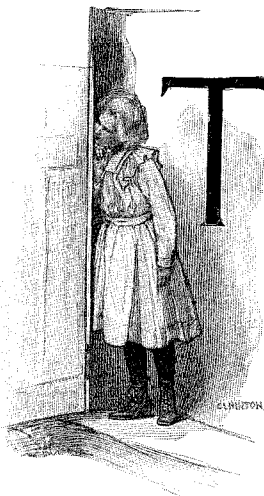




"I SING OF HONOR AND THE FAITHFUL HEART"

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 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.

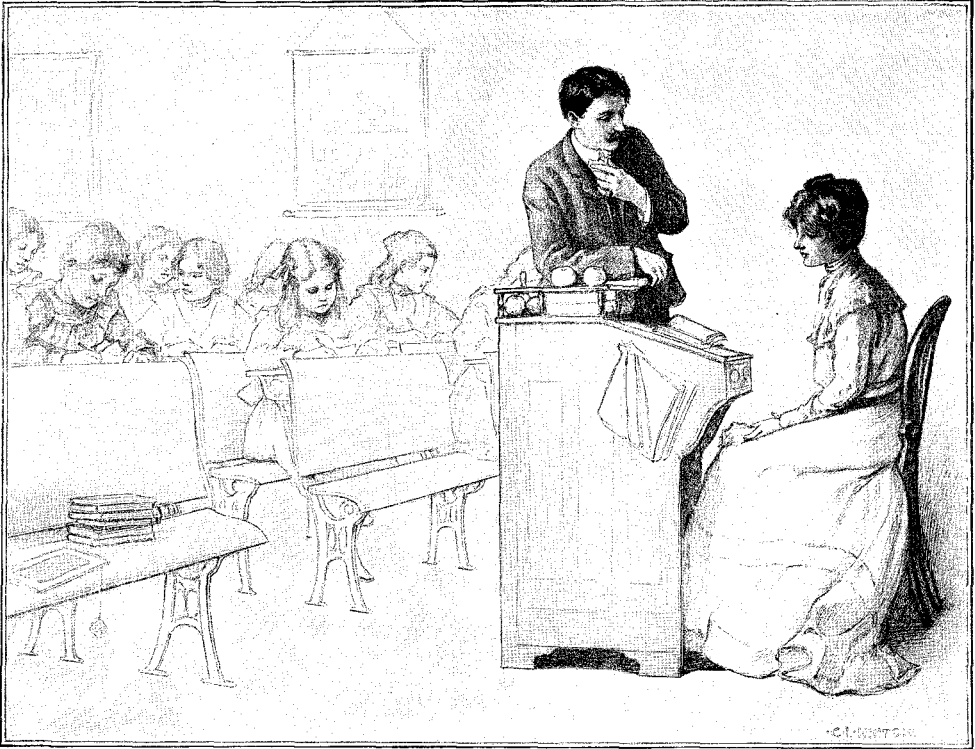
The Substitute's name was Miss Jenny. The class speedily adored Miss Jenny. Soon Miss Jenny's desk might have been a shrine to Pomona. It was joy to forego one's apple to swell the fruitage of adoration piled on Miss Jenny's desk. The class could scarcely be driven to recess, since going tore them from 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 grimness of its second syllable sounded most unpleasant. Appalled and astonished must be bad, but to be chagrined, as Mr. Bryan said it, must be terrible.

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 pretty. 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



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"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 scarcely breathed. 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.

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

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

"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.

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

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?"

"It wasn't any system," Mamie hastened to explain, anxious to disclaim a connection

evidently so undesirable; "it was tissue paper."

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

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

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

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

"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.

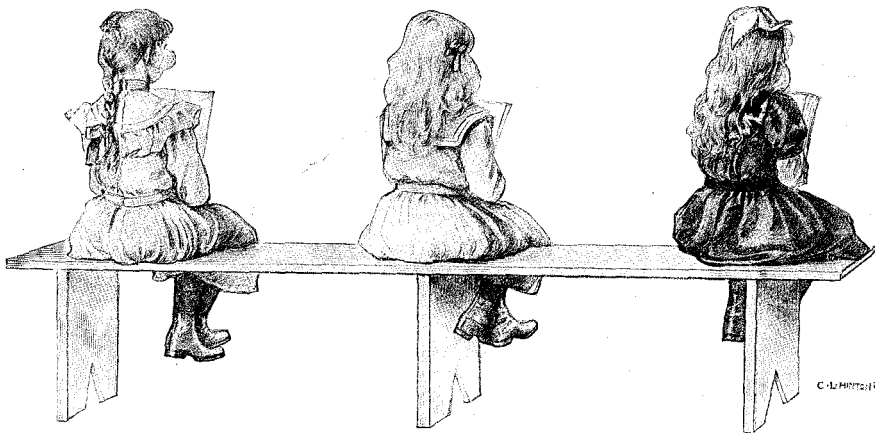
The Third Reader class, stunned, picked up its pencils. Miss Jenny had feared for them in Arithmetic. They had feared for themselves. They were cheats and liars, and they had failed. And the knowledge did not make them confident. They were cheats, and a suspicious and cold surveillance on the part of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

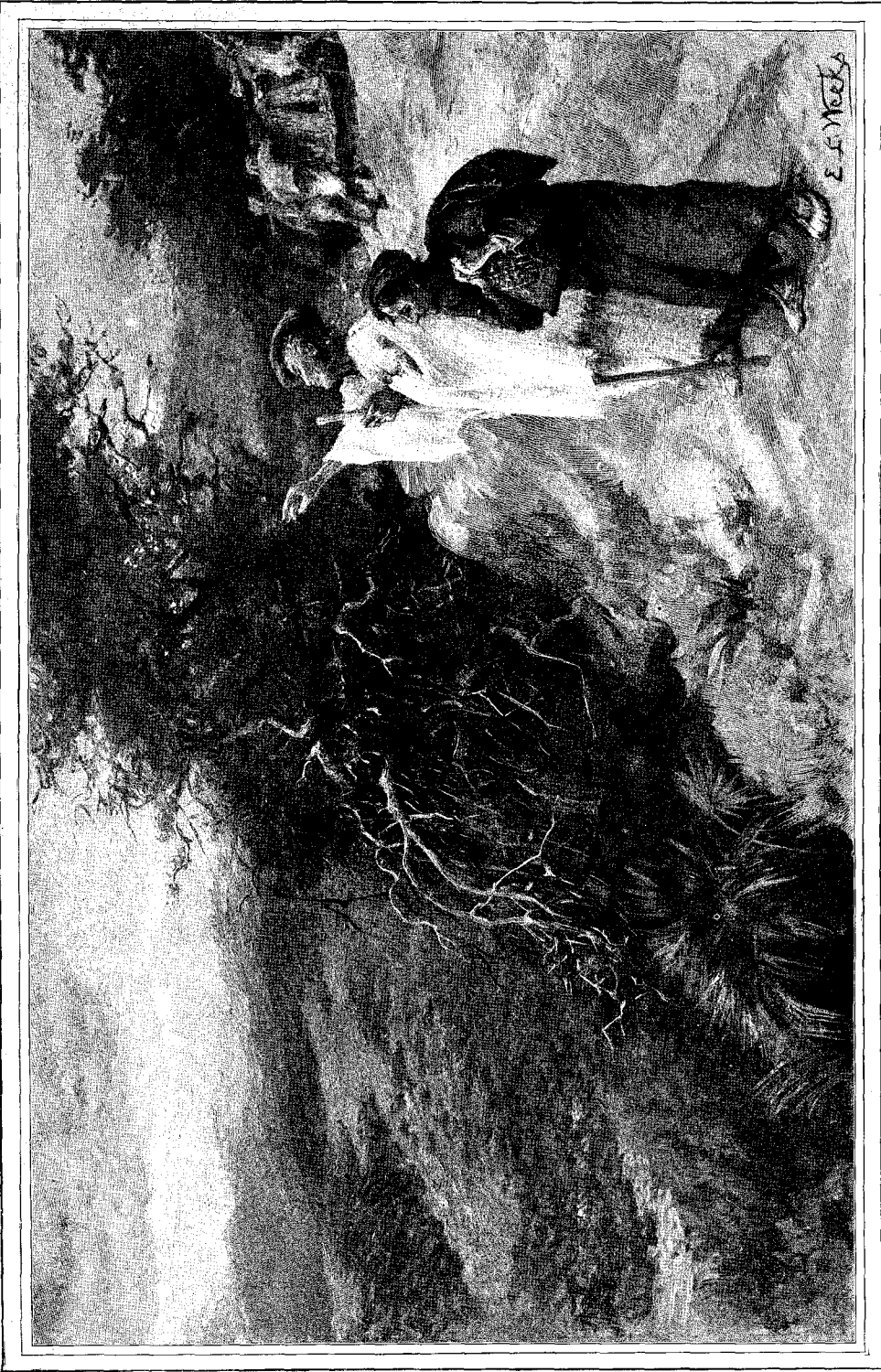
They did better next day in Geography and Reading. They passed on Friday in Spelling and Penmanship.

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!”