemed unconsciously to have drawn herself to her full superb height, but she had grown white as her gown.

He suddenly resumed his usual manner. "Take the child on to bed," he said, glancing at Alexina standing startled, looking from one to the other. "This is no time to have the matter out."

"I agree with you quite," said his sister, and held out a hand to the girl. Alexina took it quickly, impulsively, and held to it as they went up the garlanded stairway which suddenly looked tawdry and garish. In the hall above, the girl lifted Harriet's hand and put her cheek against it, then almost ran in at her own door.

CHAPTER III

The Blairs met about the breakfast table next morning at the usual time; a matter of

four hours for sleep instead of eight would have been insufficient excuse to Austen for further upsetting of routine; and there was none of the chit-chat that would seem natural on a morning following the giving of a large social affair.

Aunt Harriet was dumb and Uncle Austen tense, or so it seemed to the third and youngest Blair about the board. She had been conscious of sharp interchange checked as she entered. Uncle Austen even forgot to look up at her interrogatively as she came in, though she was a moment late.

Was the trouble still about the Major? Was Aunt Harriet determined to go with him Friday evening? Whatever the cause, Friday came with the strained relations between sister and brother unrelieved.

The town was in the midst of its social season, the Blair reception being one of several crowding each other. On this Friday, Harriet and Alexina were to attend an afternoon affair, and later Alexina was to go to an evening occasion with her uncle, who had consented icily, as though to emphasize the fact that it was Harriet's engagement which made it necessary for him to take the girl.

Alexina, coming down a little before five, found Harriet standing in the parlor, ready, gloves on and wrap on a chair. To be young is to be ardent. Not all youthful things are young. Alexina was young.

"You are beautiful, Aunt Harriet," she declared.

But it was as if Harriet did not hear. Was it premonition, that strained absorption?

"A moment, Alexina," she was saying. "Listen, was that the bell?"

"John, probably," said Alexina, "to let us know the carriage is waiting."

But it was Major Rathbone who came in upon them in his quick fashion a moment later. His overcoat was a cape affair which somehow seemed to suit his personality, and ever after Alexina could see him throwing the cavalier-like drapery back with impatient gesture.

"You are not gone then, Harriet," he said; "I am glad for that."

Quickly as the words were spoken, the "Harriet" on his lips was not lost upon Alexina. She turned to go, quite hot and with impulsive haste, but the Major, putting out a hand, detained her.

"No, Miss Alexina; I'd really rather you would stay if you will be so kind," he said,

then turned to the older woman. "I have just had some words with your brother on the club-house steps and I knocked him down. I came on straight here, preferring you should hear my regret from myself. I lost my temper."

He was facing Harriet, who had taken a step towards him at his entrance, then had stopped. Looking at her he went on rapidly.

"There is this I want to say. Yesterday I thought never to have the right to say it since I was too poor to ask you to listen. To-night I came here to say that I love you from my soul, and near you or away from you, alive or dead, will go on loving you and wanting you. Had you been poor I would have fought like any man to make you care; as it is I knocked your brother down for saying I was trying to do it because you are rich, to further my political ambition. I knocked him down for that, and for some other, older reasons. There is nothing more to say; no, in the divine bigness of your nature don't think you have to speak. I cannot come here any more, even if you would permit me, after what has happened, and I can't expect you to go to-night of course. But if ever I can serve you I am yours, soul and body, and will be while there is life in me. That's all, at last. What," as he turned, "crying, Miss Alexina? For me? Or for him? I assure you there was little hurt but his arrogance. Dare I ask you to shake hands?"

And he was gone in his abruptly quick fashion and the latch of the outer door was heard clicking behind him.

It aroused Harriet and she came to herself. She was trembling, but on her face was a look of one who has entered Heaven. Then it seemed to come to her that he was gone.

"I must—oh, stop him, Alexina. He must know——"

The girl ran into the hall, but the outer door was heavy, and in her haste she was awkward getting it open. As it gave finally the rush of wind drove her inward. The steady rainfall of the day, freezing as it touched the ground, had changed to finely driven sleet. The steps glared with ice. But already the Major was at the gate, and through the dusk she could see his umbrella lowered against the wind as he turned and started up the street. She called after him impulsively, beseechingly, but realized the futility of it through the fierce rush of wind and sleet. John was just driving out the carriage-way from the stable. Indeterminate,

she closed the door and turned back to the parlor.

Harriet had sunk upon a chair, and in her eyes, looking far off, was a light, a smile, or was it tears?

She sprang up and turned, her face one heavenly blush, as Alexina entered. Had she thought it would be he?

"Gone? Oh, Alexina, I must—I have to tell him. Ring the bell. John must go for him. After what has happened I cannot stand it that the knowledge should all be mine."

But she was already pulling the bell-cord herself. Then she turned to Alexina blushing and radiant.

"I am thirty-eight years old, Alexina; I am not even young, and yet he cares for me."

The bell had rung; both had heard the far-off sound of it. But no one answered, maid or man-servant.

She rang again. "I had no time, the words would not come, I tried to tell him," she said pleadingly to Alexina, as if the girl were arraigning her. Then suddenly she dropped into the chair by the bell-cord, and with her face in her hands against its back went into violent weeping.

Alexina stood hesitant. There are times for silence. She would go and find Katy.

But she met her hurrying from the kitchen towards the parlor, the shawl over her head full of sleet and wet. She was breathless and her eyes were large. Alexina was vaguely conscious of the cook, breathing excitement, somewhere behind in the length of the hall, and behind her some tradesboy, his basket on his arm, his mouth gaping.

"It's Major Rathbone," said Katy, panting; "John ran into him coming out the carriage gate. The horses slipped and he had his umbrella down and didn't see. I was coming from the grocery."

"Oh," said Alexina; "Katy, oh——"

Harriet had heard and was already in the hall and struggling with the outer door. "I can't—it won't—oh, Alexina, help me!"

Katy had reached the door too. She put her hand on the knob. "They've already started to the infirmary with him, Miss Harriet, John and that young doctor across the street, before I came in. He told them to take him there himself. He was half up, holding to the fence, before John was off the box. 'Stop the doctor there getting in his buggy,' he said to John, 'and get me around to the infirmary.'"

"And the doctor—what did he say?" demanded Alexina.

"He said 'Good Lord, man!' and he swore just awful at John being so slow helping get him in the carriage."

Harriet all at once was herself, perfectly controlled.

"Go get me my long cloak, please, Katy," she said.

"Oh, Miss Harriet," from Katy; "you ain't thinking of it—goin' out—it's sleet-in' awful—without the carriage!"

But Harriet already had reached the stairs going for it herself.

Alexina followed her. "What is it, Aunt Harriet?" she begged. "Where are you going?"

Harriet answered back from her own doorway. "To the infirmary."

Action is the one thing always understood by youth. Alexina entirely approved. "I'll go too," she said, and ran into her room to change her wrap for a darker one.

There was but one infirmary at the time in the city, and that a Catholic institution. They could walk a square and take a car to the door. Alexina, in her haste, never thought of money, but Harriet, as she came down, had her purse.

Neither spoke on the way; it was all they could do to keep umbrellas open in the fierce drive of wind and sleet. Alexina bent her head to catch breath; the sleet whipped and stung her face, the wind seized her loose cape, her light skirts, bellying them out behind her. But Harriet, ahead, tall, poised, went swiftly on, and, in the light from the street gas-post as they waited for a car, her face showed no consciousness of storm or of aught about her. Yet it was Harriet who stopped the car, who made the change, and paid the fares. The ride into town was in silence. It was Harriet who rang the bell before the infirmary building, who led the way over the icy pavement, up the wide brick walk through the grounds; it was Harriet who rang the bell at the big central door, and it was she who entered first past the little Sister who opened that door.

Not that the little Sister meant to permit it—it was against rules, she assured them; visiting hours were over. She could tell them nothing. The doctors were with the gentleman now.

But she let them in. Prison doors must have opened to Harriet that night. She would have put the little Sister aside if need

be and walked in, Alexina felt that. Perhaps the little Sister felt it too. She glanced at Harriet furtively, timidly, and, murmuring something about going to see, glided away.

The two stood in the hall, Alexina gazing at the patron Saint of the place, in marble on his pedestal. After a time the little Sister returned and told them the doctor would see them presently and said something about the parlor, but Harriet shook her head.

Again they waited, the woman and the girl sitting in chairs against the painted wall, facing the Saint in his niche. The instincts of long ago arose within Alexina, and unconsciously her lips moved for comfort to herself in a prayer to the benign old Saint before her. There was nothing incongruous to her that she was using a little form of child's prayer taught her by her Presbyterian aunt.

And still they waited, so long that Alexina felt she could not stand the silence longer, or the waiting. She looked at Harriet, who was gazing before her, her face colorless, her eyes unseeing. Alexina began to wonder if the Sister had forgotten they were there.

But at last she came stealing noiselessly back, and, following her, a young man.

Alexina recognized him at once as the young doctor she had seen going in and out the cottage, and whose name she remembered was Ransome.

Harriet arose to meet him. He was young and boyish. He looked unnerved. "The others will be down in a moment—the other doctors—" he told her, "when I saw it was bad—you know I'm just beginning—I turned it over."

His nice blue eyes looked quite distressed. "How bad?" asked Harriet steadily.

He looked at her quite miserably, the boy; then he gathered himself together.

"May I ask—I beg pardon—may I know who I am talking to?" though true to tell he knew who she was, living as he did across from her, but in his young embarrassment did not know how to say so.

The tall, beautiful woman stood a moment before him, then a slow color came up over her throat and face. "I am Miss Blair—Major Rathbone is——"

Alexina had come close to her side and her young eyes were on the doctor's appealingly.

He understood; doubtless he had heard the two names connected before; the affairs of the wealthy Miss Blair and the somewhat famous editor were likely to be talked over in a

city the size of Louisville; or perhaps, being young, he merely divined. His distress increased; he looked quite wretched. "It's bad—I'm mighty sorry to be the one to tell you."

Did she grow taller, whiter? "Are you—are the doctors still——"

"They are through for the present and coming down now."

"Then I will go to him. Oh, but I must——" this to the horrified little Sister's upraised hands of protest and headshake of negation.

"It's against all rules," ejaculated the little Sister.

Miss Blair addressed herself to the young doctor.

"Kindly take me to the room," she said.

The abashed young fellow looked from one to the other. But he started. The little Sister, however, hastily interposing herself between Miss Blair and progress, was heard to murmur that name of authority—the Mother.

"Go and bring her," said Harriet.

The Sister departed in haste, to return speedily with the Mother, her calm face beneath its bands, mild, benignant, but inexorable.

"But I am," returned Harriet to anything she could say. "I am going to him."

The dominant calmness of the Mother had met its equal. Finally, in her turn, she retreated behind authority and mentioned Father Ryan.

"Oh," said Harriet, "go and bring him."

He came, heavy of jowl, keen and humorous of eye. But his manner was disturbed, distraught. He came as one whose absorption is elsewhere. Suddenly Harriet remembered. This man was the intimate, the friend of Major Rathbone.

"I am going to him," said Harriet. "Nothing that you can say makes any difference."

The Father gazed at her thoughtfully. Then he nodded. "No," he said; "you are right; nothing will."

Just then the two other physicians came down the stairs.

"A word with you first, gentlemen, please," said the Father. The four men gathered at the foot of the stairway.

Watching, an outsider would have said that the priest and the young doctor were pleaders with the others for the cause of Miss Blair.

Later, the Mother herself led Harriet up the stairs and along a corridor, the young doctor following with Alexina.

"I think I—do you think I ought to go with her?" Alexina had faltered to him.

The two young things gazed at each other indeterminate. Alexina's eyes were swimming, like a child's, with unshed tears. Never has tragedy such epic qualities as in youth. Then he turned and led the way. "Yes," he told her; "I think if I were you I would."

Harriet was by the bed when they entered, gazing down on the lean brown face of the man. The eyes were closed. The Sister in charge, sitting on the other side, was speaking in a low voice. Had she seen fit to tell what she knew?

For Harriet turned as they entered and looked at them. Her face was set as in marble. It was cold, it was stern; only, the eyes fixed on the young doctor's face were exploring.

"Will he wake first?" she asked.

The young fellow seemed to shrink before the majesty of her suffering. Alexina put out a hand to touch her and drew it back, afraid. If only she were not so superbly self-controlled.

"Yes, he will most likely awake," he assured her, and must have done so even if he had not thought it.

She took off her hat, a large festive affair with plumes and jeweled buckles, and dropped her wrap. There was a low chair near the bed. She drew it close and sat down, her eyes on the face on the pillow. Jewels gleamed in the lace of her gown, and the shining silk of its folds trailed the floor about her.

Alexina stole across to a far and shadowed corner of the room and sat down by a table. She was crying and striving to keep it noiseless.

The doctor stood irresolute, then made a movement.

"Do you have to go?" said Harriet, turning.

"No; I expect to be here in the building all night. There might come a—er—change."

"Stay, please," she asked him; "here."

He sat down by the open fire and she turned again to the face on the pillow.

The night passed. Now and then the Sister moved noiselessly about, or the doctor came to the bedside, lifted the inert hand, laid it down, and went back to the fire.

Alexina moved from her chair to the window or to the fire and back again. Now and again she knew that she must have slept a little, her head against the table. So the night passed.

The square framed by the window sash was turning gray when there came a movement, and the eyelids of the face on the pillow lifted. Harriet was leaning over before the others, the nurse or doctor, got to the bed, and must have been there when the eyes opened. She must have seen consciousness of her presence in them, too, and possibly questioning. For she spoke rapidly, eagerly, like one who had said the thing over and over in readiness for the moment, though her voice shook. "You said you loved me from your soul, and, living or dead, would go on loving and wanting my love?" she asked him.

There seemed no wonder in the voice replying, only content. There was even the usual touch of humor in his reply. "And will go on wanting your love," he said.

"But I am here to tell you how I love you," she returned.

The room was still, like death. Then in the man's voice: "Is this pity, Harriet?"

Her voice hurried on. "And how, living or dead, I will go on loving and wanting you," she told him.

It was no pity that trembled in her voice; it was passion. He moved. Alexina sobbed.

After a time he spoke again. It was to call her name, to say it as to himself. This time he knew it was love this woman was talking of, not pity.

"I could not bear it that you should not know," she hurried on to tell him. "I made them let me come to you."

"You know then, Harriet; they have told you?"

She was human; the sound that broke from her was the cry of a rent soul.

The doctor, who had gone back to the mantel, crouched over the fire. The Sister seemed to shrink into the shadows beyond the narrow bed. Alexina clenched her hands, her head on her arms outstretched on the table.

But Harriet had regained herself. "I am here to ask you something. May I be married to you—now—at once, I mean?"

His response was not audible, only her reply. "Oh, surely you will. For the rest of my life—to have been—you will give me this, won't you?"

There was a quick movement from him, and a sound of warning from the nurse who moved forward out of the shadow.

Material things seemed to come back to Harriet. Alarm sprang into her voice. "Shall I go away?" she asked the nurse, even timidly.

The answer came from him. "No; oh, no. Since it may be for so little time I may ask it of you; stay with me, Harriet."

She turned to the doctor.

"Stay," he told her, poor boy, new to these things.

"Then give me my way," Harriet begged, turning back again. She had forgotten the others already. "You said that after what happened between you and Austen you wanted it known how you felt to me. Haven't I the same right and more, since it was my brother who said it, to want the world to know how I feel to you?"

They could feel the laugh in his reply. "The world, the world, as if you ever cared for what the world—come, be honest, Harriet; you say this in the generous desire of making it up to me."

"But I do—I do care. I could clap my hands, I could glory to cry it from the housetops, how I care, how I am here, on my knees, begging you will marry me."

"You are kneeling? Yes? Kneel then; even that, since it brings you closer. But let's not talk of this now. I'm not used to the knowledge of the first yet. Will you put your hand in mine, Harriet?"

The girl over in the corner, her head in her arms, felt that her heart would break. And this was love. This great sad thing was love.

He was talking again. "I never thought, surely, to be a stick of a man like this. I could have made a royal lover, Harriet. A man's blood at forty is like wine at its fullness. My head—won't lift—God, that it should come to find me like this! yet, kiss me, will you, Harriet?"

But a moment and she returned to her pleading. "They will send me away from you, you know. They won't let me stay. I have no right to be here—unless you give it to me?"

Was she using this, the inference, to move him?

For he caught it at once. "You came—I see, I see."

But she had fled from her position. "It's not that, as if I cared, as if you thought

I cared. It's because I want to have been——"

But the other had stuck. "Is the doctor there?" he asked suddenly.

The young fellow came to the bed.

"I would like to see Father Ryan," said the Major.

The priest came. The two were intimates. He listened to the instructions, the exigencies of the case to be met by him. A license was necessary. "And try and get Miss Blair's brother to accompany you, and to come here with you; you will make it all clear to him."

Harriet was looking up at the priest. She saw him as the friend of the man she loved. "And you will come back and marry us yourself, won't you?" she asked.

He was looking down at her. Even after the long night, in the cold light of a winter dawn, and in the garishness of an evening gown in daylight, she was triumphantly beautiful. With her hand on the smooth brown hand of the Major, she sat and looked up at the cassocked priest. The marble of her face had given way to a divine light and radiance.

He looked down on her.

"I will come," he told her.

It was some hours before he was back. The young doctor had gone and come. Dawn had broadened into a gray and sullen day. Breakfast was sent up and placed in an adjoining room for Harriet and Alexina. The girl tried to eat, if only to seem grateful to the Sister bringing it. But Harriet only wandered about the room, and, when Alexina brought her a cup of coffee, shook her head. She watched the door until the doctors were gone and she might return to him, then went in and sat by him again. His eyes were closed, but his hand, seeking as she sat down, found hers. Later, as the priest returned, the gaze from the pillow turned to the door eagerly. Austen was not with him. The face steeled.

The Mother came in, and at a sign from the priest they gathered around, Alexina, the young doctor, the nurse.

With his hand in Harriet's the Major followed to the end.

Nor was he going to die. There was deeper knowledge of life yet to learn for the woman by him.

Afterward, Doctor Ransome drove Alexina home in his buggy, where she and the voluble, excited Katy packed some things for Harriet.

"And Miss Harriet never to let us hear a word, and Maggie and me never closing our eyes all the night, Miss Alexina," Katy said. And Aunt Harriet a person usually so observant and punctilious about everything!

"And Mr. Blair, he asked where you were, Miss Harriet and you, when he came. And then he dressed and went to the party he was going to take you to, as if nothing had happened. And the Father came this morning and talked, but Mr. Blair hardly said a word, and when they left the priest went one way and Mr. Blair he went the other."

Doctor Ransome came in his buggy and took Alexina back. On reaching the infirmary they found that Major Rathbone's sister from Bardstown, who had been sent for, had arrived. Alexina had not known that he had a sister until she found her in the room next to the Major's, with Harriet.

She was childlike and small and was looking at Harriet, helpless and frightened. She was, it proved, twenty-three years old, and a widow with two children.

"And Stevie takes care of us," she explained. "Stevie" was the Major; "us" was herself and the babies.

She had brought both the babies. "I couldn't leave them and come, you know," she said.

One of them lay on the bed, asleep, a little chap four years old, his coat unfastened, his hair tumbled. The other, the younger, asleep too, lay on the mother's knee, Harriet regarding him. He was aquiline, lean and handsome, baby as he was, like a little deer hound.

"His name is Stevie," said Stephen's sister.

Harriet looked up from the child to the mother, almost jealously. "Then he is mine too; I have some part in him too, since his name is Stephen."

(To be continued)



THREE POEMS
BY
FLORENCE WILKINSON



THE HOUSE TO HIS FIRST MISTRESS

A CROSS my threshold they have gone,
Many the steps and sweet,
But yours alone that I love best
Is the rhythm I repeat,
From days when you and I were young
And autumn flamed across the street,
Remembered trailings of your skirt
And hauntings of your feet.

The generations come and go
And I have held them dear ;
Between the lattice and the hearth
They dance and disappear,
But echoing through their songs at night
It is your voice I hear
That knew me when I was unknown
Conceived me out of dust and stone,
And loved me in that bygone year.

I took you to my lonely arms,
You were the soul of me ;
There was no speech between us twain,
There needed not to be ;
Your watchful nights were mine, were mine,
And mine your minstrelsy.
Your seal upon my forehead is,
Forever still to be.

took up the oil lamp which she used to save gas in the kitchen.

He stood a long time gazing at the light in his hand, swaying a little, his lips twitching. He went up the hall to the door of the

room and stood there, hanging his head. He blew out the light. In the darkness, he tapped on the panel and whispered—hoarsely, apologetically :

“Maggie?”

THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF “EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART”

PART II—CHAPTER IV



AUSTEN BLAIR and his niece lived on in the big house upon terms precise and formal. Alexina wondered if her uncle were not different from other people, for it must be the abnormal human who would not ask one question about his sister; mere curiosity must have demanded that much, Alexina thought, having a lively curiosity herself. To be sure, Aunt Harriet, from Uncle Austen's standpoint, had outraged every convention to which they had been bred; she had married a man between whom and her family there had been bitterest enmity, between whom and her brother there had been personal encounter; she had gone from her brother's roof to be married in a Catholic institution, by a Catholic priest.

It almost made Alexina laugh when she summed up the enormity of the offending. She gloried in it herself; she adored Aunt Harriet and loved her for it.

But the fact that her uncle could thus ignore the whole subject made it harder for Alexina to go to him about a matter which had arisen concerning herself.

A letter had come to her from her mother. Though it was eleven years since she had seen the handwriting, she knew it, as Katy, bringing the mail, handed it to her.

It seemed to Alexina that her pulses stopped and the tide of her blood flowed backward. Katy, closing the door as she went, brought her to herself, and she flung

the letter from her the width of the room. Her gaze followed it.

She sat like one stunned with horror. Then rage succeeded. “What right had this—this so-called mother to write to her?”

But she need not read it, and Alexina sprang up and went about her household duties, as if in interviews with grocery man and butcher, with cook and laundress, she could forget that her mother had written her, that the letter lay up-stairs awaiting her.

She would not read it, she assured herself; but all the while she knew that she would, and when the time came she opened it quietly and read it through. Then she put it in its envelope and threw it from her again across the room, and sat immovable, the lines of her young face setting as though by some steeling process. Suddenly she caught sight of her face in the glass. On it was the look of Uncle Austen.

She sprang up and, dragging forth her cloak and hat and furs, fled from the house. She must turn to some one, she must get away from the horror that was upon her. She would go to Aunt Harriet.

It was a frosty day and a light fall of snow was on the pavements. She met Dr. Ransome and Emily Carringford strolling along as though it were summer. She had introduced him to Emily, and one would say she had done him a good turn. She smiled as they called to her from across the street. He admired Emily and it looked as if Emily—

but then Emily sparkled and glowed for any man, even for Uncle Austen.

She saw Georgy wave his hat gayly from the platform of a street-car and look as though he meant to swing off and join her. She was seeing a good deal of him these days. She shook her head and pointed with her muff, and a moment later turned in at the Infirmary gate. She had walked rapidly and felt better somehow. The Major was daily growing stronger though the fear was that he might never walk again, but, rather than accept this verdict, he and Aunt Harriet were going East for advice or, if need be, to Paris.

Paris! The horror surged back upon her. She stopped short in her very turning to close the gate and stood engrossed with the misery of it, for it was from Paris her mother had written to say she was coming to her.

"I have reached the end of my money, ma chère," she wrote, "as you come into yours, which Austen, being a Blair, will have cared for. I will teach you to love life, now that you are grown. When you were a child you were impossible; you disconcerted and judged me, but it is unfair to let you taste life according to Blair seasoning only. So write me, ma fille, mon enfant, of your whereabouts, in the care of your Uncle Randolph in Washington, for I follow this steamer across."

And then, as though her mood had changed: "In any case, I shall not trouble you long. It is my lungs, they tell me. It is a curious sensation, may you never know it, having your furniture seized. *Le bon Dieu* and Celeste have stood between me and much."

Celeste! Tall, gaunt, and taciturn—*negro mammy* to Alexina and to Molly before her. Celeste! It all stifled the girl. She hated Celeste. Celeste had chosen to go with the mother, and the child had been left by both.

And where was M. Garnier, the husband—"the promising young French poet"—as Uncle Randolph had termed him to some one, in the child Alexina's hearing, those years ago. The letter made no mention of him.

Alexina closed the Infirmary gate and walked up the wide pavement to the entrance. The little Sister knew her well now and smiled a welcome as she let her in. Passing along the hall Alexina hesitated before the marble saint in his niche. Hers was no controversial soul; what she wanted was comfort. Perhaps the blend of Presbyterianism

and Catholicism may be tolerance. Then she went on through the spotless halls to the second floor.

As the door opened Harriet looked around. She had been writing by the Major's couch, and he had fallen asleep, his hand on hers, the portfolio lying open on her lap. She smiled at Alexina, then nodded at the hand detaining her.

Could it be the same Aunt Harriet, this yearning-eyed woman? Her hair, always beautiful, had loosened, and drooped over her temple, and the thought swept upon Alexina, how human, how sweetly dear it made her look, this touch of carelessness because of greater concern. It moved the girl, bending to kiss her, to slip to her knees instead and throw adoring young arms about her.

And then a strange thing happened; the head of the woman drooped for support against the girl's shoulder and, with a sudden trembling all through her, Harriet began to cry. Only for a moment; then, lifting her head and putting the hand of the sleeper gently on the couch, she arose and drew the girl over to the window.

"You go to-morrow?" asked Alexina.

"Yes; Dr. Ransome has arranged to go with us then. I don't know why I cry, for he's better. He's been dictating an editorial. I'm unnerved, I suppose, and it's beginning to tell."

"You are worn out with the strain, Aunt Harriet, and the worry and unhappiness."

"Unhappiness?" Harriet laughed a little wildly. "Unhappiness? I thought you understood better than that. I'm happy, for the first time in all my easy, prosperous, level life. It's out of the depths we bring up happiness, Alexina. And come what may, I've known, am knowing it—nothing can take the knowledge from me now."

She was crying again, her head bent against the window pane. "I never knew how to get near to any one; I've been alone all my life till now. Maybe you have been lonely all along. I didn't know. Living with Austen and me—oh, I'm sorry for you, Alexina. I'm going away now with Stephen; but when we come back I mean to make it up to you and see that you have opportunities and friends. Oh, Alexina, we do all need it, the joy of having some one needing us. And you'll be nice to Louise for me, won't you, while we're gone?"

Louise was the sister of Stephen, and she and the babies were to remain in Louisville in the house the Major and Harriet had taken against their return, an unpretentious house on a cross street.

"Stephen has arranged it all," Harriet was saying; "he won't let me do a thing. He will not consider for a moment that he isn't going to be able to keep his position on the paper; they're filling it for him among themselves still. If he wasn't so—so fiercely proud! It's Austen that rankles, you see."

There was a movement on the couch. Harriet went swiftly over to the waker. It is on Olympus they take time for deliberate and stately progression; Harriet had come down to the human world.

"It's a soporific thing," quoth the Major, "listening to one's own editorials. I never heard one through before. You there, Alexina? Where have you been these two days? I hope you're not holding it against us that Georgy is sending all his flowers to me? It's his delicate way, you see; reaching round through me via Harriet to you."

There was a tap and the little Sister entered. It was company. It was always company. The Major's life had been close to the heart and center of things. It was laughable to see the reserved Harriet's pride in his popularity. It was a certain judge this time, and with him an old comrade at arms, come up from the Pennyroyal to see him.

"But had you better?" Harriet expostulated.

The Major caught her hand and laughed at her. "But these are fond farewells, you see, dear lady," he explained.

Was he drawing her to him by the hand he held? For suddenly Harriet bent over and kissed him; nor did Alexina feel any consciousness or shame, and the little Sister went out softly with glistening eyes.

So it came about that Alexina did not open her heart to Harriet after all, and the aunt went away next day without knowing.

Yet Harriet influenced the girl in her decision.

Alexina, standing at her window, watched a sparrow tugging at some morsel that had fallen upon the snow and essaying to fly upward and away with it. She was lonesome; the house was so big; it seemed so empty. She was thinking about Aunt Harriet, who was giving her strength out to

some one, who had opened her arms to Louise and the babies, whose days were full of thought and planning, and through whose eyes shone something never there before.

Alexina left the window and re-read the postscript of her letter. "In any case I shall not trouble you long. It is my lungs, they tell me. It is a curious sensation, may you never know it, having your furniture seized. Le bon Dieu and Celeste have stood between me and much."

It was to her uncle after all, that Alexina went with the matter that night. He was in the parlor reading and laid down his paper to give attention. The substance of the letter heard, the two perpendicular lines between his brow relaxed, for it was a case of his judgment being justified and a man likes to feel he has been right.

"It is what I expected," he said, "only it has been longer coming. She has her father's people in Washington, she has no claim on you." He lifted his paper.

"But—" said Alexina.

He lowered it and waited.

Her mouth grew set. He always made her stubborn. Fingering the upholstery of his chair, she looked at him, though it took courage to look at Austen Blair under some circumstances. She found herself suddenly disposed to defend her mother. "But if I feel a claim, Uncle Austen? I wanted to tell you I think I ought to write her to come."

"Come where?" asked Austen Blair.

To be sure—where could she write her to come? There fell a silence.

Then he spoke, and curtly. "In three months you will be of age, a fact no doubt which your mother has remembered. Until then I forbid it; after that it is your affair. In the interim, it has been my intention, and I meant to say as much to you, to make you acquainted with your affairs. I had expected you to live on in my house. Under the conditions you propose you will, of course, make your own arrangements."

Alexina listening, looked at him. One would have said tears were welling. Had he raised his eyes to hers, put out a hand—

But he returned to his paper.

Her cheeks blazed, her head went up, and something ran like a vivifying flame over her face. It was a pity Austen did not see her then. He demanded beauty in a woman. He should have seen his young niece angry.

Then she turned and went up to her room and wrote her mother to come. But, the

letter written, she dropped her head on the desk and broke into wild and passionate crying.

CHAPTER V

Alexina for several years had been made partially acquainted with her affairs.

The evening her uncle chose to go over the whole with her, Alexina, in the midst of it, put a hand timidly on his. "I am grateful, Uncle Austen, you know that," she said.

The matter of the mother was fresh between them. "I have been paid, as any one else, for my services," he answered.

She drew her hand back.

The books were a clear record of what had been done year by year.

"Cowan Steam-boat Mortgage," read Alexina from a page of early entries. "What was that?"

"A mortgage held for you on a boat built at the Cowan shipyards."

"What was the name of the boat?" Alexina's voice sounded suddenly strained and odd.

"The 'King William,'" said Austen. "The boat never paid for itself, and the mortgage was foreclosed and the boat sold."

The girl's eyes narrowed with curious intentness. As she listened she pushed her hair back with the hand propping her head as if its weight oppressed her. "And then?" she asked. "Here are more entries."

"I bought the boat in at a figure a little over the mortgage; river affairs were down. Later, a couple of years—you'll find it there—the boat sold for double the price."

She closed the book. "That's enough, I believe," she said, "for one evening." But it is doubtful if he was at all aware of anything strange in her tone.

She tripped on her skirts, so impetuous was her flight up the stairs, and, in her room, flung herself upon the bed. Her hands even beat fiercely as she cried, but there was no doll Sally Ann to be gathered in for comfort now.

They had loved her, they had been good to her, Mrs. Leroy had rocked her, the Captain had held her on his knee.

She sprang up and went to bathe her eyes. If she knew where they were, or how to find them, she would go—

She wondered if Emily or her mother had known about this.

She went to the Carringtons' the next afternoon. She liked to go over to the little

brown house and she liked Emily's strong-featured, outspoken mother, there was a certain homely charm even in the clear-starched, fresh calico dresses she wore.

Mrs. Carrington was drawing large loaves of golden-brown bread from the oven as Alexina came in by way of the kitchen door. The smell of it was good.

"Wait a moment, Alexina," she said, as she rose and turned the loaves out onto a clean crash towel spread upon the table. "I want a word with you before you go up-stairs. It's about Emily—you know, I suppose, that your uncle is coming over right often to see her?—That big hat looks well on your yellow hair, Alexina—And I'm going to be plain: it's bad for Emily; she's discontented with things now—she always has been."

Alexina's eyes dilated. "Coming to see Emily? Does—does Emily want him to come?"

"Alexina," called Emily down the stairs; "aren't you coming up?"

Alexina went up to the room which Emily shared with her two little sisters. It was hard upon her. There were various attempts to have it as a girl fancies her room. The airiness of Swiss muslins, however cheap, the sheen of the color over which the airiness lies, the fluttering of ruffled edges, these seem to be expressions of girlhood. But Emily's little sisters shared the room with her. They were there when Alexina entered.

"Now go out," Emily told them; "we want to be alone."

The little girls looked up. Miss Alexina was tall and fair and friendly, she wore lovely dresses, she went to balls, and they adored her.

She felt the flattery and liked it too. "Oh," she interceded, "no, don't, Emily."

"Yes," said Emily; "we want to talk. Go on, Nan—Nell; don't you hear?"

The little sisters gathered up books and slates with some show of resentment; it was their room too. Emily shut the door behind them.

The breadths of a light-hued silk dress were lying about the room. Emily was ripping on the waist. "It's a dress Miss Harriet gave mother for a quilt while you were away, but I told her it would be no such thing if I could devise it otherwise."

She frowned, then threw the waist down. "Not that I don't hate it—the devising, the scheming."

"I wouldn't do it," said Alexina bluntly.

"Which is easy for you to say," retorted Emily, her eyes sweeping Alexina from top to toe. Harriet Blair knew how to dress the girl.

"Yes," said Alexina; "I suppose that's true." It was part of her hold on Emily, her fairness. "But you're welcome to anything of mine; I've reason somehow to hate 'em all."

The color heightened on Emily's face and she looked eager. Passion expresses itself variously. The stern old grandfather abased and denied the physical and material needs. Emily exulted in the very sheen of rich fabric, in the feel of satin laid to cheek. Was the grandchild but fulfilling the law of reaction? The soul of Emily and the soul of the old preacher saw each other across a vast abyss.

"It's for the Orbisons' I need a dress," said Emily. "Of course, I know it's because I have a voice I'm asked."

Yet knowing that for herself she never would have been asked, there was exultation in Emily's tone.

Alexina got up suddenly. Somehow she didn't want to discuss the Leroy's with Emily after all.

Down-stairs she stopped again in the spotless, shining kitchen, the clean odor where soft-soap is used always lingering. Alexina liked it; all her knowledge of the dear homely details of life she was familiar with she had gotten here.

"You remember the Leroy's?" she asked Mrs. Carrington.

"Why, yes; I sent them milk twice a day."

"Did you know why they went away?"

"Wasn't it because they had put everything into that—er—?" She stopped.

"Boat?" suggested the girl.

"Boat"—Mrs. Carrington accepted the word—"and so had to after it was—er—"

"Sold," supplied Alexina. "Did you—did people know who it was held the mortgage?"

The plain-spoken Mrs. Carrington looked embarrassed. "Well, Alexina, you know how it is in a neighborhood."

"Then you knew the boat was bought in for me?"

"Why, yes; I did."

"Did the Leroy's know it?"

"Why, naturally, I should suppose so."

That was all that Alexina wanted to know, yet not all, either. Her color rose a little.

It made her pretty. "Do you know anything of the Leroy's since?"

"Not a word," said Mrs. Carrington. "What do you hear from Miss Harriet and Major Rathbone?"

"They are still East. Dr. Ransome came back yesterday."

"Yes; I know he did," said Mrs. Carrington. "He was here to see Emily last night. He's a nice boy." There was emphasis in her way of making the statement. Harriet Blair had once remarked that Mrs. Carrington was that anomaly—a sane woman. Yet she opposed the visits of Austen Blair and spoke heartily concerning the other one. "Garrard is a nice boy; I like him."

CHAPTER VI

Alexina became twenty-one in May. She had found that in the settling of her affairs it would be necessary for her to remain in Louisville and so had written her mother to come to her there. She explained about the change in her life to the Carringtons, to find that they knew all about her mother; probably her little world, Georgy, Dr. Ransome, knew it too, while these years she had comforted herself with the thought that, at least, it was her secret shame.

Mrs. Carrington put an arm about her and kissed her. There was approval in the action.

Emily looked at her, then laughed nervously, while a vivid scarlet rose to the roots of her chestnut hair.

As Alexina passed through the front-room study going home, the old minister looked up from his writing and called her name. He pushed his spectacles back onto his leonine head, looking up as she came toward him. She was surprised, for he never had seemed conscious even of her comings and goings.

"There are two ties that are not of our making," he told her; "the spiritual tie between the Creator and the created, and the material tie between the parent and the child. They are ties not of duty but of nature, as indestructible as matter. God go with you."

She felt strange and choked, though she was not sure she knew what he meant.

A week after she became of age she was dismantling the bay-windowed room of such things as were hers. Little by little it grew as cold and cheerless as the one adjoining,

now the personality of Aunt Harriet was gone out of it. What would become of Uncle Austen after both were gone?

She had tried to force from him some expression of feeling, at first wistfully, then determinedly. There is a chance, had he responded, that she would have made other arrangements for her mother. Then she told herself she did not care and went hotly on with her preparations.

She had taken two bedrooms and a parlor at a hotel, and had written her mother to go directly there, but the night of her arrival the girl felt she could not go to meet her. It was too late an hour anyhow, she would wait until morning, but she shrank so from that first moment she could not sleep.

She and her uncle met at the breakfast table the next morning. She made one or two attempts at conversation. "I go to-day, Uncle Austen," she said at last, and, leaning forward, pushed a paper across the table to him. It was the final statement of the household expenditures under her management.

Her board from her first coming had been paid into the general house fund, and, accordingly, she had included against herself charge for these several days in the new month.

Noting it, Austen Blair nodded; it was the first approval accorded her for some time.

She laughed. "I go to-day," she repeated.

Her uncle, who had risen, put the paper, neatly folded, into his wallet, then crossed to her and put out his hand.

"I will not see you again then?" he said, and shook hands.

A moment after she heard the front door close.

There were the servants to bid good-by and that being done there was no excuse to linger.

It was a warm May day; the magnolia in the yard, the pirus japonicas, the calycanthus, the horse chestnuts, were in bloom. The lawn was green, the edges of the gravel paths newly cut and trim. Alexina, in her muslin dress and Leghorn hat, turned on the stone flagging and looked back at the home she was leaving. Home?

The girl, pausing in the yard of the big house, glanced across the street to a shabby old brick cottage. Her affection was for it.

The hotel was in the business part of the city near the river. A street car would

have taken her directly there but she walked, as if seeking to put the moment off. The way took her past the housefurnished and waiting for Aunt Harriet and the Major. Louise was sitting on an up-stairs window-sill with little Stevie, and caught his small fist and waved it to her. A curtain was fluttering out an opened window and a comfortable looking colored woman was sweeping the pavement. The place had an air of relaxation, of comfort, already. Aunt Harriet was going to have a home.

The arrangements had been made at the hotel, and the child, for a very child she was, went in at the ladies' entrance where a sleepy bell-boy sat, always nodding, past the pillared corridor, on up-stairs, and along the crimson-carpeted hallways. She was trembling, her throat was dry.

In the suite she had taken, a bedroom either side opened into a connecting parlor. It was the knob of the parlor-door she turned after a tap. Then she went in.

"Why, you tall, charming, baby-faced—! Celeste, Celeste, here's your baby! Come here to me, Malise. Why the child's hands are cold!"

How foolish to have dreaded it so! It was all gone—even the restraint. The twelve years were as nothing. She was again the baby child, Malise, so-called by her mother's people.

And her mother? The linen pillows on the sofa beneath her head looked cool and pleasantly ruffled, and the sheer white wrapper was fine and softly laundered as a baby's. Her hair, hanging in two plaits over the pillows, had no suggestion of carelessness—it looked childish, it looked fascinating, it looked lovely.

The mother, holding her child's hands, was gazing up curiously, interestedly, her lips parted, as pleased interest will part any child's. There was contagious laughter in the eyes too, the laugh of expectancy about to be gratified, as with children while the curtain goes up on a new scene. "You are as pretty as you can be, Malise; the Blair features used to look so solemn on a baby!"

"Lil' missy——"

Alexina looked around. It was Celeste, tall, brown, regarding her with covert eyes as of old. Celeste had never loved her, the child had known that; her love belonged to the mother, her first charge, her Southern born, all her own. The father's blood in

this second child was alien; Celeste had resented it as she had resented that father and all his kind. She had been jealous for the mother against the father and child from the first.

Alexina, drawing a hand from her mother's, gave it to Celeste. The old woman took it loosely, then let it drop. Things were to be as of old, then, between them.

The girl turned back to her mother. "But, Molly"—the name came naturally; she had known her mother by no other—"your health, you know; tell me about that."

What did this dilation in Molly's eyes mean? And she glanced sidewise, secretly, as if at fear of some dreaded thing, lurking.

"Did I write about that? Oh, well, perhaps I was, then, but not now; not at all now."

The haste to disclaim was feverish, and the look directed by Celeste at Alexina was sullen, even while the old woman's strong, resistless brown hand was pushing her mistress back onto the pillows.

"Got to res' lil' while, p'tite; got to min' Celeste an' lay back an' res' now."

Then to her daughter, who suddenly felt herself a little compelled creature again, so was she carried into the past by the old woman's soft, Creole slurring: "'Tain', lil' missy; 'tain' like Madame Garnier she aire seeck actual, but jus' she taire, easy like."

Madame Garnier! That meant Molly! The illusions were all gone. The girl backed from the couch. Twelve years rolled between Molly and herself, years full of resentment. A slow red came up and over the girl's face.

But Molly, back upon the pillows, gave no sign. She flung her plaits out of the way and slipped her arms under her head. There is a slenderness that is not meagerness, but delicacy; thus slight, thus pretty, were Molly's wrists. The arms under her head tilted her face so the light fell on it. It was a narrow piquant face with no lines to mar its delicacy. The odd difference in the eyebrows, which had fascinated Alexina as a child, one arched, one straight, lent laughter to it even in repose. Yet the mouth drooped, like a child's, with pathos and appeal. Could one say no to that mouth, it was so wistful? It was an alluring face, and moved you so to tenderness, to do battle, to give protection, that it hurt.

"Throw off your hat, Malise," suggested Molly. "Celeste, take her parasol off that chair. There is so much to hear about. I asked la femme de charge, when she was in this morning, if she'd ever heard of the Blairs. Everybody used to know everything about everybody when I was here before and the servants most of all, and, mon Dieu, she knew all about them. 'She's married—Miss Blair,' she told me. 'I know that,' said I. For you'd mentioned that much in your letter, Malise. 'She ran off to get married,' said she. 'Oh, hush,' I told her."

She had retained her very colloquialisms, this Molly, too unconscious and too indolent to know she had them, probably, or to care.

"So she told me all about it, how tall, cold, proper Harriet had run off from Blair properties and Austen, to marry a Southerner and a Catholic! It's as if the virgin in marble had stepped down and done it!"

Molly was amused. It narrowed her eyes till they laughed through the lashes.

"I never heard anything so funny in my life, Malise, as—as Harriet eloping. What is it Jean Garnier would quote from his adored Shakespeare about Diana and her icicles? Make me stop! It hurts me—to laugh. Oh-o-h, mammy, Celeste—God, mammy!"

The appeal died in a little choke, and the morsel of handkerchief pressed to her mouth showed a spot of crimson, but Celeste was already there, putting Alexina aside. "You can ring fo' lil' ice—yonder," she told the girl jealously. "Then, efen I were lil' missy, I'd go in there—that one is yo' room—an' I'd shet my do'h. When it's over with, p'tite won't want fo' you to have been in heah."

But pushed into the adjoining room and with the door shut between, Malise still could hear. She did not want to hear; she tried not to hear. She was awed and frightened.

"Am I going to die this time, Celeste? I'm afraid, mammy; my hands are cold. Don't rub them with the rings on, you fool; you hurt. No, no; don't go away, mammy! mammy! I couldn't sleep last night; that's why I'm—I'm tired. The night was so long and I was afraid. I see Jean when I try to sleep. I hear him cough. Give me something to make me sleep—oh, mammy, give it to me."

The girl in the next room stood gazing out the window over the roofs and chimney stacks at the yellow tide of the river sweeping

down towards the pier bridge spanning it, but she was not seeing it. She was filled with pity and terror.

It grew quieter in the next room, then still, then the door between opened and closed. It was Celeste, outwardly unmoved and taciturn.

"P'tite's gone to sleep. Shall I help lil' missy unpack her things?"

CHAPTER VII

Summer in a half-grown Southern city is full of charm; pretty girls in muslin dresses stroll the shopping streets and stop on the sidewalks to chat with each other and with callow youths; picnic parties board the street cars, and in the evenings sounds of music and dancing float out from open doors and windows along the residence streets.

Alexina, chaperoned by Harriet Blair, would have found herself in these things, yet never quite of them.

"Malise," Molly said quite earnestly, a day or so after her coming; "don't you think it's—er—stuffy—here?"

It was stuffy; hotel rooms in summer are apt to be; Alexina felt as apologetic as if Molly were the one who had given up a spacious comfortable home to come and live in rooms for her. "I'm sorry," she said. She had explained the necessity for it before.

"I thought you'd gotten the bank to take charge of your affairs," Molly reminded her; "so why do we have to stay?"

"I have, but it's a different thing, very, from having Uncle Austen, personally——"

She stopped; it might seem to be reminding Molly that she had caused the break with Austen Blair.

But Molly never took disagreeable things personally. She threw her arms back of her head. "Can't you propose something to do?" she entreated.

"We might go round to the stores," suggested Alexina doubtfully. She hated stores herself.

Molly brightened. "I need some summer things."

Alexina agreed, yet she wondered. Seven trunks can disgorge a good many clothes; "mere debris from the wreckage of things," Molly explained, though they didn't look it. Yet in a way Alexina understood. It wasn't the actual things Molly wanted, it was the diversion, and at the suggestion she cheered

up. "You look pretty in summer clothes, Malise," she stated, with graciousness, as they started. On the way she went in and bought chocolates; not that she wanted them either—it was too hot for candy, she said—but one must be doing something.

Coming out the door they met Georgy, who promptly stopped. He was a beautiful youngster, with a buoyant and splendid heartiness. And now he was flushing ruddily with pleasure up to his yellow hair.

Alexina blushed too, she hardly knew why, except that he did, and told his name to Molly, who regarded him with smiling eyes and gave him her hand, whereupon he blushed still more and then suggested that he go along with them.

A group of young matrons and their daughters stood at the door of the shop to which they were bound, chatting, in easy warm weather fashion. Alexina knew them slightly but Georgy knew them well, and they were greeted with salutations and laughter.

Molly smiled too, an interested smile that brightened as she was introduced, and she remembered having known the mother of this one when she, Molly, had lived in Louisville before, and the husband of another one, and all the while she was letting her eyes smile from one to the other of the group, who meanwhile were telling Georgy in chorus that they were planning a dance.

Dance? Molly's eyes grew inquiringly eager. Favors were they speaking of? She had a trunk full of Parisian knick-knacks, she told them. "Come around to the hotel," suggested Molly, "all of you; why not now?"

And so it was that the stream of things gayest caught Molly and Molly's daughter into its swirl. The banks along the way were flowery, the sky was blue, and Alexina began to find the waters of dalliance sweet. Hitherto girlish groups had seemed to make themselves up and leave her out, and there had always been a disconcerting lack of things to talk about in dressing-rooms and strictly feminine assemblies. Now she found herself in the planning and the whirl, happy as any.

There was exhilaration, too, in this sudden realization of what an income meant, which she hadn't had much opportunity of learning before.

These days she laughed out of very exuberance and sudden joy in living.

"It seems as if I didn't really know you, sometimes," said the literal Georgy, out calling with her one evening. "It makes you awful pretty, you know, to be jolly this way," which was meant to be more complimentary than it sounded.

They were stepping up on the porch of the house to which they were bound. Alexina laughed and caught a handful of rose petals from a blossoming vine clambering the post and cast them on Georgy.

There were other swains than Georgy these days, too, and not all of them were youths either, not that it mattered in the least, who they were; in the beginning it is the homage, not the individual, that counts.

She hung over the offerings which came to her from them with a rapture which was more than any mere joy—it was relief. Suppose such things had been denied her? There are maidens, worthy maidens, who never know them, and so Alexina blushed divinely with relief. Roses to her!

And Molly, watching, would grow peevish—not over the flowers; Molly was too sure of her own charm for that. Alexina really did not know what it was about, and she did not believe Molly quite knew herself.

There was a lazy-eyed personage the young people called Mr. Allie. Their mothers had called him Mr. Randall, but then he had been the contemporary of the mothers.

No daughter of these bygone belles was secure in her place to-day until the seal of Mr. Allie's half-serious, half-lazy approval was upon her, or so the mothers and the daughters felt. Mr. Allie was perennial, indolently handsome, an idler in the gay little world, yet somehow one believed he could have gone at life in earnest had there been need.

He, too, sent roses to Alexina, and flowers from him meant something subtly flattering, and he came strolling around at places and sat down by her, saying pretty things to make her blush, apparently to watch her doing it. Not that she minded as much as she worried, because she felt she ought to mind, and in her heart she knew she didn't really.

She had gone out with him half a dozen times perhaps, when, one evening at a dance, Mr. Allie, seeking, found her at the far end of a veranda where the side steps went down to the gravel. She and Georgy were sitting there together. Georgy was telling her of his aspirations and, in passing, dwelling on the lack of any civic spirit in the town, the

inference seeming to be that Georgy, modest as he was, some day himself meant to supply it.

Mr. Allie told Georgy that a waiting damsel was expecting him, then took Georgy's place. He did not speak for a while and Alexina never was talkative.

"Would you rather go in and dance?" at last he asked.

"Why," said Alexina; "no." Which was not quite true for she loved to dance these days. She used to be afraid she was not going to have a successive partner and it marred the full enjoyment of the one she had, but now—

Still, any one would be flattered to have Mr. Allie asking, so she said no.

"Then we'll stay," he said; which was not brilliant, to be sure, but it was the way Mr. Allie said things which made them seem pregnant of many meanings.

After that neither of them said a word, yet Alexina's pulses began to beat. The big side yard upon which the steps descended was flooded with moonlight, and a mocking-bird was sending forth a trial note or two. And it was June.

"For you know, really, you're the very dearest of them all," said Mr. Allie, with soft decision, as if he had been arguing about it.

There wasn't a thing to say and she could not have said it if there had been.

"And I've known a good many," continued Mr. Allie, which probably was true, only Mr. Allie knew how true; "but I've never felt just this way about any of them before."

Then they sat very still, and the bird note rose and fell.

"Maybe you'd rather go in," said Mr. Allie as the music began again. Was it hurt in his tone?

"Oh," said Alexina; "no."

Mr. Allie picked up the end of the scarf which had fallen to the steps and put it about her shoulders again. It brought his face around where he could see hers. Was he laughing? Or were his eyes full of reproach? For what? He did not look a bit like a contemporary of anybody's mother. Yet perhaps the mustache that drooped over the mouth did hide—lines, and the lazy eyes sometimes did look tired. Youth has its dreams, vague, secret, yet the Prince of the dreams should be no Mr. Allie with eyes that look weary and tired.

"If I thought," said Mr. Allie softly, oh, so softly; "if I thought that you could care?"

"Oh," said Alexina; "no, I couldn't."

Then she sobbed. It seemed cruel to Mr. Allie.

Then they talked it over, he so gently, she with self-reproach and little chokes against tears. He even held her hand, she too tenderhearted to know how to take it away, and the remorse eating into her heart was forgotten somewhat in the glow, the wonder that this thing, this sad but beautiful thing should come to her. Presently he took her in. The rest of the evening sped hazily. Going home, she talked to Mr. Allie and Molly as in a dream.

Reaching the hotel, and in their own apartment, Alexina dropped down on the sofa, her wrap and fan falling unobserved, and sat, chin on palm, shyly remembering, shrinking a little, and blushing. Suddenly conscious, she turned and found Molly in her doorway between, undressing, and looking at her with knowledge and with laughter. She had forgotten Molly, who had been rummaging and had brought out some olives and crackers and wine. Molly lunched at all unheard-of hours.

Alexina sprang up. She turned white, then scarlet.

"Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck," Jean Garnier would say," Molly began, unloosing her waist and laughing again. "Mais non, mon enfant, you take these things too seriously; it is time you understood. He has said as much to every pretty girl there, one time and another, and to most of their mothers before them, only they all understood. It's very charming in you, of course, right now, and to a man like him, irresistible but, still—Malise—"

Alexina looked at Molly. Then up welled a red that rose to her hair and spread down her throat and over her bare young shoulders. She would never misunderstand again. It is a cruel thing, the hotness of shame. But Molly was staring. Malise was beautiful with her head so proudly up and her cheeks flaming.

There was more to understand. They were a gay crowd, the young people and their elders with whom Molly and Alexina and Georgy were going. Things came to Alexina slowly.

"It isn't just nice," she told Molly anxiously, an evening at the Willy Fields'; "Georgy says you've all been in the pantry

opening more champagne. I'm sure they're acting like there's been enough, and he thinks, too, we ought to go home."

"Good Lord," said Molly. She looked so slender, so childishly innocent standing there where the daughter had drawn her aside, one couldn't believe she had said it. "This is the way you used to go on when you were a child. One would think you'd had your fill of what people ought to do, living with the Blairs."

Alexina looked at her. That Molly should dare allude to that past this way! Then she went and found her mother's wrap and brought it.

"Put it on," she said.

Molly laughed rebelliously, then waveringly.

"We are going home," said the daughter.

Molly essayed to put it on but didn't seem able to find the hooks, and Alexina, hardening her heart, would not help her, but went to find Georgy. He was looking stern himself, and forlorn and young, and the fact that she knew why did not serve to make Alexina happier.

The cars had stopped running and they walked home, leaving hilarity behind them. Molly was acting stubbornly, her tones were injured, and her talk incessant. Alexina couldn't make her stop.

"Jean was just such another clog as Malise," she told Georgy. "He was forever harping about proprieties, and he wore me out trying to make me tie my money up; Malise isn't stingy, I'll say that though she might have been—she's a Blair. Jean shivered over spending money. And after there wasn't any left, he used to sit and cough and cry over his Shakespeare about it. He had thought he was going to be a great poet once, himself, Jean had."

In the light of the setting moon one could see Molly's childlike face; and her voice, with its upward cadence, was more plaintive than the face. The very look and the sound of her were sweet, seductively sweet.

"He liked to believe himself a Gascon too, Jean did, and he loved his Villon too. He wasn't well ever, he couldn't always breathe, Jean couldn't, but v'raiment, he could swagger as well as any."

The night was still, the streets asleep. Nearing the hotel now, the way led past blocks of warehouses and wholesale establishments. Molly stumbled over a grating. Georgy steadied her. They went on, their

"Thank God!" he gasped. "The first shot."

We leaned over the puma. "Quite dead," said Rend. "Through the brain, I think. Ah, but did you see King Coal?" His voice choked with pride.

We turned to look for our friend. A little, draggled, black rag lay on the lawn. Not all black; there was a splash of crimson on the breast. And beside the limp body a baby-girl hid her face in the grass and sobbed for her playmate.



THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

PART II—CHAPTER VIII

IT seemed all at once as if some wilful perversity had seized Molly; at home she was so petulant Alexina dared not cross her, for to anger her was to make her cough; abroad she was gayer than any, almost to recklessness. Celeste, taciturn and secretive, kept herself between mother and daughter insistently, and often the door to Molly's room was locked until afternoon. Mrs. Garnier must not be disturbed, she said.

One of these times, a day in late July, Alexina went out to the Carringfords'. Emily knew of most of the comings and goings of Alexina and her mother, and in her heart probably was envious, though to Alexina she was concerned.

"That picnic of last week is being talked about," she remarked.

Alexina flushed, but she was honest. "It ought to be," she said. Gaiety can tread

close upon the heels of recklessness. But if Molly went, the daughter had to go for this very reason, though she could not tell Emily this. So she spoke of other things. "Do you know anything of Uncle Austen?" she asked. "Is he still taking his meals down-town and sleeping at the house?"

Emily looked conscious. "Yes," she said; "I think he is."

Somehow Alexina felt that Emily not only knew but wanted it to be felt that she knew. Then why hesitate and say only that she thought so?

"How's Garrard?" Alexina asked suddenly. Garrard was young Dr. Ransome. Emily flushed a little but she answered, unconcernedly, "Well enough, I reckon."

On Alexina's return to the hotel, the clerk stopped her in the corridor, looking a little embarrassed under the clear, surprised gaze of the young lady. "It's about a little

matter with Mrs. Garnier; it's been running two months now."

A moment after, as she went on blindly up the stairs, a folded paper in her hand, she understood; understood what Georgy had offered to share with her, what the taciturn secretiveness of Celeste meant. She went in through the parlor to her mother's room, from which of late she had been so much shut out.

"Molly," she said, her voice sounding strange to herself, as she held out the paper open.

Molly, risen on her pillow, looked at it, at her, her eyes growing big. She was frightened, and covered a little, crumpling some letters in her lap. "Don't look at me like that, Malise," she said. "I've some of the money you gave me left—I'll help to pay it."

That she was afraid only because of the bill!

"Oh—" Alexina breathed it rather than uttered it.

Molly, risen from her elbow to sitting posture, was looking at her with big, miserable eyes, her throat, so slight and pretty, swelling with the sobs coming.

But the other came first, and with it came the terror. "Malise, Malise, hold me; hold me. I'm afraid!"

Celeste was out.

Alexina, holding her mother, could reach the bell, and rang it, again, and again. "Oh," she said to the boy when he came; "get a doctor."

"What one?" he asked.

Alexina remembered Dr. Ransome.

Then she sat and fed ice to Molly and tried to keep her still. It is a fearful thing to feel the close, clinging touch of a person we are shrinking from. It was a hot, drowsy afternoon. The clock on the parlor mantel ticked with maddening reiteration. It seemed hours before Dr. Ransome came. Then a moment later Celeste returned. Molly flung her arms out to the old woman.

"He's dead, mammy," she wailed; "Jean's dead; the letters came after you went—and I'm afraid, I'm afraid of it; I'm afraid to die!"

It was to Celeste Molly had to tell it. The daughter listened with remorse, and a sudden resentment toward Celeste, too.

Molly was not going to be better right at once, and Alexina and Dr. Garrard Ransome had many opportunities for talk. She

stopped him in the parlor, as he was going, one morning. It had been on her mind for a long time to ask him something. "It's odd, your name being Ransome," she said. "Mrs. Leroy, who used to live where you do, had been a Miss Ransome."

"She's my Cousin Charlotte," said the young fellow; "that's how my mother came to fancy living where we do, when we came down from Woodford to Louisville. She used to visit the Leroy's there, you see."

"Really?" said Alexina. "They were very good to me."

The blue eyes of the doctor were regarding her intently, but as if thought were concentrated elsewhere. "I wonder if it was you Cousin Charlotte meant? I was down there two winters ago, for a month. They live in Florida, at a place called Aden."

"Yes," said Alexina; "Aden."

"And she asked me about some young girl who, she said, lived across from the cottage. Of course I didn't know."

"I wasn't there then," said Alexina; "I was at school. They were good to me; are they well—and happy?" The eagerness was good to see, so dejected had the girl seemed of late.

"Well—yes—or were when mother last heard. Happy too, I reckon, as it's counted with us poor families used to better things."

"Tell me about them, if you don't mind? They were the best friends I ever had."

"Well," he said, looking rather helpless in the undertaking, "there isn't much to tell. They're getting along. The Captain was bookkeeper for a steamboat line down there, went home every week, but, somehow, a year ago, they dropped him; he's getting old, the Captain is."

"Yes, he must be, the Captain. And Mrs. Leroy?"

"Cousin Charlotte? Well, she's Cousin Charlotte. Some ways she's a real child about things and mighty helpless when it comes to managing. But she never thinks about repining, and it's funny how she'll do whatever King tells her."

"And he?"

"King? Oh, he's all right. Queer fellow though, some ways, imperturbable as a young owl. Best poker player down there, and that's saying something. It's motley, Aden is, like all those small towns since the railroad went through 'em."

The young man happened to glance at Miss Alexina, and saw he had said something wrong. He was the only child of his mother and so knew something of how ladies feel on certain subjects. Yet, on the other hand, Miss Alexina adored Major Rathbone, and the Major's poker record, while possibly of a more local character, was scarcely less celebrated than his guerrilla past. Still, ladies are expected to be inconsistent.

"I shouldn't have told that, I reckon," he remarked; "you all don't see these things as we do. He's a fine fellow, King is. He's a great shot, too," cheerfully; "I went on a week's hunt down in the glades with him. King's all right."

Maybe he was, but it sounded as though he were trifling. "Hasn't he a business?" she asked, with condemning brevity and an emphasis which spoke small opinion of him if he had not.

"I don't know about calling it a business," said William Leroy's cousin; "I know he's about the busiest. It's a big, old place, you know, the grove they own, and he's reclaiming it. There's just one subject he's discursive on and that's the best fertilizer for young orange trees."

Somehow William Leroy did not shine against this background as his well-intending cousin meant he should. "And they're poor, Mrs. Leroy and the Captain?" asked Miss Blair.

"Well," admitted Garrard, "they aren't rich."

The girl sat thinking. "I'm going down there," she said suddenly. "Is there a hotel? There is? Then I'm going to take Molly and go down to see them. There's something I want to tell Mrs. Leroy and the Captain."

"As good a place as any," agreed Dr. Garrard. "I told you at the start Mrs. Garnier must not try a winter here."

"We'll go," declared Alexina, then stopped. Maybe they would not be glad to see her. "But don't mention the possibility if you should be writing," she begged; "don't mention knowing me—please. I—I'd like to discover it all for myself."

After he had gone she went to the piano near the window and, looking out over the warehouse roofs to the river and softly fingering some little melody, sat thinking.

There was a tap, and Alexina turned on the piano stool as Emily Carringford came in. Somehow Emily, so prettily, daintily

charming in her fresh white dress, made Alexina cross. She felt wilted and jaded, and who cared if she did? That her present state was brought about by her own choosing only made her crosser. What was it in Emily's manner? Had she grown more beautiful in a night?

She dropped into a chair and, holding her parasol by either end across her knee, looked over at Alexina on the stool, and, looking, laughed. It was a laugh made of embarrassment and complacency, half shy, half bold.

"Your Uncle Austen asked me last night to marry him," she said.

"Emily—" Alexina sprang from the stool and stood with apprehension rushing to her face in rising color and dilated gaze. "Oh—Emily!"

Was it foreboding in her eyes as they swept Emily's girlish loveliness?

"He didn't seem to mind my being poor," said Emily; "he said it was my practical and praiseworthy way of going to work that made him first— Oh, Alexina," she colored and looked at the other, "he didn't even mind our little house—and mother doing the work."

A sort of rage against Emily seized Alexina. She stamped her foot.

"Oh," she cried, "why shouldn't he the rather go down on his unbending knees in gratitude that you'll even listen? You're twenty-one and he's fifty-one. You've everything, you're lovely. You've your voice, you haven't begun to live yet—oh, I know he's my uncle, and I remember all he's done for me, but I've known him years, Emily, years, and I've never seen Uncle Austen laugh—once."

What on earth has laughing to do with it? Alexina always was queer.

This from Emily. Not that she said it, except in a puzzled, uncomprehending stare at Alexina, the while she returned to what she had come to communicate. "We're going to be married the first day of October," she said; "Mr. Blair has to go East on some business then."

Alexina drew herself together with a laugh. What was the use—yet she could not divest herself of a responsibility.

She looked at Emily who was looking at her. Their eyes met. Alexina looked away.

"Emily," she said, "there's something," it took effort to say it, "something maybe you

haven't thought of. It came to Aunt Harriet, and it comes to everybody, I feel sure. Won't you be cutting yourself off from any right to it?" The red was waving up to Alexina's very hair.

Emily showed no resentment at this implication which both seemed to take for granted, but then she was not following Alexina very closely, her own thoughts being absorbing. "The wedding will have to be in our little house," she said, "so it won't make much difference about the dress; nobody'll be there, but for the rest, I'm going to have some clothes. I told mother and father and grandfather so this morning."

Alexina went over and seized the other's hands as children do. A softer feeling had come over her. Perhaps Emily was doing this thing to help her people. Besides, she and Emily had used to weave wonderful garbs in bygone days, for the wearing to the Prince's ball. To be sure, one had never pictured an Uncle Austen as the possible Prince, but still Emily should have them, if she wanted them.

Alexina's gaze fell upon a flower lying on the floor, which had dropped out of Garrard Ransome's buttonhole. The boy loved flowers as most men from the blue-grass country do, and the cottage yard was a wilderness of them. She had almost forgotten Garrard's share in this. She picked the flower up and handed it to Emily. "Dr. Ransome has been here," she said, feeling treacherous—for the other man, after all, was her uncle.

Emily took it, and laid it against the lace of her parasol, this way and that.

"I've always, as far back as I can remember, meant to be somebody, something," said Emily. She said it without emotion, as one states a fact. Then she rose and picked up her glove. "Sometimes I've thrown my arms out and felt I could scream, it all seemed so poor and crowded and hateful to me," which was large unburdening of self for Emily. Then she went. At the door she laid the flower on a chair.

The three weeks of Molly's illness brought it to the end of August and, as she convalesced, Alexina began to plan for Aden. In the midst of her preparations the Major and Harriet returned.

She went out to the house the morning of their arrival. The luggage was being unloaded at the curb as she reached the gate.

Hearing voices as she stepped on the porch, Alexina looked in at the parlor window. Harriet, her hat yet on, was bending her head that little Stevie, urged by his mother, might kiss her. The baby was no shy about it than the woman, yet the woman smiled as the baby's lips touched her face.

As she rose she saw Alexina and came to the door to meet her. She kissed the girl almost with embarrassment, yet kept hold of her hands, and suddenly her eyes filled with something she tried to laugh away.

"I had your letter," she was saying, "and resent it, too, that you are going, and so does Stephen." Her face changed, her voice grew hesitant, hurried. "He's never going to be better than now"—was it a sob?—"but since I may have him, may keep him, and he is willing now to live so for me, though not at first, not at first— Oh, Alexina, it has been bitter!"

Alexina followed her into the parlor. The Major was there in a wheeled chair, the babies afar off, refusing to obey the maternal pokes and pushes to go to him, and regarding him and his wheeled affair with furtive, wide-eyed suspicion. The eyes of the Major were full of the humor of it.

"Now had I been a gamboling satyr on hoofs they would have accepted me at once," he assured Alexina; "it's this mingling of the familiar with the unnatural—"

He was holding the girl's hand while he spoke and looking up keenly at the pretty, tired face. There had been enough in her letters for them to have divined something of her trouble.

"To some it comes early, to others late, Alexina," he said quite gently. He had noted the signs—the violet shadows beneath the baffled young eyes, the hint of the tragedy in their depths.

Alexina sat down suddenly and, leaning her face on the arm of the wheeled chair, began to cry. Not that she meant to do it at all.

Time was when Harriet would have been at a loss, even now she was embarrassed, though she hovered over the girl, anxious and solicitous, and even touched the pretty wavy hair with her hand.

"Let her alone, let her cry it out," said the Major.

Alexina, groping for his hand, held to it like a very child and cried on.

PART III

"Joy will be part of the Kingdom of God."
RENAN.

CHAPTER I

Immediately after the wedding Alexina and Molly went South. Molly turned petulant at sight of Aden and Alexina could not blame her; indeed, she and Celeste were of a mind with her as they drove from the station to the hotel. The horses ploughed through loose, grayish sand, the sidewalks along the street, ostensibly the business thoroughfares, were of board, not in the best of repair, and the sky-line of the street was varied according as the frame stores had or did not have a sham front simulating a second story. Men sat on tilted chairs beneath awnings along the way and stared at the occupants of the carriage as it passed. It was mid-afternoon, which, in Aden, seemed to be a glaring, shadeless hour and, but for these occasional somnolent stagers, a deserted one. Yet people lived here, existed, spent their lives in this crude, poor hideousness, this mean newness; the Leroys lived here! And that their son would let them, would remain himself!

"What did we come for anyhow?" queried Molly. "The world is full of charming places. You do adopt the queerest notions, Malise."

Malise sat convicted. It had sounded so alluring—so suggestive of charm and languor; the very name of Aden had breathed a sort of magic. And she had come, too, buoyed up by a large and epic idea of restitution. How foolish, how young, how almost insulting from the Leroys' standpoint it suddenly seemed.

"We spent two winters in Italy, Jean and I, and one in Algiers," Molly was saying reflectively. "Heavens, Malise, they're building that house on stilts, right over a sink hole of tin cans."

For the matter of that there were tin cans everywhere; it was most depressing.

"Even Louisville was better than this," said Molly grudgingly; "don't look so resigned, Malise; it's not becoming."

They turned a corner and the driver stopped before a long two-storied building, painted white, which proved to be the hotel. It stood up from the street on wooden posts, the space between latticed. A railed gallery ran across the front and steps ascended midway of its length. Two giant live-oaks

flanked the building either end, the wooden sidewalk cut out to encircle their great roots, and, while hand-bills and placards were tacked up and down the rugged, seamy trunks, yet gray moss dropped from the branches and swept the gallery posts. The building looked roomy, old-fashioned and reposeful, and Alexina's spirits rose. She gathered up the wraps, Celeste the satchels—no one ever looked to Molly to gather up anything—and they went in.

The place seemed deserted and asleep, but just inside the doorway, where the hall broadened into an office, a man stood looking through a pile of newspapers. His clothes were black and his vest clerical; below its edge hung a small gold cross; he turned politely, then said he would go and find some one.

"Dear me," said Molly, brightening, "he's handsome."

Two days after they were settled in comfortable rooms overlooking the hotel grounds. A slope down to a small lake boasted some gnarled old live-oaks and pines, and one side was set out with a young orange grove. Across the lake one could see several more or less pretentious new houses built around the shore. The breeze tasted of pine and Molly had slept a night through without coughing.

"But, Heavens!" she complained, the second afternoon, lolling back in a wooden arm-chair on the hotel gallery; "isn't there anything to do?"

Alexina and the young man in clerical garb were her audience. He was the Reverend Harrison Henderson and had charge of the Episcopal Church of Aden and lived at the hotel. He seemed a definite and earnest man. His blond profile was strong. It was a rather immobile face perhaps, but it lighted with very evident pleasure as he answered Mrs. Garnier.

"How would you like to drive out to Nancy?" he proposed; "it's quite an affair for a lake down here. There's a young fellow there who rents sail-boats."

"Charming," agreed Molly, sitting up; "you have ideas; you can't have been here long."

Mr. Harrison smiled, though it was an acknowledging rather than a mirthful smile. Life is too earnest for mere laughter, but his zeal to serve Mrs. Garnier was not to be doubted.

"What do you say, Miss Blair?" he asked, turning to that young person.

"Who—I?" Alexina had been leaning forward with her elbow on the gallery railing, her eyes looking off to a line of pines against the sky, wondering how she could find out about the Leroy's, and if she really wanted to. She came back to the veranda and the present. "I think it would be charming, too," she replied.

"Then we'll go right away, so as to see the sunset," he said, and rose; "you will need wraps for Mrs. Garnier." Somehow a man never thinks the other woman will need anything.

He spoke briskly and went off down the plank sidewalk toward town with a swing, for the day was fair, the air soft, and the blood in the Reverend Henderson, despite the dogmatic taint in it, was red and young.

Out at Lake Nancy Osceola, a young fellow in flannel shirt, knickerbockers, and canvas shoes, was scanning the shore from a wooden pier which ran out the extent of shallow water, having just made fast the sail-boat rising and falling with the swell at the pier's end.

A grove of well grown orange trees stretched up the slope from the water, the trees heavy with fruit and looking sturdy and well cared for. To the right stood the frame packing sheds, and beyond, amid higher foliage against the cerulean sky, showed a house roof.

But the young fellow on the pier was gazing in the other direction, where, through the straight vistas of the grove, a carriage was being driven under the trees, the top sweeping the fruit-laden branches, then he halted as he started in the pier, but a negro man digging among the trees had dropped his spade and was running up. The carriage stopped and the young minister of the Aden Episcopal Church got out. Naturally, it was to be supposed, it was some person with no more common sense.

But there were others than the Reverend Mr. Henderson descending—two ladies, some party from the hotel come for a sail, probably.

It was the duty of colored Pete to go with sailing parties, but there was work that he should finish this afternoon. The old darkey was backing the horse. The minister and the ladies were approaching.

The young fellow was just in from a sail, having been down to the sedge land with his gun, but he would go again. He gave a call. "It's all right, Pete; go on with the ditching."

His eyes were indifferent as he watched them approach, though their glance was straight and clear and keen. Suddenly the look changed, intensified, and the young fellow's shoulders squared.

The minister led the way, talking with the pretty, slight woman who stopped with protest each step as her feet went down in sand. Behind them came a jaunty-looking young girl with light-footed carriage. The wind was ruffling and tossing her hair and she held to her hat as she stopped under the orange trees to look upon the prospect.

But the eyes watching her did not turn, knowing the scene on which she was gazing. It was Lake Nancy, long and lizard-like—its sapphire water shimmering beneath the breeze—stretching westward between curving, twisting, inletted shores, fringed near at hand with the bright green of young oranges and lemons and further on by the darker live-oak and pine, while on the opposite side the line of forest stretched heavy and somber, trailing gray moss hoariness into Nancy's lapping waves.

And while the girl gazed on Nancy the young man watched her with a curious intentness but with no doubt. Then he walked in the length of the pier to meet them, and as the girl's eyes came around to him she changed to a startled pallor, white as her serge gown, and her eyes dilated, then into them came eagerness.

Except for a tightening pull on muscles about nose and mouth the young fellow stood impassive.

The color rushed back into the girl's face. The young man had turned and was shaking hands with Mr. Henderson who was mentioning names, but the girl had her back to them and was studying the outstretch: her head was high.

When she turned again Mr. Henderson was carefully piloting the other lady into the boat. "Malise," that lady was calling. Malise, forced by this to come and be helped in, found herself in the stern. But her throat, because of a choked-back sob, hurt, and a vast homesickness and sense-of futility was upon her.

When presently she could look up and around, the little craft was skimming out

across the lake to deep water where it shifted and flew westward into the dying afternoon.

There were billowy puffs of clouds high above, softly flushing into rose with a golden fleeciness to their edges. Her mother's talk and dulcet-toned laughter reached the girl, punctuated with the serious accents of Mr. Henderson. The two were sitting where the seats, running about, came together at the bow, and he, with an elbow on the rail, was looking at Molly. Such a wistful, pretty child she looked in her white canvas dress, with her wind-blown, gauzy veil fluttering from her hat.

Alexina's eyes were fixed on them, but she was conscious, too, of a gaze on her, which for all her hot pride and hurt she could not look around and meet. Once, when the sail was shifting and she knew the eyes would, perforce, be concerned therewith, she stole a hurried survey and saw a well-knit figure, quick in its movements, the muscles playing beneath the flannel shirt. A discarded coat was upon the seat near her.

"Down, please," came in cool, deliberate tones from the owner of the coat and the gaze. The head of the girl went down, while the sail swung about. The boat dipped, righted, then flew ahead, following the curving shores of the lake.

The very air seemed flushing, the shimmering water had a thousand tints, the shores slipping by breathed out odors of mold and leaf and vine. The western sky was triumphing, clouds of purple and of crimson lifting one above another about a golden center, and they in the boat were speeding into the glory, the very rosiness of the air seemed stealing down upon them and enveloping them; the sense of *avoirdupois*, of gravitation, was lost; one felt winged, uplifted, it was good all at once, it was good to live, to be.

The eyes and the gaze were on her again, she felt them and turned suddenly and faced them. The look she met was deep and warm, but it changed, holding hers, grew cool, enigmatical, impersonal. Did he not know her then, or did he not want to know her?

This time tears of hurt and pride rushed to her eyes. He was watching, but she could not get her eyes away, even with those hateful tears welling.

The sail shifted, for no reason apparently. "Down, please," he commanded. But as

the boat dipped, shook itself, righted again, and flew on through the rosy light, his head came up near hers and his voice, in the old, boyish way, said:

"Really?"

Sudden light shone through the tears in the girl's eyes. Molly would have wrung her hands with an artist's anguish, this was the place for coquetry!

"I thought you didn't want to know me and I was hurt," said Alexina.

"It was yours to know first," said William Leroy stoutly, but his eyes were laughing.

"Oh," said Alexina doubtfully, "why, yes; perhaps it was," and then she laughed too, gaily.

CHAPTER II

As Molly, Alexina, and Mr. Henderson sat on the front gallery of the hotel the next morning, they were joined by one Mr. Thompson Jonas, a lawyer of Aden, who lived above his office and took his meals at the hotel.

Mr. Jonas was small, wiry, and muscular, of Georgia stock, with a fierce little air and a fierce mustache, and quick, bright blue eyes, never still. He had sprung to the aid of Molly and Alexina one morning, and flung a door open as they passed from the dining-room, and speedily they were all good friends.

It was characteristic of him that he should have flung the door back, not merely opened it. There was something of homage in the act. Within the body of the little man was the chivalrous spirit of a Chevalier Bayard, a *Cœur de Lion*. The big soul of Mr. Jonas was imprisoned in his pigmy person as the spirit of the genii in the casket.

Mr. Jonas was a Nimrod, and even now stood in hunting accoutrements, seeming rather to have been shaken into his natty leggings, than they to have been drawn onto him. There was a flare and dip to his wide soft hat and a jaunty fling to his knotted tie. His dog, a Gordon setter bitch, sat on her haunches by him as he stood, his fingers playing with her silky ears.

"Now, you'd better come go with me, Henderson," he was urging; "the buggy's here at the door. You need it—you need this sort of thing more."

"It's a busy day with me, thank you," answered the Reverend Henderson, a little coldly. For this Mr. Jonas was a man of no church. His faith, he had frequently

assured the young clergyman, would long ago have died for breathing space in any creed he yet had met with.

"When you're older you'll understand better what I mean, my dear boy," the little man had in good part and cheerfulness assured the other; "come round and use my books any time you like."

For the soul of Mr. Jonas enthused—or convinced its owner that it did—over Confucius and further reveled in the belief that it delved in occult knowledge; it also led him to place the volumes of the early Fathers on his book-shelves and the literature of the Saints and of Kant and Comte and Swedenborg; it conducted its owner to the feet of Emerson and Thoreau; it made him talk Darwinism. Jesus Christ and Plato, Mr. Jonas loved to say, made up his ideal philosophy.

Mr. Henderson, on the other hand, spoke of church buildings in Aden other than his own as assembling places. It was inevitable he did not give his approval to Mr. Jonas. His feeling against the little man even made him enumerate the occupations ahead for the day, as if it was a sort of avowal of the faith to thus declare them.

"It's a busy day with me, thank you. I have a feast day service and a guild meeting, besides my parochial duties and a vestry meeting for the evening."

"Dear me," said Molly, looking at him, "to be sure—I'd forgotten you're a minister."

The young man looked up, instant self-arrangement in his face for permitting it to be forgotten.

"When do you have service?" Molly was saying. "We must come over—Malise and I."

He told her gravely.

Mr. Jonas was standing against the gallery railing, rising and falling on his neat little toes, the setter's eyes following his every movement. He was facing Mrs. Garnier and her daughter, looking from the mother, with her red brown hair and shadowy lashes, to the girl, quite lovely also, when she smiled in this sweet, sudden way up at him. She had nice hair too, something the color of wild honey.

"Charming women, charming women;" he was summing them up; yet could Mr. Jonas have called to mind any women, the old or young, the forlorn or charming, who had not moved him to chivalric emotion in some form?

Alexina was looking up the street and as Mr. Jonas turned, a wagonette, drawn by two big iron-gray mules, swung around the corner, a glitter of brass and a hint of red about the harness. A young fellow on the front seat was driving; a lady sat behind.

"The finest boy and best shot in Jasmine County," said Mr. Jonas, starting forward as the mules were reined up at the hotel entrance, "and the foolishest, most profoundly wise mother."

Alexina was going forward too. "We—that is—I—know them," she told him; "they are old friends—the Leroy's."

For she had known Charlotte in a moment.

A darky boy lounging about came to take the mules and King sprang his mother out, as lightly as ever a girl would spring, and brought her up the steps to Alexina.

Charlotte's embrace was eager and ardent; then she cried a little with her face against the girl's shoulder.

"For my youth," she said the next instant, lifting her head and smiling at the girl. "I'm almost a middle-aged woman, little Mab; I'm nearly forty-five and I don't want to be."

Vivacity, as of old, dwelt in Charlotte's face and animated her lively movements, but her brilliant eyes were somewhat sunken, as happens with women of marked features and dashing beauty; the skin was growing sallow too, and as the cheeks and temples drew in, the features stood large.

"I don't know how to grow old," said Charlotte, and truthfully, "I don't know how to let go. I haven't the resourcefulness, or quiet, or repose, for an old woman."

Always, way back as Charlotte Ransome, she had loved the showy, and she loved it still, as evidenced by the scarlet ribbon from which her fan hung, and the flowered muslin, showing the hand of village dressmaking. But she bore herself with the smiling pleasure of a child in them.

Willy joined them. He had been talking with Mr. Jonas, and evidently had declined the expedition too, for the little man, calling to the setter, went off grumbling and upbraiding the lot of them.

"We came early to avoid the heat," Charlotte explained as they went to join Molly and Mr. Henderson.

Molly's eyes swept Mrs. Leroy's youthful fineries wonderingly, curiously. It was no

credit to Molly that her sixth sense lay in an instinctive selection of the appropriate in the beautiful. She wondered much like a child wonders over the mysterious, at what she, more often than not, saw on others.

She lolled back now in her simple dress, of which Alexina had reason to know the cost, and she lolled indifferently—Celeste or some one would press out the rumples when need be—then she held a pretty hand out to Charlotte.

But Mrs. Leroy, the greetings over, spread her draperies with some care and absorption as she sat down. She was another type of helpless person, the reverse of Molly, with a carping sense of responsibility.

Molly's gaze followed her concern with lazy interest in which lurked laughter, for the dress upon which the care was bestowed was so—well—

Alexina's face grew hot; she hated Molly, whose every thought she was reading; and so, by the girl's arrangement, they fell into two groups, Molly and the men making one, King William perched on the railing of the gallery, and Alexina and Mrs. Leroy the other, drawn a little apart. There was so much to say.

"We see the Kentucky papers," Charlotte told Alexina; "so I know of most of the happenings." She drew a little breath. "And Austen Blair is married?"

"Yes," said Alexina, "just before we came."

Charlotte was regarding her like a child with a secret trembling on its lips. "I was engaged to him once, Alexina, and we broke it." Light from many sides began to break in upon Alexina.

"Why," she said; "Mrs. Leroy!"

"It's odd, isn't it?" said Charlotte. "He was the only man ever caring for me that I never subjugated—except Willy here—" Her voice brightened, while she nodded, in her near-sighted way, at Mr. Henderson. "As for him, he's ruled me and browbeat me all his life." And Charlotte smiled contentedly at the minister.

Alexina reached out and, with a passionate sort of protectiveness, took hold of the be-ringed hand wielding a fan with vivacity and sprightliness.

"I wish we could have given him more advantages," Mrs. Leroy was continuing, "but he's had to plan for us somehow, instead. I remember he wasn't eleven years old, though

it seemed natural enough he should be doing it at the time, when we came over from St. Louis to Louisville without his father, and Willy had to buy the tickets and check the trunks. I suppose I ought to have realized it, but I never had done such things in my life, and I lost my purse in the depot, I remember, and a gentleman found it, and so Willy took hold.

"We sent him into town here, after we came to Aden, to the Presbyterian minister, who taught him. He wanted to go to college, not that he'd admit it now. Then as soon as he was any size he began at his father about reclaiming the grove. That is, Willy planned and Georges listened. Willy'd got an idea from Mr. Jonas that the railroad was coming through some day, just as it has, but it's been a long pull and a wait, for this is the first full yield for his trees. He's been offered seven thousand for the crop as it hangs, but the mortgage is eight thousand on the place, which went for fertilizing and ditching and sheds, and living, you know, so Willy is holding for eight thousand and Mr. Jonas is urging for nine."

Charlotte's pride in these statements was beaming.

"As soon as the grove proves itself, the place will sell for several times its old value, and we're going back to Kentucky—to Woodford. Willy wants to buy back my father's farm—not that he'll let me say that he does, he's so afraid of admitting anything, but when he was nineteen, three years ago, he had the measles—wasn't it dear and comical, like he was a child again—and he let me hold his hand, in the dark room, you know, and we talked about it, when we would go back."

The girl was patting Charlotte's hand softly and winking back tears while she laughed. Why tears? She herself had no idea.

Mrs. Leroy had a thousand questions to ask, she said, but somehow she never got to them.

"Dear me," she said presently, "we have to go and I've talked of nothing but my own affairs. In my solitude down here I've grown a shameless egotist."

As if she had been ever anything else, the unconscious soul!

"But to be with one of my own sex—some one linked with the past, too—is extinction. There's so much a woman can't

talk of with men, they have such different ways of seeing things, and let her love her men folk never so dearly, if there's none of her own sex around, a woman's lonesome, Alexina."

"Yes," said Alexina; "she is." But she said it absently, for she was conscious of King William's gaze being upon her. She looked up laughing, yet a little confused, for his look was warm.

He slipped along the railing, leaving Mrs. Garnier and the minister chatting. In this blue serge suit and straw hat he looked very like the King William of long ago, dark, keen, and impatient.

"What do you think of it—Aden?" he asked.

"I like it," said Alexina; "somehow as soon as you are in a thing the scene changes to out of doors; it used to be Indians on the common, or Crusoe in the yard, back there in Louisville."

"You began by saying you liked it," he reminded her. Did he think to tease? His eyes were naughty. Here was a zest; this was no Georgy.

"And I do," she said, standing to it. "I do like it."

Was he always laughing at people, this William Leroy?

"They are coming to spend a day with us this week, Alexina and her mother," Mrs. Leroy here told her son, at which for all the imperturbability of his countenance, Alexina was conscious of something a little less happy about the son.

"They're very good to come," he responded. The tone might be called guarded.

Certain recollections were crowding upon Alexina. Mrs. Leroy's management, her housekeeping, even to a child's comprehension, has been palpably erratic and unexpected.

The girl understood his masculine helplessness. Hers were the eyes that laughed now.

"I've set the table in your house before," she informed him, "while you made toast."

His countenance cleared. He met her gaze solemnly. "It's a bargain," he said; "what day, mother?"

That night Alexina was chatting with Mr. Jonas. She liked him. "You said this morning," she reminded him, "that Mrs. Leroy was the wisest, foolishest mother—what did you mean?"

"Just that," said Mr. Jonas; "hasn't her very incompetency made the boy?"

CHAPTER III

For the next three days Mr. Henderson avoided them. He spoke in the hall or dining-room, to be sure, but joined them no more in plans or on the gallery.

And Molly turned petulant. Why had they ever come to Aden, she moaned. "Can't you propose something, Malise?" she besought.

Alexina, endeavoring to write letters, felt tired, having been up at Molly's call a dozen times in the night.

"We're going to spend to-morrow with Mrs. Leroy," she reminded her mother.

"She looks like Mrs. Malaprop," said Molly crossly.

The daughter's face flushed. Youth is rawly sensitive to ridicule of its friends. Besides, what would they find at Lake Nancy? It would be poor, she expected that, and it might be—pitiful? Not to her, not to her, but Molly was so unable to see behind things; if a thing was poor to Molly it was only poor, and she said so. Alexina hoped her mother wouldn't go.

But when Friday came Molly, in feverish, restless state, was ready for anything. She even brightened up over it, and it was Alexina who was petulant, and put on one dress and took it off, and tried another, even with William Leroy down-stairs in the wagonette, waiting.

But she felt better as she came out into the sunshine. The dress she had finally decided on seemed to settle on her into sudden jauntiness.

William Leroy shook hands. There was a comfortable sense of humor about him.

"It's fair to divide families into component parts on occasions," he stated, and put Alexina in a place by his own and Molly behind. Molly pouted.

"And, besides, we are going to drop Henderson at a sick parishioner's on the way," he said, with a naughty glance at her. "I met him starting to the livery stable just now and stopped him."

Molly's face cleared. She met his eyes with insouciance, but, somehow, one felt all at once that she liked him better.

Mr. Henderson came out with a satchel and climbed in. He looked stern and uninviting, Alexina thought, but the note of

Molly's random remarkings promptly brightened. Willy flicked the whip above the big gray span and off they trotted across town, westward.

The morning was keen enough so that the sun's warmth was pleasant and quickened the blood. Aden was left behind. Here and there on the outskirts, frame-houses, crudely and hideously cheap, were building; land everywhere was being cleared, the felled trees lying about, the whirl of a portable sawmill telling their destiny, while burning stumps filled the air with creosote pungency.

Then the despoilments of progress were left behind and the untouched pine woods closed about them, and trees rose tall, straight, twigless, to where a never-ceasing murmur soured, and the light came sifting, speckled, and flickering through the gloom, upon the sandy ground and scrub palmetto beneath.

Alexina breathed deep. It was quiet and peaceful and solemn.

"Isn't it?" said Willy sociably.

She looked up; she hadn't spoken. The trees thinned, grew sparse, and the road came out into the open. A mile further on they entered a belt of hummock land, a wild growth of live-oak, cypress, magnolia, thicketed, intertwisted, rank. Gray moss trailed and swept their faces as they passed under, vines clambered and swung and festooned, gophers crawled out of the path, and a gleaming snake slid across the road and into the palmetto undergrowth.

He was looking at her as they came out, she flushed and ecstatic.

"But wait," he said, "until I show it to you after a while, in bloom."

Just beyond the hummock he drew rein at a clearing before an unpainted frame-house, even cheaper and more hideous than the most. Mr Henderson got out, Willy handing the satchel after him.

"It's a death-bed," he said under his breath to the two, as the minister went toward the house; "that's the pitiful part of it down here, people taking all they've got to get here, to die."

"Don't—don't tell about it," said Molly sharply.

King Leroy touched the mules and they went on. A little later Alexina felt Molly's hand upon her. "Come back with me, Malise," she begged. Her face looked drawn and gray.

"But we're there," explained King, and a minute after turned in at an old iron gate, flanked by two ancient live-oaks. An osage hedge, cut back upon old woody stock, stretched about the place either side from the gate. Within, the driveway made a sweep off towards buildings in the rear, while a shell path led up to the house, which was of frame, wide, with porches across the front, up-stairs and down. Bermuda grass covered the sandy surface of the yard, which was large and sloped back towards the lake, visible through the grove. Here and there a banana plant reared its ragged luxuriance and a stunted palm or two; there was an old rustic seat beneath a gnarled wild orange tree.

As King helped them out, Charlotte appeared and came animatedly down the path between the borders of crepe myrtle. Alexina ran ahead to meet her. The girl's hands were quite cold. Mrs. Leroy's white dress, relic of bygone fashion, fluttered with rose-colored ribbons, and suddenly Alexina seemed to see a wide old cottage in a shrub-grown yard, and on its porch a lady in a gauzy dress with rosy ribbons, gathering a little child into her lap.

The girl threw her arms about this Charlotte in the old white dress, and then, because her eyes were full of foolish tears, ran on, for the Captain was on the porch, in a cane arm-chair, a line of blue smoke trailing up from the cigar in his fingers. Laughing and breathless she went up the steps and their eyes met, never a word spoke either, but the hand of the man closed on the girl's and rested there until the others came up.

"Willy wouldn't let me do a thing about your coming, Alexina," Mrs. Leroy began, as she reached them, "he said he'd tend to it himself. He wouldn't let me give a direction. He's fussy sometimes and notionate. It's like the time when the surveyors were staying with us, and Mandy set some dishes on a chair. I'd already told him she didn't know how to clear a table for dessert and he said I ought to have taught her."

The girl's eyes danced. "You're all of you the same, the very same; not one of the three has changed."

Charlotte beamed. She took it with undisguised pleasure that she had not changed.

Willy came round the house. He had taken the mules to the stable. "I'm holding you to that bargain," he reminded Alexina.

Molly looked bored. Such things were only playful and interesting as she was part of them. Then she said she was tired. She evidently had no mind for a morning with Mrs. Leroy.

"You shall go up and lie down in my room," said Charlotte.

The three women went in. The hall dividing the house was wide and high, its floor of boards a foot wide, and bare but for a central strip of carpet. An old mahogany hat-tree stood against one wall, a mahogany sofa against the other, with straight backed chairs flanking both. It was all laboriously clean and primly bare. The rooms up-stairs were big, with old mahogany furniture set squarely about them.

"They didn't want me to bring the furniture, Willy and his father, when we came," Charlotte told Alexina; "it cost more to get it here than to buy new. But I didn't want new; I wanted this."

Everything was innocent of covers or hangings, nor were there any pictures. She explained this.

"I don't know how to drive nails," she told them, "and Willy and the Captain don't care. Willy had the house papered this fall in case of people coming about buying, and the papering men took the nails out of the walls and Willy won't bother to put them in. They're all in here."

Charlotte didn't mean the nails; she threw open a closet door and ancestral Ransomes, neatly set against the walls, peered out of the dark.

Alexina put a hand over Charlotte's on the door-knob. Molly yawned.

"It seems chilly here in my room," said Charlotte; "the sun isn't round this side yet. Put your hats on the bed and Mrs. Garnier shall go lie on Willy's sofa."

They followed her across the hall. "He has his bed and things in there," she explained, nodding towards an adjoining room, "and he keeps his books and such in here."

On the floor, otherwise uncarpeted, lay a bear skin. There was a sofa against the wall and a plain deal table in the center of the room, piled with papers, books and pipes, about a lamp. There were some chairs, a gun rack, antlers, an alligator skin, and some colored prints of English hunting scenes on the walls, and an old-fashioned brass mounted cellarette, hung in an angle. The south window looked out across the grove upon

Nancy; between the two east windows stood an old secretary book-case.

Charlotte suggesting that Mrs. Garnier put on a wrapper, the two went back to her bedroom. Alexina stood hesitating. She felt a sense of surreptitiousness and embarrassment, and then took a step to the book-case—any one might do that much—and read the titles of the books.

About orange culture and fertilizing these first seemed to be, and those next were concerned with the breeding of stock. They meant Woodford and the future, probably. She skipped to another shelf. Buckle's Introduction to the History of Civilization, Hallam's Middle Ages, Wealth of Nations, Wilhelm Meister, Poems of Heinrich Heine, several volumes of Spencer and Huxley, Slaves of Paris, Lecoq the Detective, File No. 118, The Lerouge Case, The Scotland Yard Detective, Carlyle's French Revolution, Taxidermitology, Renan's Life of Jesus, Pole on Whist, Hoyle, Tom Sawyer, Past and Present, Pickwick Papers, Herodotus, an unbroken shelf of Walter Scott, A Pair of Blue Eyes, Cousin Pons, Drainage, Pendennis, Small Fruit Culture.

Why, here was a world, within these glass doors, she did not know. Yet she had read diligently among Uncle Austen's books. She looked back in memory over his shelves. Macaulay, yes, Uncle Austen cared so essentially for Macaulay, and for Bancroft and Prescott, and Whittier and Lowell. There were the standards in fiction and poetry in well bound sets. Uncle Austen himself admired Alexander Pope and Franklin's Autobiography; he liked Charles Reade's novels, too, bearing on institutional reforms—

Here Mrs. Leroy and Molly came back, Molly in a white wrapper and Charlotte bearing a pillow and a silk quilt.

"Willy's calling," she told Alexina; "he wants you."

Willy was at the foot of the stairs. He waited for her to get down, watching her hand on the banister. The wood was dark and the hand was white and slender. Then he held out a big checked apron. She walked into it and looked over her shoulder while he tied the strings behind.

It takes time to set a table, when neither is just certain where things are to be found. Hunting together in sideboard, cupboards, and on pantry shelves brings about a feeling

of knowing each other very well. There was so much, too, to talk about.

"Do you remember—" It was Alexina pausing with a goblet in hand to ask it.

"Have you forgot—" Willy, producing a carving set, would rejoin.

Presently she paused. Twice she started to speak, hesitated, then got it out. "There's a thing I want to ask you, or rather want to say—" Her voice was a little tremulous and breathless.

"Yes," said Willy.

"You—you remember—that is, you haven't forgot the 'King William?'"

She was looking away from him and he looking at her, his mouth odd, yet smiling, too. She was an honest and a pleasant thing to look upon. "Why, yes," he told her; "as well as I remember the raft we put off on from the desert island and the plains, back of the stable—have you forgotten the trackless plains where we sat

down to starve in the snow, with never a sign of deer or buffalo for days, or even a thing on wing? We'd just lighted on Hiawatha those days. There was an Indian, by the way, came up from the grass water yesterday and brought us venison for to-day."

It was evident Willy did not mean to let her return to the subject.

Presently Alexina untied the apron. "I must see your mother some," she said.

"But she won't want you," declared his mother's son; "she's overjoyed to think you're with me. She thinks there is something deficient in her son; she insists I've never spoken to a girl since we left you in Louisville. Besides, she's in the kitchen; hear her out there now, all fluttered herself and fluttering Aunt Mandy."

But Alexina would go. "I must call Molly in time for dinner," she insisted.

(To be continued)

THE NEW LOVE

BY

WITTER BYNNER

CONTENT beneath a lulling tree
That I and crickets know,
To keep awake, I count the birds;
They twitter to and fro.

You think no girl could ever love
So dull a lad as this?
You never saw a neater girl
Than one I us'd to kiss.

And yet I did not dally long,
Nor want her here with me:
The sun and I are keeping tryst,
And she would make us three!

She sank slowly upon her knees, wild happiness in her face—wild tears pouring down it.

"She has seen her!" And she stretched forth yearning arms towards the little figure of Judith, who lay quiet upon the sofa in the corner. "Your little girl has seen her—and I dare not waken her. She is asleep."

Jane stood by the sofa—looking down. When she bent and touched the child the stillness of the room seemed to have got into her blood.

"No," she said, quivering, but with a strange simplicity. "No! not asleep! It was this way with her Aunt Hester."

THE END

THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

PART III—CHAPTER IV

NOW William Leroy supposed Mrs. Garnier to be in his mother's room. A moment later he followed Alexina up the stairs, meaning to get something out of his desk which he wished to show her. He was a most direct youth considering that he was, by his mother's confession, a timorous one. There was an odd little smile about his mouth perhaps because all things looked pleasant right now.

His nature was practical rather than sanguine and built in general only on things achieved, but to-day the fruit was hanging golden on the trees and the grove was one of the few new ones in bearing. He had anticipated the railroad by several years in planting, and now the grove and house were going to bring a figure larger than he had ever hoped for.

As the Israelites yearned for Canaan, he was looking towards the pastoral lands of Kentucky. To-day, for the once, he would let this new buoyancy, this unanalyzed optimism, run warm in his blood; why not? He was young, he was strong, he was master of his circumstances for the first time.

He went up the steps lightly, springily, with a sort of exuberant joy in the mere action. His canvas shoes made no sound.

The stairs landed him at his own door. He brought up short.

Alexina was standing midway of the threshold; he thought he heard a sob.

She turned hurriedly, her hands outspread across the doorway as by instinct.

"Don't," she begged; "please go away." Then as he wheeled, "No, don't; wait—" She swallowed before she could speak.

"It's Molly," she said. "Can you send us back to town; she's—she's—"

"Not well," the daughter was trying to say. The boy's straightforward eyes were fixed on hers inquiringly.

"What's the use; I can't lie," she broke down miserably. "I ought not to have come with her." Her arms dropped from across the doorway. In all perplexity he was waiting. He had a glimpse of Molly within, drooping against the table, and her eyes regarding them with a kind of furtive fear.

His hunting flask from out the cellarette was there on the table.

The girl was speaking with effort. "I'm sorry; she must have felt bad and found it."

She suddenly hid her face in her hands against the casement.

That roused him. He felt dazed. It needed a woman here to feel the way.

"I'll get mother," he said.

"Oh," begged the girl and quivered, "can't we get back to town without? Must she know?"

King was growing himself again. "Why," he said, "of all people, yes, mother."

He went down the steps two at a time. There was no sensitive apprehension in his manner when he brought her back, as there was often concerning his mother; he knew her strength as well as her incompetencies.

She came straight up and hardly noticed Alexina as she passed but went on to Molly, whose eyes, full of shame and fear, were dully watching the scene.

Charlotte put her arms about her, drew her to the sofa, and sat by her. "Poor dear," she said, "poor dear."

Molly drooped, trembled, then turned and clung to her crying piteously, "You're sorry for me. I did it because I'm afraid. He said they all come down here to die. Malise don't know, she don't understand, she's hard."

"You go down to your dinner, Alexina," said Charlotte; "it's waiting. Oh, yes, yes; you will go." There was finality in the tone, very different from Charlotte's usually indefinite directions. "Leave your mother to me; oh, you needn't tell me anything about it, I know. And take that hardness out of your face, Alexina; it's your own fault if you let this embitter you; it's ourselves that let things spoil our lives, not the things. I'll tell you something that you may believe I know, something that I told Willy at a time his arrogance seemed to need the knowledge. My father—my great, splendid, handsome father—all my life was—this way. But he came straight home to my mother, and so she kept him from worse, and held him to his place in the world. Keep on loving them; it's the only way. Many a time we've all cried together like babies, father and mother and I, by her sofa—"

"Willy," called Charlotte. The boy ran up from below. "Take Alexina down to her dinner and afterwards take her out of doors. No; you're not going back to the hotel; not to-night. Willy can send Peter in for your woman and your things, for you're going to stay here till she's better and you see this thing differently."

That evening King and Alexina sat on the edge of the pier, the water lapping the posts beneath their swinging feet. He was peel-

ing joints of sugar cane and handing her sections on the blade of his knife, she trying to convince herself that they were as toothsome as he insisted they were. He could idle like a child.

But the girl's mind was back there in the house. "According to your mother," she was saying, "there's got to be affection back of the doing of a duty." Poor child, she was putting it so guardedly, so impersonally, she thought.

"Well," said he, dropping his unappreciated bits of cane, piece by piece into the water, "that's a woman's way of looking at it."

"What's a man's?" asked the girl at that, "how does a man do hard things?"

"He just goes at 'em, I should say," said he, "and doesn't analyze. He's got to be at something, you know, it's part of the creed."

"What creed?" demanded Alexina.

"Mr. Jonas's."

"Oh," said Alexina, "yes I see."

CHAPTER V

Molly, Alexina and Celeste stayed a week at Nancy with the Leroy's. It was a household wherein there was no strain, no tension, though, to be sure, there was small management. One had a comical apprehension that Mandy the cook and Tina the wash-woman kept their families off the gullibility and good faith of their mistress.

Alexina was sent into the sunshine.

"Keep her outdoors," Charlotte commanded Willy; "the child's morbid."

Mr. Jonas drove out with trophies of game as offerings to Mrs. Garnier. One morning Mr. Henderson came with him in the buck-board, and Molly and the two men sat in the sunshine on the porch and talked.

"Did he die?" she asked the minister presently.

"Who?"

"The man at the house where you stopped that day?" She asked it as one driven to know, even while apprehensive of the answer.

Exultation leaped for an instant to the young man's face—a stern joy. "He died," he told her, "but in the faith at the end."

"In what faith?" Molly asked curiously. She was a child in so many things.

"The church," he told her, with reproof in his tone.

The click of Mr. Jonas's incisors upon incisors chopped the air.

But Molly moved a little nearer the minister.

"Yes," she agreed slowly, unwillingly almost; "they all do. Father Bonot used to say it over and over. They all come back to the church to—to die."

She was shivering.

There was a quick, snapped off h'ah from Mr. Jonas.

Mr. Henderson looked bewildered. "I did not know; then, Mrs. Garnier, you are——"

"I'm a Catholic," said Molly, a little in wonder.

"Romanist," said the other gently.

But Molly wasn't listening nor would she have known what the distinction meant, had she been. It was Mr. Jonas who gave forth another sound that was almost a snort, and marched off to where King and Alexina were sitting on the step.

Molly watched him go, then glanced around as if to insure aloofness and leaned forward her fingers pulling at the edge of her handkerchief.

"You helped him to die, and you're a priest—one sort of a priest—and I want to tell you——"

"No," said the other; "you do not understand; let me make you see."

"It doesn't matter," said Molly; "no," hurriedly, "let me tell you, I want to tell you. It will help me. I take things—I have to; anything that will make me forget and make me sleep. I'm afraid—I take it because I'm afraid to die."

He looked at her out of dull eyes. She was, self-avowedly, everything he held abhorrent—alien, worldly, and weak. He stammered something—was he asking God to help her, or himself?—and left her.

Later as he and Mr. Jonas drove back to Aden the eyes of Mr. Jonas snapped. "You're brewing mischief to your own or somebody else's peace of mind, you always are when you look like that. Out with it, man."

Why Mr. Henderson should out with it, he himself knew less than any, but Mr. Jonas had a way.

The minister's words came forth with effort.

"I've been seeking light to know why Mrs. Garnier was sent down here. I've never cared for a woman before; I can't seem to tear it out. But to-day it's made clear: she was sent to me to be saved."

"From her faith?" inquired Mr. Jonas. But the minister was impervious to the sarcasm.

"To the faith," said Mr. Henderson.

The others gone, Alexina, King William, and the Captain sat on the porch. The girl, who was on the step, reached up and put a hand on the locket swinging from the Captain's fob. "May I?" she asked, "I used to, often, you know."

The Captain slipped the watch out and handed it to her, the rest depending, and she opened the locket, a large, thin, plain gold affair. "This," she said, bending over it, then looking up at the Captain archly, "is Julie Piquet, your mother, wife of Aristide Leroy, refugee and Girondist——"

She recited it like a child proud of knowing its lesson, then regarded him out of the corners of her eyes, laughing.

There answered the faintest flicker of a smile somewhere in the old Roman face.

The girl returned to the study of the dark beauty on the ivory again, its curly tresses fillet bound, its snowy breasts the more revealed than hidden by the short-waisted, diaphanous drapery.

"And because it had been your father's locket, with you and your mother in it, Mrs. Leroy wouldn't let you change it to put her in, and so this on the other side is you, young George Gautier Hippolyte Leroy——"

"Written G. Leroy in general," interpolated the gentleman's son.

"And this is how you looked at twenty, dark and rosy-cheeked, with a handsome aquiline nose. You never were democratic, for all your grand pose at being; do you believe he was?" This to King. "Look at him here; if ever there was an inborn, inbred aristocratic son of a revolutionist——"

"He barricaded the streets of Paris with his fellow-students in his turn, don't forget," said King.

"Where his papa had sent him for a more cosmopolitan knowledge of life than Louisville could afford," supplemented Alexina gaily.

"And where he wrote verses to a little dressmaker across the hall," said William.

"Verses?" said Alexina. "Did he write verses? I never heard about the verses."

"No?" said the son; "hasn't he ever written verses to you? Well, since I've opened the way to it, I was leading up to it all the while, why I have. I'll show 'em to

you. I've had 'em in my pocket waiting the opportunity three days now." Which was true. He had been going for them that first day.

He produced a small card photograph, somewhat faded which taken in Alexina's hand, showed her a little girl's serious face with short cropped hair.

"She had a nice little straight nose, anyhow," said Alexina approvingly, studying the card.

"Turn it over," said Willy Leroy. He had a way of commanding people. Some day Alexina intended warring with him about it, but she turned it over now. The lines inscribed on its reverse were in a round and labored script that, despite effort, staggered down hill.

"I wrote 'em," said Willy Leroy, "moi, myself, with gulped-down tears at leaving you. I've never written any since."

She was reading them.

"Out loud," he commanded.

She read them aloud. She was laughing, but she was blushing absurdly too.

*"This is Alexina and she
Is a girl but she
Plays like I tell her and she
Cried because we had to come away
And this is Alexina."*

"He thinks, your son does," said Alexina, addressing herself to the Captain, "that he was a precocious person, whereas he was only——"

"Young," said the Captain.

"Lamentably egotistical," said Alexina.

"Give it to me," said Willy, "my picture and my feelings thereon——"

"No," said the girl; "I want it."

"Yes." He said it with the King William air. She made a little mouth, but gave him the card, which he put back in his wallet and the wallet in an inner pocket. "You're welcome to a copy of the lines," he said.

Alexina, bestowing on him a glance of lofty disdain, departed high-headed into the house.

But he ran after her and stooped that he might look into her face—was he laughing at her?

"Oh," she said, and wheeled upon him, but she had to laugh too, such was the high glee behind this sweet gravity on his countenance. Glee there was yet something else

too in the dark eyes laughing at her, something unconsciously warm and caressing.

The girl ran quickly up-stairs.

And William Leroy, brought to himself, stood where she left him. The hand on the newel post suddenly closed hard upon it then he straightened and walked into the parlor and, sitting down, stared at the embers of the wood fire, as one bewildered. Then his head lifted as with one who understands. On his face was a strange look and a light.

CHAPTER VI

Alexina went up to her mother and Mrs. Leroy. Molly was lolling in a big chair in the sunshine, idly swinging the tassel of her wrapper to and fro. The shadows about her eyes were others than those lent by the sweep of her child-like lashes and she looked wan but she looked at peace too. In her present state the flow of Mrs. Leroy's personal chat was entertainment. Now, there was always one central theme to Charlotte's talk, whatever the variations.

"He hasn't a bit of false pride, Willy hasn't," she was stating. "After his father lost his position, those two years before the trees began paying, there's nothing Willy wouldn't turn his hand to. He carried a chain for the surveyors and went as guide for parties hunting and fishing in the glades."

Molly's attention sometimes wandered from these maternal confidences.

"You were Charlotte Ransome before you were married, weren't you?" she asked irrelevantly. "You used to come to New Orleans winters, didn't you? You were at a party at my Uncle Randolph's once when I was a girl, and you were spoken of as a great beauty, I remember. There was a pompom head-dress too, one winter, called the Charlotte Ransome."

The Charlotte listening, only the vivacity of smile and eyes left of her beauty, the Charlotte living the obscure life of a little raw Southern town, let her needle fall, the needle she handled with the awkwardness of a craft acquired late. She was darning an old table-cloth, come down from her mother's day, that day when triumphs and adulation made up life, and when cost or reckoning was a thing she troubled not herself about. She was that Charlotte Ransome again, called up by Mrs. Garnier, Charlotte

Ransome, the beauty, the fashion, and the belle.

"Oh," she said, "the joy of youth, the joy! Old Madame d'Arblay, the Louisville milliner, devised that pompom head-dress out of her own cleverness, and I remember my old Aunt Polly Ann Love tried to talk her down on the price. How it comes back, the intoxication of it, and the living. Drink deep, little Mab, it never offers twice. I seemed to have divined it never would be again."

The girl looked from one woman to the other. Molly still pursued this thing called adulation, and Mrs. Leroy, big-hearted, simple-souled as she was, looked yearningly back on that which was gone.

Was this all then? Was life forever after empty, except as with Mrs. Leroy, of duties that occupied but did not satisfy? And what of women who are neither beauties nor belles? What has life to offer them?

A vast depression came over the girl. And was this all? Both women bore witness that it was.

"I heard tell in those days," Molly was saying to Mrs. Leroy, "of a dozen men in the South you might have married. How did you come" — curiously — "in the end to marry Captain Leroy, so much older, and so quiet, and—er—"

Charlotte was too simple to resent the question, which to her meant only affectionate interest and besides, she was an egotist, and livened under talk of herself. She had no concealment; indeed, had she been cognizant of any skeleton in the family closet, it must speedily have lost its gruesomeness to her, so constantly would she have it out, annotating its anatomy to any who showed interest.

"Because he came to us in our troubles," said Charlotte, "to mother and me when father died. He was shot, my father, you know, in a political quarrel on the street in Lexington, the year before the war. And Captain Georges came to us. We'd always known him; his father and my Uncle Spottswood Love operated the first brandy distillery in Kentucky. Captain Georges had brought me pretty things from New Orleans and Paris all my life. I meant never to marry, then; I'd been unhappy. But it turned out we were poor, and so, when Georges said for me to marry him so he could care for mother and me, why—"

"Oh," breathed Alexina. It was denunciation. Certain scenes of childhood had

burned into her memory, which she had interpreted later. Molly had not loved daddy, either.

"No one was ever so good, so nobly, generously good to a woman as Georges has been to me," Mrs. Leroy was saying; "and even in our poverty he and Willy have managed, and kept it somehow from me, and long, oh, long ago, I came to love him dearly."

The young arraigner, hearing, gazed unconvinced. She pushed the weight of her hair back off her forehead, as she always did when impatient. "Came to love him dearly." With that mere affection which grows from association and dependence, and habit.

The girl sitting on the window-sill in the sunshine, drew a long breath. There was more in life than these two had found, and, all unknowingly, they had proved it.

CHAPTER VII

Charlotte kept them with her the week, then Molly turned restless.

"I can't stand hearing another thing about Willy, Malise," she declared. "I think he's a very dictatorial and outspoken person myself."

So Molly and Alexina and Celeste went back to the hotel, which had filled during the week of their absence. There was life and bustle in the halls as they went in and, from their windows up-stairs, they could see the lake gay with sailboats.

The talk down-stairs concerned dances, picnics, fishing parties. The somnolent Molly awoke, languor fell from her, and she stepped at once to the center of everything gay, the embodied spirit of festivity. Mr. Henderson, incongruous element, was there too, with deliberate election it would seem, for Molly's eyes did no inviting or encouraging. She did not need him in capacity of attendant or diverter these days, and it was clear that in any other capacity he embarrassed her. But he was not deterred because of that.

"You are coming to church, remember," he told her on Sunday morning.

Molly did not even play at archness with him now; she looked timid. And at the hour she went, and Alexina with her. They had heard him officiate before, and it seemed the mere performance of the law; but into the dogmatic assertions of his discourse to-day glowed that fire which is called

inspiration. The Reverend Henderson was living these days.

Molly, slim and elegant in her finery, moved once or twice in the pew. Alexina could not quite tell if she was listening. But she was.

"Dear me," she said, from under the shadow of her lace parasol, as they walked home, "how wearing it must be to be so—er—intense." She spoke lightly, but she shivered a little. The Reverend Henderson had laid stress upon his text, "In the midst of life we are in death!"

As they went up the hotel steps Molly turned and looked around her and Alexina turned too, since it was Molly's mood. The sky was blue, the air breathed life and glow and sparkle. There was a taste almost of sea about it. On the prim young orange trees about the new houses across the street the fruit hung golden.

"He used to reach them for me—Father Bonot did," said Molly, slowly, "before I was tall enough. They're sweeter—Louisiana oranges are. I used to run and hide behind his skirts, too, when I was afraid my mother was going to whip me."

They went in. Half way up the stairs Molly paused. "You Blairs, you're all like *him*—not like Father Bonot."

"Like who?" asked Alexina.

"Like Mr. Henderson. You Blairs and Mr. Henderson would have pulled aside your skirts so my mother could have caught me and whipped me."

Something like apprehension sprang into Alexina's eyes. "Oh," she said anxiously, "no; surely I'm not like that, and Aunt Harriet's not!"

"Yes, you are," said Molly stubbornly. "you all of you are. It's because"—a sort of childish rage seized her—"it's because you're all of you so—so damnably sure of your duty." And her foot stamped the landing in her little fury.

It was funny, so funny that Alexina laughed. And perhaps it was true. She could have hugged Molly; she never came so near to being fond of Molly before.

December arrived, Christmas came and went. Life was almost pastoral—no, hardly that, it was more *un fete champetre*. Each day after breakfast the hotel emptied itself into the sunshine and merriment, emptied itself, that is, of all but the invalids. Molly shunned those. She never even looked the way of one if she could help it.

There was a lake party one night. They took boat at the hotel pier in various small craft and followed the chain of lakes to an island midway of the farthest. The moon was up as they started.

The party was of the gayest, and one might have said that Mr. Henderson was out of his element. Certainly his face was hardly suggestive of hilarity. But he followed Mrs. Garnier into one of the larger boats and took his place with a sort of doggedness. Even in the moonlight the sharpening angle of his cheek-bone was visible and the deepening of the sockets in which his eyes were set, eyes that followed Mrs. Garnier insistently.

Molly being of the party, it followed that Alexina was too, but that William Leroy was of it seemed to quicken something in his own sense of humor. His manner with the gay world was perhaps a little stony. He avowed, when thus accused by Alexina and Mr. Jonas, that it was to cover bashfulness.

"I hate people," he declared.

Yet, for a bashful youth, he was singularly deliberate and masterful, seeming to know what he wanted and how to get it. Tonight it was that Alexina go with him in a small boat. The others started first, a youth in a striped flannel coat, strumming a guitar.

King put out last. He rowed slowly and often the boat drifted. When they entered the lock connecting the first lake with the next, the other boats had all passed through. The moon scarcely penetrated the dense foliage on the banks above them, and the ripple of the water against the boat seemed only to emphasize the silence—the aloofness. There must have been an early blossom of jasmine about, so sweet was the gloom.

When they passed out into the vaulted space and open water of the next lake, the other boats were far ahead. The tinkling cadence of the guitar floated back to them.

He rowed lazily on. Presently he spoke. "I wonder if you remember how we used to talk, way back yonder, about the land of Colchis?"

"Yes," said Alexina; "I remember."

"I believe we are there at last. We closed the contract for our oranges to-day. It's pretty fair gold, the fruit in Colchis. We pick for delivery on Monday."

He never had talked to her of personal affairs before; it was Mrs. Leroy who had told her what she knew.

"There are several possible purchasers looking at the place, we are going to sell, for dwellers in Colchis, you know, are only sojourners; they long for home."

"The Jasons, too?"

"This Jason worse than all. He wants four seasons to his year, and to hear his horse's feet on pike, and to put his seed into loam."

They slipped through the next lock and out upon the long length of Cherokee, the lake of the island which was their destination. It seemed to bring self-consciousness upon the speaker.

"You are so the same as you used to be," he said; "I forget. How do I know you want to hear all this?"

"You do know," said Alexina honestly.

He did not answer. They were coming up to the other boats now, beached at the island. Lights were flickering up and down the sand and the rosy glare of a beach fire shone out from under the darkness of the trees. Figures were moving between it and them and they could hear voices and laughter.

"You do know," repeated the girl.

They had grounded. He was shipping the oars. Then he got up and held out a hand to steady her. She, standing, put hers into it. They did not look at each other.

"Yes," he said, "I do know. You're too honest to pretend."

He helped her along and out upon the sand. There was a negro boy awaiting to take charge of the boat. They went up the slight declivity. He had not loosed her hand, she had not withdrawn it. The laughter, the chat, the aroma of boiling coffee, the rattle of dishes being unpacked reached them. They stood for a moment in the shadow, then her hand left his and they went to join the others.

The dozen men and women were grouped about the pine-knot fire, for the warmth was grateful.

There was badinage and sally, light, foolish stuff, perhaps, but flung like shining nebulae along the way by youth in its whirl of mere being. It is good to know how to be frivolous sometimes. Alexina felt the exhilaration of sudden gaiety, daring. She sat down by the youth with the guitar and the striped flannel coat.

"*And both were young, and one was beautiful,*" warbled the owner to his guitar,

making room for her. "Right here, Miss Blair, by me."

More than one presently stole a look at the tall, rather handsome Miss Blair, hitherto conceded reserved and different from her mother. She was laughing contagiously with the youth, and in the end she gained the guitar over which they were wrangling. She knew a thing or two about a guitar herself, it seemed—Charlotte Leroy could have explained how—as many chords as the owner anyhow. But the young Leroy, it would appear, was sulky, certainly unsociable, sitting there, removed to the outskirts of things, to smoke and stare at the moon. Yet never once did the girl look his way. It was enough that they were to return together.

Nor was she paying attention to Molly either. There are times when the mad leap and rush of one's own blood absorbs all consciousness.

Molly was gay too, feverishly gay. Some one had brewed a hot something for the delectation and comforting of the chilly ones, and Molly's thin, little hand was holding out her picnic cup as often as any one would fill it. It was Mr. Jonas who presently took the cup away and tried to wipe a stain off the pretty dress with his handkerchief.

It was late when the start homeward was made. King came over to Alexina.

"I have to ask you to change to the large boat going back," he said, a little stiffly perhaps; "Mr. Jonas is taking Mrs. Garnier in the small one, and Mr. Henderson says he will see to you."

When she answered her voice was slightly nonchalant.

"Why not?" she said, absorbed in putting on her jacket.

She took her place in the boat by Mr. Henderson. Evidently the evening had gone wrong with him for his face was ghastly in the moonlight, and his long, nervous fingers never stopped fingering the little gold cross hanging below the line of his vest.

William Leroy did not return with the party at all. Not that she was concerned with that, Alexina assured herself proudly; it was only that she could not help hearing the others wondering at his entering a boat with the negro boy and rowing swiftly away up the lake. It was clear to her. Lake Nancy would have been the next lake on the chain had the channel been cut and he meant to tramp across home, to save himself the

trouble of going back to town. She didn't think he had very good manners, at any rate. Yet, when the boats came in at the hotel pier, it was William Leroy who met them. He waited for Alexina and walked with her a little ahead of the others up through the yard. "Mrs. Garnier is not well," he told her. "I went home and drove in and Mr. Jonas is putting her in the wagon now. We'll take her out to mother; she's all upset over something."

She stopped short, having forgotten her mother. "I can't let you," she declared, "it isn't right to Mrs. Leroy."

"Mother's waiting," he said. "You'd better go in and say something to somebody and get Celeste."

Mrs. Leroy said that people always obeyed the King William tone. Alexina stood hesitating. He waited.

Then she went.

He was in the wagonette when she and Celeste came out. The place was still and deserted, even Mr. Jonas had gone, for which Alexina was grateful.

Molly was on the back seat, and Celeste, gaunt and taciturn, started to mount beside her.

She protested. "Not you, mammy; go in front. I want Malise—not the big Malise, you know—the little one."

The girl taking the wraps from the old woman, got in by her mother and began to put a shawl about her. The dew was falling heavily. Molly touched her hand. "Once Alexander said to me, 'Let Malise keep tight hold on you, Molly.'"

William Leroy was flicking the mules, traveling briskly through the sandy streets, and talking to the old woman, but she was sullen and the conversation died.

Alexina's heart was choking her. Her father—daddy—Molly had spoken to her of daddy.

And all the while Molly was talking on, feverishly, incessantly. "You must keep him away, Malise, that minister, he worries me and his eyes make me uncomfortable, following me. He makes me remember things, and I don't want to. He says it's his duty. He said to-night, I'm not going to get well, and that he had to tell me in order to save me from myself. Make him keep away from me, Malise; I'm afraid of him. I took it, *that*, to-night, to forget what he said—say it isn't so, Malise—say it."

Willy leaned back over the seat, talking in steady, everyday fashion. "There's the

moon setting ahead of us; see it, Mrs. Garnier? Everything's so still, you say? Why, no; it's not so still. There is a cock crowing somewhere, and that must be a gopher scuttling under the palmetto. Now, look backward. See that line of light? It's the dawn."

CHAPTER VIII

The next evening at Nancy, an hour or two after supper, King William was tapping at Mrs. Garnier's door, which was ajar.

"She is asleep," warned Alexina; from within.

"Then come on out," he begged; "the moon's up."

"Go on," Mrs. Leroy told her, "Willy wants you," which to Charlotte was reason for all things.

"It's windy," he called softly, "bring a wrap."

The girl came, bringing her reefer jacket and her Tam, and put them on in the hall. The jacket was blue, the Tam was scarlet, and both were jaunty. He regarded her in them with satisfaction.

"Now, there," said he, with King William approval, "I like that."

They went down and out. She was tired, she said, so they sat on the bench under the wild orange. The moss, drooping from the branches, fluttered above them. The wind was fitful, lifting and dying. It was a gray night, with scattered mists lying low over the lake, while a shoal of little clouds were slipping across the face of the moon.

"It's been too soft and warm," said Willy; "it can't last."

But Alexina shivered a little for there was a chill whenever the wind rose.

"Walk down to the pier," he begged, "and back and then you shall go in."

The path led through the grove. Stopping to select an orange for her, he passed his hand almost caressingly up and down a limb of the tree.

"And you begin to pick the oranges Monday," said Alexina.

"Monday."

"And this is Thursday."

They walked on. He was peeling away the yellow rind that she might have a white cup to drink from.

"I won't be here to see the picking," said Alexina. "I have to go to Kentucky for two weeks, something about business. Uncle

Austen wrote me in the letter you brought out to-day, that it would simplify things if I could come and Emily—Emily Carrington, you know—Uncle Austen's wife, wrote too, asking me to stay with them."

"So," said he, "you go——"

"Monday. I've been talking to your mother, and she's willing, if Captain Leroy and you are—I came out to ask you—I am always to be asking favors of your family, it seems—if you will let me leave Molly here instead of at the hotel. Celeste can attend to everything."

"Why not?" asked Willy.

"It's—it's a business proposition," said Alexina. But it took a bit of courage to bring it out.

"Is it?" said he.

"Or I can't do it, you know."

They had reached the lake and were sitting, like children, on the edge of the pier. The lake was ruffled, the incoming waves white-crested, and the wind was souging a little around the boat-house behind them. He was breaking bits off a twig and flinging them out to see them drift in.

"Great country, this," he said, "that can't produce a pebble for a fellow to fling."

He looked off now toward the shining, shadowy distance, where the moon gleamed against the mists. "You are"—then he changed the form of his question—"are you very rich?"

"Leave the very out, and, yes, I suppose I am rich," said Alexina.

"You are so—well—yourself," he said, "sometimes I find myself forgetting it."

The girl swallowed, once, twice, as if from effort to speak. She was looking off too, against the far shore. "Is it a thing to have to be remembered?" then she asked.

"Isn't it?" said King William, turning on her suddenly. There was sharp harshness in his tones. "I wish to God it wasn't."

She got up and he sprang up too, facing her. Suddenly she stamped her foot. The wind, rising to a gale now, was blowing her hair about her face and she was angry. It made her beautiful. She might have been a Valkyr, tall, wind-tossed.

But the sob in her voice was human. "I've had Uncle Austen say such things to me in his fear I might let other people forget it, and a girl I cared for at school let it come between us, but I thought you—I had a right to think you were bigger. Your mother is, oh, yes, she is, and your father is. Not that

I despise the other, either." She lifted her head defiantly. "It's a grand and liberating thing, though it was shackles on me in Uncle Austen's hands. I don't despise it; I couldn't; but that it should have to be remembered——"

"Just so," said Willy Leroy, in his father's phrase.

Her head went up again and she looked at him full, straight, then turned and fled towards the house.

He ran after her, came abreast, and after the fashion he had, stooped to see into her face. "Don't go away, in from me—mad," he begged. Was he laughing?

"But I am mad," she returned promptly.

"But don't go in, either way," he said; "stay, mad if you will, but stay. Oh, I'm not proud"—he was breathing hard again—"that is—only this proud; I shall build on to my little gold of Colchis until we stand at least nearer equal—and then——"

Each looked at the other, with defiance almost. She was as beautiful as Harriet Blair.

"Then," said the girl; "you will be that far less my equal. Let me go." And she jerked her sleeve from his hand and ran into the house.

CHAPTER IX

The morning after dawned sunless and chill. The sky was a pale leaden, below which darker masses of clouds scurried. The wind blew strong, steady, resistless. At breakfast they all sat shivering.

"Have Pete start fires," said King William to Charlotte, "and you had better move Mrs. Garnier over to my room before night." For there were not fireplaces in all the rooms.

It was a dreary morning every way. The breakfast was poor and scant. Aunt Mandy defended herself. "Ev'y thing done give out," she declared. "Miss Charlotte been so occupied she done forgot to order things f'om town."

Convicted, Charlotte looked at Willy, then hastily she took the defensive. "Mandy ought to have reminded me," she declared.

"No, *ma'am*," responded Mandy. "I done quit this thing uv tellin', an' havin' you say things give out too soon."

Willy sat stony. The Captain shivered. One realized all at once that he was an old man. "The thermometer is at forty-six degrees, King," he remarked.

"Yes," said the son, "and falling."

All morning it fell. At noon it registered forty degrees. The wind still swept a gale that whistled and shrieked at the corners of the house and the three women passed the morning in Charlotte's room, shivering about the open fireplace, while Pete spent his day chopping and bringing in arm loads of fat pine wood. All the sense of dissatisfaction with Aden returned. Desolate gray sand is a hideous exchange for sward, and orange trees look like toys from a Noah's ark.

At dinner there was a furrow between King's straight dark brows. "It's thirty-eight degrees," he told his father, "and falling. It's clearing, too."

Afterwards he was talking to Pete in the hall. "No, sir," reiterated Pete, "we's too far below the line. Ain't never heard of such a thing down here."

At four o'clock King came in to say he was going to town. "It's down to thirty-four," he told his father. "I'm going in and telegraph up the river for reports."

"And what then, son?" asked the Captain. "What can you do?"

It was a hitherto unexperienced danger threatening Aden. But youth cannot sit and wait. Alexina, from the window in Charlotte's room, saw King William fling himself on his horse at the gate and gallop off. The wind had ceased. The live-oaks on either side of the old iron gate stood motionless, their moss hanging in dreary, somber lengths. There was no sound of bird or insect. And it was cold—cold. Alexina had a jacket over her woolen dress, for Aden houses are not built for cold, which poured in at casements, beneath doors, at keyholes. Molly on the couch, drawn up to the fire, coughed, and coughed again. Alexina went to her. "I'm cold," she complained; "and how dreary it is."

It had cleared and the sky was a pale, chilly blue. The sun set in a yellow pallor. The night fell.

King came in and warmed his hands at the parlor fire. Alexina and Charlotte had come down now. "Thirty-two," he told his father, "and falling."

Neither the Captain nor his son ate much supper, but near-sighted Charlotte, absorbed in things at hand, seemed unconscious of anything more amiss than discomfort from the cold. After supper the son disappeared.

Molly was coughing sadly. They had moved her bed across to Willy's sitting-room

and a fire crackled on the stone hearth but it was to be one of the nights when she would not sleep, or but fitfully, and when Celeste and Alexina would not sleep either. At nine o'clock they persuaded her to bed.

"But talk, Malise, you and mammy talk, I don't have chance to think when people keep on talking; and, mammy, rub my hands, it helps, to have some one rub them."

At ten she wanted a drink of water. Alexina went to the window where she had set a tumbler outside. The night was still and clear, the stars glittering. The moon would rise soon now. How large the grove showed itself from this south window, stretching away to the southwest around the curving shores of Nancy. As Alexina opened the window she shivered despite the heavy wool of her white wrapper and as she took in the glass, was it? Yes, over the surface of the water radiated a ferny, splintery film, which was ice.

Molly, feverish and restless, drank it thirstily, and said it was good, but it roused her so that she began to talk again.

"He said I couldn't prevent his praying for me." She was harping on the minister. "For my soul," she laughed uneasily. "I told him to let my soul alone. It's perfectly funny, Malise, that I've got to be prayed over when I don't want to be."

The night wore on. Celeste was nodding even while her brown hands went on rubbing up and down the slim white wrist and arm.

The wood on the andirons broke and fell apart. The room grew shadowy. "Build it up, Malise," begged Molly; "I like it light."

There was no more wood up-stairs. It was past twelve o'clock and the house was still. Alexina opened the door into the hall. A lamp in case of need, because of Molly, was burning on a stand. Alexina had remembered there was wood piled on the parlor hearth. Her slippers were noiseless.

Down-stairs she paused, then tip-toed to the front door. The big thermometer and barometer in one, hung against a side of the recess and could be seen through the glass side lights. It was bright moonlight now; the shadows of the rose vine were clear cut on the porch floor. She looked at the thermometer. She looked again.

It had come then, what never had come to Aden before. From the talk of the day she had gleaned enough to know that the fruit

hanging on William Leroy's trees was but so much sodden, worthless pulp.

She turned back toward the parlor where the firelight was flickering out the doorway, then stopped. He was in his father's chair before the hearth. His elbow was on his knee and the hand on which his chin was propped was clenched. The flame flared up. His face was haggard and harsh.

Alexina fled back up-stairs. Molly had fallen asleep; Celeste was nodding.

The girl shut the door and dropped in a little heap on the bearskin before the fire. She was shivering, but in her eyes, fixed on the embers, was a yearning, brooding light, that made them beautiful. Then suddenly she hid her face in her hands, her head bowed on her knees, and began to cry.

(To be concluded)

ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF PAINTING

BY JOHN LA FARGE

AUTHOR OF "GREAT MASTERS"

TRIUMPHS—PART ONE

AS the song and the verse recorded success, so also has the work of the hand in the arts of the hand—the arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting—from their most vague beginning. Mostly these early testimonials are mere records; often, however, associated with some ideals—naturally those of religion, of observance—of duty to the forces which perhaps give success. Sometimes they are testimonials to personal valour in the person of the ruler, who triumphs over his bound enemies in Assyrian sculptures or fights the Lion hand to hand.

That good taste of the Greeks, which we can never too much admire—so much is it a record of intellectual sight and of moral balance—preferred to record triumphs by some devotion to the Gods who give the battle, or else by some image, which through praise of God and Heroes, apart from men themselves, might not wake that Nemesis which they knew hangs forever over each attempt at self-glorification. That perfect taste is not so far from later recognition of the religious necessity of attributing all triumph and all success to something outside of us.

With the Roman world the testimony is more brutal, and as the ruler is a form of God, as the State and God become one, there is perhaps more harmony than we discern

easily to-day. With the crash of Rome and the triumph of Christianity comes of course some element of the Christian spirit, but still we see the Emperor, often a half barbarian, placed on the right hand of the lowly Christ in Byzantine mosaic. He is his Vice-regent, a sort of Lieutenant, and he continues the Roman tradition. Then the chivalry of the Middle Ages, the absorption of all in service to the Church, or to the Blessed Virgin, or to the Blessed Saints, or to Christ Himself the Head, wipes out the record of personal triumph. Churches are built, windows are placed, saintly stories are painted almost as *atonement* for success. With the necessary reaction, with the breaking up of the ties to the superiors of hierarchy, with the assertion of personal value and valour comes first, and in Italy, the record of the glory of the City. Occasionally this is, in a smaller way, a memorial of some great lord of personal promise or achievement, but it is the City which is first glorified. Any smaller attempts here and there are unimportant, and drowned in the praises and lauds of Venice as painted by her artists. No songs since Roman days have been as fine in praise of the majesty of the City's fame. "Nil visere majus." Their meaning was sufficient, their theme grateful enough to lift the painters with them. In whatever case, that something that painting alone can give—the cry of music excepted—

remains for us, to whom Venice is but a name, her glory all departed. But, nevertheless, we see and sympathize with the idea of success depicted; as we do in music's triumphs which are for us, and are our own, though their meaning was once for others and not for us at all. What is the exact cause of these representations and triumphs having come to be the greatest types is difficult to establish. Why, especially, when the function, the external representation of the pomp of power was so often seen by Italian eyes in Pontifical splendours, or in the ceremonial of churches; in all processions of civic and government display; when the imagination of writers and of painters in Florence, in Milan, or elsewhere, was called to instil poetry into every detail; when Italian records are full of them; when fortunes were spent upon them; when a special form of poetry consecrated that name of "Triumph" for ideals such as Chastity, Love, or Death (in verse we know they bore the name *Trionfi*). When painters and sculptors again translated these poems of literature into engaging shapes, why was it left to Venice the commercial alone to feel the great breath of joy and elation that animates these great wall or ceiling pictures, which takes them away from local conditions and makes them types of the pure ideal? It may be that the other previous forms, exhausted first attempts based on the copying of external realities—and not on the realities of art, in which colour, line, and spaces are the bases and realities of fact used to *excuse these means of art*.

The great painter, Paul of Verona, fits so absolutely by his temperament, his training, and his methods of painting, into the representation of scenes open to the public eye, to which also belong a certain proportion of display, a certain idea of function, that he seems to have invented the occasions for them. Other Venetians have also spread open great surfaces of architecture in which move their crowds: the needs of the time, which as we know determine the forms of talent, called for big spaces to be adorned in churches, in the meeting places of convents, of palaces private or public; other painters have filled these needs of the day, but none as if they had always wished for such a chance and felt themselves in their proper home. A cool and temperate lighting, a wise and temperate arrangement and balance, a wise and temperate expression even in such a drama

as that of Christ falling below the weight of the cross, have always been with Veronese. But the larger the space to fill, the more figures to be invented, the more difficult the relations of real life and arbitrary arrangement of imaginary spaces, the more at his ease seems this modest, most balanced, most gentlemanly of painters. So complete is his equipment, so thoroughly has he understood the necessities, or what one might call the duties of the paintings to be seen on big stretches of wall or ceiling—which must be seen from many places and still keep beauty of line and arrangement, and tell their story however looked at, in light, and half light, and shadow—that we pass a little too easily and call this decoration and not drama. But the essential good taste which is Veronese's mark and his serenity of mind made him decide the proper course. In the great spread of wall paintings, which must remain before the spectator whether he wishes to see or not, it is evident logic that peace and order and absence of disturbance or sudden appeal should be the law. Veronese is, therefore, the great decorative painter, whatever else we may think of him, and it is but right that fate should have called him to paint the great function of Venice Triumphant, in perfect union between the idea and the artist. That triumph is one of peace, of serene established success. If centuries of war, of financial and diplomatic struggle, of commercial effort, of continued industry, have been the beginning of this day of peace, there is almost nothing in the serene picture to recall it. Only such matters as belong to great festivals; the putting of the people in order and in their places; some troops of guards making a police enough to remind the happy ones at home that outside and far away there are men on watch, and all the security of discipline and courage. Two horsemen ride through a crowd which is there to enjoy the spectacle and take them as part of it. All but these few guards look up to where above, over many steps, upon which ride the horses, and on the last one of which, the Lion of St. Mark spreads his imaginary wings, rises a palace solid but imaginary, a painter's dream of architecture, but the dream of a painter learned in other arts. Were it more real we could not explain why such things occurred there; we should feel that in a building built by hands, subjected to the conventionalities and the necessities of the builder, gods would not float from

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ha! hee-hee! Yip. . . . Blame clumsy fool! . . . P-too! Yes, in my mouth and in my ears and down the back of my neck. All over. Running out of my sleeves. Everything I got on is just ruined. Completely ruined. Come on. Let's go home. There's nothing more to see, much. Aw, come on. Well, stay if you want to, but I'm going home and get some dry clothes on me. You get me to go to another Firemen's Tournament and you'll know it. Look at that monkey from Caledonia laughing at me. For half a cent I'd go up and smack his face for him. . . . Aw, let up on your "Where's Caledonia now?" Give us a rest. Well, are you coming, you folks? . . . Kind of a fizzle this year, wasn't it?

However, after supper, with dry clothes on, it isn't so bad. The streets are packed. All the firemen are parading and shouting: "Who? Who? Who are we?" The Caledonias got one more prize than our boys. Well, why shouldn't they? Entered in three more events. I don't see as that's anything to brag of or to carry brooms about. All the fife-and-drum corps are out and the bands are all playing "Hiawatha" at once, but not together. Not all either. There's one band in front of Hofmeyer's playing "Oh, Happy Day! That Fixed my Choice." That's funny: to play a hymn-tune in front of a beer-saloon. Hofmeyer seems to think it's all right. He's inviting them in to have something. "Took the hint?" I don't understand. . . . Oh, is that so? I

didn't know there were other words to the tune.

See that woman with four little ones. Her husband's carrying two more. "I want to go howm? Why caint we gow howm? I do want to gow howm pretty soon. I want to gow na-ow!" Eh, Mary, how would you like to lug them around all day and then stand up in the cars all the way home?

Well, good-by. Hope you had a nice time. Give my regards to all the folks. Don't be in such a rush, my friend. . . . Oh, did you see? It must be the man that got hit on the head with the ladder. Taking him home on a stretcher. Gee! That's tough. Skull fractured, eh? Dear! Dear! I hear they have been keeping company a long time and were to have been married soon. No wonder she cried and took on so. Poor girl! Yes, it's the women that suffer. . . . Oh, quite a day for accidents. I didn't mind though after I had changed my clothes. I took some quinine and I guess I'll be all right. Lucky you got a seat. Well, you're off at last. Good-by. Remember me to all. Good-by.

Well, thank goodness, that's over. Another ten minutes of them and I'd have— Well, Mary, what else could I do but ask them home after he told me what they didn't have to eat at the Ladies' Aid? . . . It was all right. Plenty good enough. Better than they have at home and I'll bet on it. The table looked beautiful. I'm glad the Tournament doesn't come but once a year. I'm about ready to drop.

THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

PART III—CHAPTER X

THE Captain, Mrs. Leroy, and Alexina, on the gallery, watched King as he trudged across the yard. He was going for his horse that he might take a telegram in to Aden for Alexina, who was to leave the following morning.

He trudged sturdily and was whistling under his breath as he went.

"But it's a debt—I owe it to you," said the girl suddenly, turning on the Captain. She spoke with vehemence, entreaty, passion.

"We put that aside the other day—discussed," said the Captain gently.

"You did," declared the girl; "but not—you can't say I did. And Mrs. Leroy saw the right, the justice of it, when I talked to her up-stairs.

"But I hadn't heard Georges then," Charlotte hastened to say, "and I see now how you're trying to make a purely business affair a personal one." Poor Charlotte, she did not see anything of the kind, she was quoting the Captain.

"But it is a debt," declared the girl, crying a little against her will, "and you have no right to refuse me. The whole transaction was a taking advantage, and hard, and mean, it was the pound of flesh, and you said, Mrs. Leroy, that if the grove could be held a year or two, and not sacrificed right away—"

"The boy will fight that part out," said the Captain. The words sounded final, but the hand laid on the girlish one clasping the arm of his chair made it right.

"How can he?" she insisted, with stubbornness.

"I don't know," said the father.

The three sat silent. King, waving his hat at them as he rode around, stooped from his horse, opened the gate, and went through. He was not a person to be offered sympathy. Right now he was absorbingly cheerful.

"But Mrs. Leroy admitted," Alexina began again, her under lip trembling.

"No, Alexina," said Charlotte hastily; "I didn't. Or I ought not to have," she added honestly. "I've never set myself against Georges in things concerning Willy since we came down here. We talked it out then, Georges and I. It's been hard to see Willy fighting things; he was born imperious, but he's used to battling now; and I see what Georges meant. It's better for people to learn how to battle. If I had ever been taught——"

The sun was slanting in under the old wild orange tree onto the gallery. Again the three sat silent. Then out of the silence the Captain spoke. He was an old man who had laid down the burden of labor, to lift and carry the heavier load of inaction in silence as he had carried the other. His tone was impersonal.

"There was a giant wrestler, one Antaeus of Lybia, if I remember my classics, Alexina. King used to lie on the rug when you both were children, and read you about him. So many times as this Antaeus was brought to

earth, he arose renewed, if I recall. The boy must wrestle with his own fate."

CHAPTER XI

On entering Uncle Austen's house, self-consciousness and constraint closed in like bars across the door of spontaneity. Alexina had arrived the night before and they were at breakfast. Uncle Austen was facetiously affable, and his sportive sallies, not being natural with him, embarrassed his audience. There is something almost pitiable in the sight of middle-age grown playful.

Emily, Uncle Austen's wife—embarrassing realization in itself—looked in her plate constrainedly, so that Alexina, if only that his further playfulness might be prevented, threw herself into the conversation and chattered volubly, but in vain, for Uncle Austen found chance to reply.

There was complacency in his facetiousness too. He had married him a wife, and the pride of the thing coming to him this late, made him a little absurd, and yet, Alexina reflected, he was a man of big ability and varied interests, prominent in whatever large enterprises the city boasted, banks, railroads, bridges; a power in the Republican party of his state, his name standing for respectability, wealth, and conservatism.

"I'm taking pretty good care of your old friend Emily, Alexina," Uncle Austen was demanding playfully, as he arose from the table. "She's standing transplanting pretty well, eh?"

Emily got up abruptly, so abruptly her chair would have turned over but for his quickness in getting there to catch it: but his good-humor was proof even against this, though he ordinarily frowned at awkwardness. He set the chair in place and, taking Emily's hand as they all went from the room, patted it ostentatiously. Alexina grew hot.

"A pretty hand, a hand for a man to be proud to own, eh, Alexina?"

Emily almost snatched it away and paused at the foot of the stairs.

"Good-by," she said.

He was finding his overcoat and feeling for his gloves. Then he took a little whisk-broom from the rack drawer and brushed his hat with nicety. He was smiling with high humor. The man's content was almost fatuous.

"I'm glad to have you here, Alexina," he said; "very glad. I will feel that Emily is

having the companionship she ought to have in my absence."

The click of the door as he closed it seemed to breathe a brisk and satisfied complacency. Emily had fled up-stairs. Alexina followed her slowly.

How strange it seemed to hear her moving about in what had been Aunt Harriet's room.

"Come in," she called.

Alexina went in.

"He might at least have re-furnished it, mightn't he?" said Emily, with a laugh. It was not a pleasant laugh. "What would you like for dinner?" she asked, her hand on the bell.

"I don't care, anything," said Alexina.

"So it doesn't cost too much," said Emily, laughing the laugh that was not pleasant.

Later, the conferences with the servants over, she sat down to make certain entries in the ledger, open on the desk. Alexina picked up a magazine.

"He asked me one day," said Emily, turning, "what had become of an end of roast that ought to have come back made over, and said there must be waste in the kitchen."

"Don't," said Alexina. "I wouldn't, Emily."

"Why not? You knew it all before."

Alexina flushed. "Yes," she said slowly, "I did. I knew it—before. How are your mother and the little girls, Emily?"

"Mother—oh, all right. He told me to ask Nan and Nell over every Friday from school to supper, and mother and father and Oliver over to Sunday night tea. 'It ought in the end,' he told me, 'to make an appreciable saving in your mother's providing, these continued absences from stated meals.'"

"You mustn't, Emily. Tell me about the winter. Have you been gay?"

"Gay?" Emily wheeled from the desk. She gazed at Alexina almost wildly. Then she laughed again. "Gay! oh, my great Heaven—gay! Then you don't know? I'm going to bear him a child—and, oh, help me somehow, Alexina, I loathe him."

A child, Uncle Austen and Emily a child. A warmth swept out of Alexina's very soul and enveloped her. She knew, and she did not know. Other women, and girls, had taken it for granted always that she knew, and talked on before her. It meant to her something vague, unapproachable, veiled, and a great overwhelming consciousness stifled and choked her.

"I went out on the platform of the train while we were away," Emily was saying, Emily who, never even in childhood had curbed a mood, a dislike, a humor; "and tried to throw myself off, but I was afraid."

Alexina shrunk. "I mustn't listen—you mustn't tell me—it's between you and him, Emily."

Emily had got up and was walking about.

"He offered Oliver a place in the bank, to please me, I thought. Oliver's nineteen now. The place had been paying eighteen dollars a week, and Oliver had only been making twelve. So he offered it to him at fifteen. 'To the benefit of both sides,' he came home and told me."

Emily stood still, her eyes tearless and hard. "Put on your wraps, Alexina, and we'll go drive. It's like a duty, a task, the exercising of the horses. It hangs over me like a nightmare that I've got it to do, until I've gone out and gotten it over."

"Yes," said Alexina, on familiar ground, "I know. I've hated those horses too, before you. But you ought to be like Aunt Harriet, Emily; don't be like me—tell him so."

Emily, unlocking the wardrobe door, suddenly flung up her arms against it and hid her face in them. "I've tried, I have tried, and I can't—I can't; I'm afraid of him, Alexina."

But the child coming—their child? Perhaps the child would make it right? When it came, Emily would love her child? Perhaps she did, she never talked about it afterwards, and Alexina never saw her with it; it died in the summer, soon after its coming.

When she did see the two again, her uncle and Emily, on her own return to Louisville in the late fall, the embarrassing playfulness had left Uncle Austen. Perhaps the steely coldness of his manner was worse. Had Emily dared—even in her mourning, there was something about her that was reckless. But she did not dare. She was twenty-two and he was fifty-two, and she was to live afraid of him, to see him an old man, for he is living now.

CHAPTER XII

Harriet laughed at Alexina's wonder over her. "It took me a time to realize that

hospitality means the incidental oftener than the invited," she confessed. "My guests, you know, Alexina, were formally asked, and the other would have fretted me. That was why, I suppose, I had no intimates."

Harriet never knew, it would seem, these days, whether the Judge, the Colonel, Father Ryan, the man from the office chatting in the library with the Major, one or all, were going to stay for supper or were not, yet she had come to the place where she could smile in serene and genuine welcome, the while everybody moved up and the colored housemaid slipped in an extra chair and plate.

And she only laid a hand on the spoon with which little Stevie hammered his plate.

"I'd take it away and spank him myself, you know," confided Louise, Stevie's mother, to Alexina; "I do spank William."

But all of life seemed to be moving for Harriet with serenity. Every trivial happening was swallowed up in the joy that death had spared her her husband. And the Major, whatever the agony, the horror, preceding the acceptance of a maimed life, had not lost the vital grace of humor. Life flowed in and out of the Rathbone home with him for center, as it had used to do in and out of his office. The room where he sat amid his papers and books was a rallying place, because the strong will and personality of the man in the wheeled chair made it so.

"He's been meaning for years to do a series of guerrilla articles a magazine has wanted of him, and now he's at them," said Harriet, "and he has given in this far, in his stiff-necked pride, that he's bought an interest in the paper for me, and it keeps him in touch and absorbed."

The Major had been watching Alexina. At the end of several days' observations, he leaned back in his chair and addressed her. His eyes were humorous. "There's an encouraging promise about you, Alexina," he informed her. Then he caressed his lean chin with his lean, smooth hand. "A promise that gives me hope. You've laughed at my jokes since you've been here, and not from mere politeness either. Now, Harriet smiles out of the goodness of her heart because she thinks she ought to."

But he caught at Harriet's hand, even while they all three laughed, for it was patent to everybody that Harriet had no idea what

his jokes were about, which was the amusing thing of all, seeing that it was the Major's humor that she confessed had attracted her.

And yet, the eyes of the man often deepened and glowed as he watched her moving about the house, for she made even the trivial duties seem beautiful because of her unconscious earnestness and her joy in their doing.

CHAPTER XIII

On the return to Aden, that last hour on the train, Alexina was trembling. She was glad, glad to be back, yet of the actual moment of arrival she was afraid.

It was Peter, and alone, who met her at the station with the wagonette. The high ecstasy of her shrinking fell like collapsing walls beneath her. Life was gray, level, flat.

"Mrs. Garnier's po'ly this mornin'," Pete told her as they drove homeward. "Mis' Cha'lotte wouldn't leave her to come, and Mr. Willy, he's been gone for a week now, down to the grasswater with a pahty of gen'l'men, as guide."

She felt strangely tired and quiet. It was going to be hard to seem as glad to be back as she ought. Yet the world, as they drove out to Nancy, was rioting in bud and new leaf and bloom. Magnolias were uplifting giant ivory cups of heavy sweetness; every tree-trunk, rail, and stump bore a clambering weight of yellow jasmine bloom; the tai-tai-drooped pendulous fringes of faintest fragrance, and wild convolvulus ran riot over the palmetto. There was bird song and sunshine and ecstasy everywhere.

And she could not feel glad, she could not feel glad.

Promptly Molly dragged the girl off to their room. She looked slihter and more wistful-eyed and bored to death. "You promised me we would go early in March, if I stayed out here—you promised, Malise. And I've stayed. You promised we'd go to The Bay, where there are people and hotels and it's gay. And it's March—now. You look so tall and cold, Malise—what's the matter?"

Alexina, restless and absent, wandered out on the porch to the Captain. She chatted to him about Louisville, but there were sharpening angles about his face that made

her heart ache. She went up to Mrs. Leroy's room.

"I don't know what we are going to do, Alexina," Charlotte told her. "Willy said I was not to think or worry about it; I was to put it all aside until he got back. But it hurts. He went off looking so gaunt. I don't believe he slept a night through after the freeze; all hours I could hear him up, walking around, but he don't like it if I notice, you know."

Alexina dropped down and put her head in Charlotte's lap and cried, and Charlotte patted the girl's wealth of shining hair and cried too.

But since he could go without a sign to her, Alexina could go too. That day she wrote for rooms at The Bay Hotel. The answer came that she could have what she wanted by the eighth. She told Mrs. Leroy she and Molly would go on that date.

She could leave without a sign, too, she had said, but in her heart there was joy that Fate had given her to the eighth. She would not have moved a finger to stay, but since he was to return on the sixth, why—

But the very day the letter from The Bay reached her, a Seminole came up from the glades with game from King and a note. The party was considering making a longer stay, he wrote to his mother, so she need not worry in case he did not return.

"I told him in my answer," said Charlotte, "that you all were going. Dear me, I'll miss you so."

Then he would know, he would know, and if he did not come it would be because it was his desire not to.

Molly confessed to a few bills in town. Malise had left money, yet Molly had managed to make accounts at a fruiterer's, the café, as it called itself, the drug store, the stationer's, and the two dry-goods establishments.

"I'm glad you're not stingy like the Blairs," Molly told her, "you know, Malise, they're really mean. Your grandfather Blair carried you out to their gate once to see a hand-organ man and his monkey. You were too pleased for anything and, when the man finally moved away, your grandfather told you, 'Say good-by to the monkey, Alexina.'"

Truth to tell, Molly and Charlotte seemed to have had a fine time in the absence of their two youthful monitors. Charlotte was

as wax in the naughty Molly's hands. Even now, with Alexina on the scene, Molly proceeded to put Mrs. Leroy up to a thing that never would have entered that innocent soul's head.

Charlotte went mysteriously to town one morning, Peter in his best clothes driving her, and came back beaming.

"I've asked some of the Aden young people out for the evening before you go," she told Alexina. "The halls and the parlors are so big, you can dance."

Charlotte beamed and Molly looked innocent. Alexina gazed at Mrs. Leroy dismayed. What would the Captain, what would King William think? It would never occur to Mrs. Leroy until afterward that she could not afford such a thing.

"I think we ought to do it together," said Alexina privately to her. "Molly and I owe Aden some return."

Charlotte was made to see it. Had Willy come along, she would have seen it as speedily, after his will, be that what it might have been.

Whatever the Captain thought, he sat unmoved in the midst of the deluge of water and mopping that suddenly swept about him on the porches. There must have been Dutch in Charlotte somewhere, for hospitality with her meant excess of cleaning.

It was a miserable week altogether to Alexina. The days dragged through to their nights, and the nights to morning. She had never known so hateful a time. She hated the grove where thousands of oranges gathered into piles, lay rotting, and where the smiling trees, wherever their buds had escaped injury, were putting out scattered blooms; she hated the lake and the Cherokee roses in bloom, she hated the crepe myrtles and the camellias in the yard. To walk meant wading through sand, there was nothing in town to make the drive worth while. The shame, the sting was in everything that was beautiful, that she should care.

Mr. Jonas and Mr. Henderson drove out one evening, Mr. Jonas to talk over matters with the Captain. Alexina wandered off by herself.

Presently she heard Mrs. Leroy calling softly. "It's your mother," she told Alexina in a whisper, as the girl came back to the house, "I don't believe Mr. Henderson is good for her."

Molly was talking to Mr. Jonas, rapidly,

eagerly, like one defending self, as Alexina reached them. Mr. Henderson was regarding her out of somber eyes.

"It's not that I think I'm sick," Molly was saying, "like he says I am. I'm better, really, much better, only while he was talking about, about things—it's a dreadful religion his—I'd rather be without any, like Jean, than have one like his—I remembered how Father Bonot used to pull the oranges for me I couldn't reach. Here's Malise come back. Malise, let's not go to The Bay after all; I'm tired, let's go to Cannes Brulée. He's there, Father Bonot is, they told me in Washington. He's an old, old man. Let's go back home there."

"Why yes," said the girl, "if you want; yes, we'll go."

"You were a little baby at Cannes Brulée—yes," animatedly, "that's what we'll do. We'll go home to Father Bonot, Malise."

At the touch of Mr. Jonas the minister started. His face was gray. Then he got up and followed the other. On the way into Aden in the buckboard he hardly spoke until the hotel was reached.

Mr. Jonas stopped the mare before the plank sidewalk. The minister came to himself as out of chaos.

"My God," he said.

Mr. Jonas turned the wheel. "Only yours?" he rejoined briskly.

The minister, on the sidewalk now, looked up at him dazedly. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Not yet," returned Mr. Jonas, with cheerful reassurance; "you will, you will, though."

So again Alexina made plans. They would go on the eighth as before, she and Celeste and Molly, but they would go to Cannes Brulée.

Supper was over and the Captain sat smoking in his cane chair on the gallery. If King was coming, it would be to-night; the train from the south came in at seven, and he knew that they were going.

Alexina, sitting on the steps below him, was glad it was the Captain out here with her, rather than the others. It was like the quiet and cover of twilight, the silence of the Captain. Moving a little, she put a hand up on the arm of his chair. His closed upon it. His eyes were resting on her strong, beautiful profile, though she did not know it.

The moon came up. The clock in the hall struck eight. Molly was lying on the sofa

inside, Mrs. Leroy moving about as was her wont, straightening after the servants had gone, and innocently unsystematizing what little system they employed.

Outside sat the man and the girl. There were night calls from birds and insects, but beyond these sounds, the girl's heart, listening, heard—

Between where the road emerged from the hummock and the gate to Nancy was a stretch of old corduroy road over a marshy strip. Elsewhere a horse's hoofs sank into sand. Willy Leroy would ride out, if he came, probably on Mr. Jonas's mare.

The girl sat, all else abeyant, listening. She heard the first hoof-beat, the first clattering thud on wood. Her hand slipped from the Captain's; she sat still.

She sat stiller even as Willy rode in and called halloo to the house, while his mother and Molly, and even Celeste, came out. She hardly moved, as he touched her hand, and went past her with the others into the house, and left her there.

She hardly knew how long it was they came and went, Pete with the horse to the stable, Mrs. Leroy getting the boy his supper. The talk of the father and mother and son rose and fell within.

She heard them closing shutters, hunting lamps, and moving up the steps. But he came out and sat on the step, near her, and yet far away.

They did not look toward each other. And yet he knew how she looked, fair, still, perhaps a little cold; and she knew how he looked, tanned and bronzed, yet good to see in his hunting clothes.

Shy as two young wild things they sat, and wordless.

Presently he spoke, looking away from her.

"Mother wrote me you were going. I came up to say good-by. They're to wait for me in camp."

After that they both were silent, how long neither knew. Then the girl stood up.

"It must be late," she said.

"Oh," he said, "no—"

"Yes," she said; "I think you'll find it is. Good-night."

CHAPTER XIV

In her packing Alexina had left out a muslin dress for Mrs. Leroy's evening. Going up from the hurried supper to dress, she glanced

at it, then drew forth a box from a trunk and pulled the contents therefrom. The dress that came forth shimmered and gleamed and floated, it was a thing that must have enfolded any woman to beautiful lines, and have made any throat, any head lift. It was a purchase she had been in a way ashamed of, tempted to it in a moment of weakness, urged on by Molly.

Now she laid it forth and dressed with care, grave as some young priestess. Molly watched her curiously. Even at the hotel there had been occasions for only simple clothes.

But the girl even brought forth some leather cases. Generally it was her little pose that she did not care for jewels, but in her heart she loved them, as every woman does, primitive or civilized, young or three-score-and-ten. Now she put on what she had. Of late the fairness of Malise had deepened into abiding beauty, yet it was the garb she was emphasizing, it would seem, not the personality.

"You're curious," said Molly. "I would have thought it was a time for the simplest."

"Should you?" said Alexina.

The evening turned into a really spontaneous little affair. It was the sort of thing the young people of Aden—dwellers in the various frame houses about the town, all sojourners from a common cause—somebody's health—it was the sort of thing these young people got up about every other night in the year. Two mandolins, a violin, and a harp made music. A college boy with a cough, and a Mexican bar-keeper played the mandolins, the local boot and shoe dealer the violin, an Italian the harp, and the whole called itself a string band.

Charlotte Leroy, in a rejuvenated dress of former splendor, was the beaming soul of delight. That Alexina, Willy, and Celeste had really seen to everything Charlotte had no idea, for neither had she sat down that day.

But she beamed now, while Molly's low laughter rose softly.

Alexina rearranged lights and adjusted decorations. She went out to the kitchen and took a reassuring survey. Later, she told the Aden youths who asked, she didn't believe she meant to dance. They did not press her; perhaps it was the gown, perhaps it was her manner preventing. She laughed, as if it mattered! She talked with Mr. Jonas, but all the time she knew that William Leroy, in his white flannel clothes, was

outside, smoking on the gallery. After a while she went out. He was leaning against a pillar, and turned at her step. The night was flooded as by an ecstasy of moonlight. His eyes swept her bare shoulders and arms, the shimmering dress, the jewels, then, turning, he looked away.

"Come and dance," said Alexina.

"I don't know how."

"It's your own fault," said the girl as promptly; "you climbed up on back sheds at dancing school so you wouldn't have to learn."

"It gave me my own satisfaction at the time," said he.

"There's so much that's your own fault," she returned, "and which you cover up by pretending you don't like or want. You're as human as any one else. You make yourself believe you don't want things because you're stubborn and proud, but you do, you do."

"Under proper conditions," he admitted largely, "I might, yes."

"Under any conditions, in your heart you want them, we all want them; you're not different."

"Well, and what then?"

"You are not honest, that is what then."

"Well," he returned, "and what then?"

She was almost crying. "You exonerate yourself, you condone yourself, you say you would, you could, you will—some day, if—if thus and so. You think some better condition is going to bring the confidence to be what nature meant you to be; yes, you do think it; you do, you do. But it has to grow out of yourself. I can tell you that, and when the time you think for comes, to be what you'd like to be, you'll have lost the power. I want to say it, I mean to say it, I want to hurt you, I hope my saying it can hurt you, so I can go away glad, glad I've hurt you. There, I've said it; don't stop me, don't; I came to say it and I'm going back now."

He was breathing hard. "Oh, no," he said, "you're not." He glanced around. Then he stepped down from the gallery and turned. "Come, let yourself go, I'll steady you."

She hesitated, brushing some wet from her cheek with her hand. She did not know until then there had been tears.

"Come," he reiterated. It was the tone, women, even Molly, obeyed.

She slipped down and he caught her and

set her on her feet. "Pick up your dress," he said, "the grass is wet."

Everywhere, it seemed, there were couples strolling. Around to the right, by the side door with its little vine-covered pent house, was a bench beneath a tree; Aunt Mandy and Mrs. Leroy aired their crocks and pans thereon. He led the way to it, spread out his handkerchief, and Alexina, gathering up her gleaming dress, sat down. The comical side of it must have occurred to him, the girl gathering up a dress fit for a princess, to sit there. He laughed, not an altogether humorous laugh.

"Illustrative of the true state of things, as it were," he said. "I proffer my lady a milk-bench."

A sob rose in her throat. "I hate you," she said hotly.

"That you bestow feeling, of any sort, to such degree, is flattering," said he nastily.

"You're very rude."

"It puts us on a sort of equality, and establishes me in my own self-respect, so to speak, to have face to be rude to *une grande dame*—"

"You're not honest, and you know it, and it's hurting you while you're doing it."

"Just so," said William, after the fashion of his father. "Where are you going?"

"To the house."

"Come back."

"I won't. I've said what I had to say."

He came after her. "And now you shall listen." They stood and looked at each other. Her eyes measured him with some scorn, his met the look squarely. "I care for you as the only thing worth while in life," he said.

"I've not so much pride left you need think you have to say that to save it," she burst forth.

"You are the one not true now. You know it; you have known it right along. I hadn't even the arts of your world to know how to conceal it."

"My world!" said Alexina.

"Very well; let's both be honest. I've fought it because I've had enough decency to see the impossibility—oh, my God!—what's the use being fool enough to talk

about it. I haven't one cent on earth that's my own; I'm worse than a beggar, if we are going to be quite honest about matters, since I'm a debtor."

"Oh," said Alexina; "oh, don't."

"I've fought it out, or thought I had, down there in the glades, and then got up and came back because I couldn't let you go—without—"

"I'm glad," said Alexina; "I'm glad."

"You don't know what you're saying."

"I do know," said the girl. "I'm glad, I'm glad—"

"Alexina!"

"I'm glad." Her young face was white and solemn in the moonlight, but her eyes came up to his with a splendid courage. "I'm glad," she repeated.

It might have been a moment, an hour, a day, an aeon, the two looked at each other. Then their hands went out to each other, for very need of human touch in the great awe of it.

When he spoke both were trembling.

"Will you wait?" he asked her. "It may be long." But the note in his voice was new. The fight even then was begun.

"Yes," she told him, grave eyes meeting grave eyes, for young love, like all young things, is solemn. Then he drew her to him, and sight and sound went out, and the solid round earth was spurned. And yet they were but two of the long, unending line, mounting thus to God and His Heaven, for it is for this we are come into the world.

Suddenly Alexina slipped her hands from his and fled.

Molly was on the porch with Mr. Jonas. A toy harness from the cotillion favors jangled on her dress. She had sunk laughing on a bench to get breath.

"Yes," she told Mr. Jonas, "we go in the morning, to Cannes Brulée."

Alexina was coming up on the porch and to Molly. Straight she slipped to her knees and her arms went round her mother.

"Dear me, Malise," said Molly.

The head of the girl hid itself in the curve of the mother's neck and shoulder.

"Dear me, Malise," said Molly; "you're such a child."