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Sweetapple Cove

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Sweetapplecove

By George van SCHAIGK

1914

CHAPTER I

From John Grant's Diary

Have I shown wisdom or made an arrant, egregious fool of myself? This, I suppose, is a question every man puts to himself after taking a sudden decision upon which a great deal depends.

I have shaken the dust of the great city by the Hudson and forsaken its rich laboratories, its vast hospitals, the earnest workers who were beginning to show some slight interest in me. It was done not after mature consideration but owing to the whim of a moment, to a sudden desire to change the trend of things I felt I could no longer contend with.

Now I live in a little house, among people who speak with an accent that has become unfamiliar to the great outside world. They have given up their two best rooms to me, at a rental so small that I am somewhat ashamed to tender it, at the end of every week. I also obtain the constant care and the pleasant smiles of a good old housewife who appears to take a certain amount of pride in her lodger. As far as I know I am the only boarder in Sweetapple Cove, as well as the only doctor. For a day or two after my arrival I accompanied the local parson, Mr. Barnett, on visits to people he considered to be in need of my ministrations. Now they are coming in droves, and many scattered dwellers on the bleak coast have heard of me. Little fishing-smacks meeting others from farther outports have spread the amazing news that there is a doctor at the Cove.

With other pomps and vanities I have given up white shirts and collars, and my recent purchases include oilskins and long boots. This is fashionable apparel here, and my wearing them appears to impart confidence in my ability.

My only reason for writing this is that the Barnetts go to bed early. Doubtless I may also acquire the habit, in good time. Moreover, there is always a danger of disturbing some important sermon-writing. In common decency I can't bother these delightful people every evening, although they have begged me to consider their home as my own. Mrs. Barnett is a most charming woman, and never in my life have I known anything like the welcome she impulsively extended, but she works hard and I cannot intrude too much. Hence the hours after nine are exceedingly long, when it chanced that there are no sick people to look after. At first, of course, I just mooned around, and called myself all sorts of names, honestly considering myself the most stupendous fool ever permitted to exist in freedom from restraint. I plunged into books and devoured the medical weeklies which the irregular mails of the place brought me, yet this did not entirely suffice, and now I have begun to write. It may help the time to pass away, and prevent the attacks of mold and rust. Later on, if things do not shape themselves according to my hopes, these dangers will be of little import. These sheets may then mildew with the dampness of this land, or fly away to sea with the shrewd breezes that sweep over our coast, for all I shall care. At any rate they will have served their purpose.

Of course I am trying to swallow my medicine like a little man. If there is a being I despise it is the fellow who whimpers. There is little that is admirable in professional pugilism, saving the smile often seen on a fighter's face after he has just received a particularly hard and crushing blow. Indeed, that smile is the bruiser's apology for his life.

Lest it be inferred that I have been fighting, I hasten to declare that it was a rather one-sided contest in which I was defeated, lock, stock and barrel, by a mere slip of a girl towards whom I had only lifted up my hands in supplication.

"We are both very young, John," she explained to me, with an exasperating, if unconscious, imitation of the doctors she had observed as they announced very disagreeable things to their patients. "Our lives are practically only beginning. Until now we have been like the vegetables that are brought up in little wooden boxes. We are to be taken up and planted in a field, where we are to grow up into something useful."

"And we shall enjoy a great advantage over the young cabbages and lettuces," I chimed in. "We shall have the inestimable privilege of being permitted to select the particular farm or enclosure that pleases us best."

"Of course," said Dora Maclennon, cheerfully.

"But I should be ever so glad to have you select for the two of us," I told her. "I guarantee to follow you blindly."

She put her hand on my arm and patted it in the abominably soothing way she has doubtless acquired in the babies' ward. In my case it was about as effectual as the traditional red rag to a bull.

"Don't you dare touch me like that," I resented. "I'm quite through with the mumps and measles. My complaint is one you don't understand at all. You are unable to sympathize with me because love, to you, is a mere theoretical thing. You've heard of it, perhaps you are even ready to admit that some people suffer from such an ailment, but you don't really know anything about it. It has not been a part of your curriculum. I've been trying to inoculate you with this distemper but it won't take."

"I suppose I'm a poor sort of soil for that kind of culture," she replied, rather wistfully.

"There is no finer soil in the world," I protested, doggedly.

Every man in the world and at least half the women would have agreed with me. The grace of her charming figure, her smiles and that one little dimple, the waving abundance of her silken hair, the rich inflections of her voice, each and all contradicted that foolish supposition of hers.

"Well, I thought this was an invitation to dinner," remarked Dora, sweetly, with all the brutal talent of her sex for changing the drift of conversation. "Of course they fed us well at the hospital, when we had time to eat, but...."

"Is that your last word?" I asked, trying to subdue the eagerness of my voice.

"If you don't really care to go...."

I rose and sought my hat and overcoat, while Dora wandered about my unpretentious office.

"Your landlady could take lessons from Paddy's pig in cleanliness," she declared, running a finger over my bookcase and contemplating it with horror. "I wonder that you, a surgeon, should be an accomplice to such a mess."

"It's pretty bad," I admitted, "but the poor thing has weak eyes, and she has seen better days."

"She deserves the bad ones, then," Dora exclaimed.

"As in the case of many other maladies, we have as yet been unable to discover the microbe of woman's inhumanity to woman," I observed.

"When doggies meet they commonly growl," said Dora, "and when pussies meet they usually spit and scratch. Each according to his or her nature. And it seems to me that you could afford a new overcoat. That one is positively becoming green."

"I do believe I have another one, somewhere," I admitted.

"Then go and find it," she commanded. "You need some one to look after you."

I turned on her like the proverbial flash, or perhaps like the Downtrodden worm.

"Isn't that just what I've been gnashing my teeth over?" I asked. "I'm glad you have the grace to admit it."

"I'll admit anything you like," she said. "But, John dear, we can't really be sure yet that I'm the one who ought to do it. And--and maybe there will be no room at the tables unless we hurry a little."

She was buttoning up her gloves again, quite coolly, and cast approving glances at some radiographic prints on my wall.

"That must have been a splendid fracture," she commented.

"You are a few million years old in the ways of Eve," I told her, "but you are still young in the practice of trained nursing. To you broken legs and, perhaps, broken hearts, are as yet but interesting cases."

She turned her shapely head towards me, and for an instant her eyes searched mine.

"Do you really believe that?" she asked, in a very low-sweet voice.

I stood before her, penitently.

"I don't suppose I do," I acknowledged. "Let us say that it was just some of the growling of the dog. He doesn't usually mean anything by it."

"You're an awfully good fellow, John," said the little nurse, pleasantly. "I know I've been hurting you a bit. Please, I'm sorry the medicine tastes so badly."

The only thing I could do was to lift up one of her hands and kiss a white kid glove, *faute de mieux*. It was stretched over her fingers, however, and hence was part of her.

When we reached the restaurant she selected a table and placed herself so that she might see as many diners as possible. If there had been people outside of Paradise, Eve would certainly have peeped through the palings. I handed her the bill of fare and she begged for Cape Cods.

"You order the rest of it," she commanded. "I'm going to look."

While I discussed dishes with the waiter her eyes wandered over the big room, taking in pretty dresses and becoming coiffures. Then she watched the leader of the little orchestra, who certainly wielded a masterful bow, and gave a little sigh of content.

"We really could afford this at least once or twice a week," I sought to tempt her, "and the theatre besides, and---and---"

She looked at me very gravely, moving a little from side to side, as if my head presented varied and interesting aspects.

"That's one of the troubles with you," she finally said. "You have some money, a nice reasonable amount of money, and you can afford some things, and I can't tell whether you're going to be an amateur or a professional."

"An amateur?" I repeated, dully.

"I mean no reflection upon your abilities," she explained, hurriedly. "I know all that you have done in London and in Edinburgh, and these German places. You can tack more than half the letters of the alphabet after your name if you choose to. But I don't quite see what you are doing in New York."

"You wrote that you were coming to study nursing here," I reminded her. "This is now a great centre of scientific research, thanks to the princely endowments of the universities. Have you the slightest notion of how many years I have loved you, Dora?"

"Not quite so loud," she reproved me. "I believe it began in dear old St. John's. You were about fourteen when you declared your passion, and I wore pigtails and exceedingly short skirts. My legs, also, were the spindliest things."

"Yes, that was the beginning, Dora, and it has continued ever since. During the years I spent abroad we kept on writing. It seemed to me that the whole thing was settled. I've always had your pictures with me; the first was little Dora, and the other one was taken when you first did your hair up and wore long dresses. During all that time St. John's was the garden of the Hesperides, and you were the golden thing I was toiling for. When you wrote that you were coming to New York I took the next boat over. Then you told me I must wait until you graduated. And now, after your commencement, I hoped, indeed I hoped---I'm afraid I'm worrying you, dear."

She smiled at me, very pleasantly, but the little dimple held naught but mystery. I really think her eyes implied a sort of regret, as if she wished she could make the ordeal less hard for me.

The waiter brought the oysters, which Dora consumed appreciatively. I was simply compelled to eat also, lest she should deem me a peevish loser in the great game I had sought to play. Yet I remember that these Cape Cods were distinctly hard to swallow, delicious though they probably were.

Suddenly she looked up, and the little oyster impaled on her fork dropped on the plate.

"There's Taurus!" she exclaimed, with gleaming eyes.

She was looking at a rather tall man, of powerful build, whose abundant hair was splendidly tinged with silver, and who was coming in with a very beautiful woman.

"Is that what you nurses call him?" I asked, recognizing one of the great surgeons of the world.

"Yes," she answered. "Isn't he wonderful? We're all in love with him, the mean thing."

"Kindly explain the adjective," I urged her. "Is it due to the fact that he protected himself against the wiles of a host of pretty women by marrying the sweetest one of the lot---with a single exception---to the utter despair of the remainder?"

"Did you ever hear him blow up his house-staff?" Dora asked me.

"I have heard that he could be rather strenuous at times," I admitted.

"Well, that's how he infringes on our rights," Dora informed me. "I have never heard him say an angry word to a nurse. He just has a way of smiling at one, as if he were beholding an infinitesimal infant totally incapable of understanding. The sarcasm of it is utterly fierce and the nurse goes off, red and shaken, and feels like killing him. Don't you think we've got just as good a right as any whipper-snapper of a new intern to be blown up?"

"Evidently," I assented. "It is an unfair discrimination."

"And yet we're all just crazy for him. You can hardly understand how the personality of the man permeates the wards, how he gives one the impression of some wonderful being who has reached a pinnacle, and remains there, smilingly, without heeding the crowd below that worships and cheers. And how the patients adore him!"

She evidently expected no answer from me, nor did I venture upon one. Her words were very significant, and gave me a rather hopeless feeling. She was under the influence of the glamour of great names and reputations. Her youth demanded hero-worship. Measured by her standards I was but a nice friend, to whom she could even be affectionate.

Presently, in her enjoyment of our modest little dinner, she turned to me, appearing to forget the crowd, and sighed happily.

"This would all be so delightful," she said, "if..."

"I'll tell you, girlie," I said, "let us agree that all this has been a dream of mine. We will say that I have never been in love with you, and regard you now with profound indifference. It has been that which some very amazing practitioners are pleased to call an error. Now you will be able to enjoy happiness. As far as I am concerned I don't suppose it can make me feel any worse."

"You're a dear good boy, John," she answered. "We shall always be awfully good friends, and perhaps, some day ... Now you must tell me all your plans."

"Ladies first," I objected.

"Well, my heart is still in Newfoundland, you know. But I'm going to stay at least a year in New York. I'm going to work among the poorest and most unpleasant, because I want to become self-reliant. Then I shall go back home. Think of a trained nurse let loose in some of those outports! I should just revel in it. I am an heiress worth five hundred dollars a year of my own. That would keep a lot of people up there. You see, I have a theory!"

"Will you be so kind as to share it with me?" I asked.

"Well, ordinary nursing is a humdrum thing" and there are thousands to do it. It is the same thing with you. Just now, having no practice as yet, you are working in laboratories with a lot of others; you run around hospitals---also with a crowd. What do you know about your ability to go right out and do a man's work, by yourself? That is what counts, to my mind."

"I see the point," I informed her, "and you expect surely to return to the land of codfish."

"Yes," she nodded, "and now what about you?"

"Oh, I am going there next week," I replied. She opened her eyes very wide, vaguely scenting some sort of joke, but in this she erred.

"I see no use in remaining here," I said, with a determination as strong as it was recent. "It would take me a long time to put myself on the level of men like Taurus, and I don't want a lot of nurses falling in love with me; I only asked for one. You are going back after a time. Very well, I'm going now, and I'll wait for you. I can easily find some place where a doctor is badly needed. You will answer my letters, won't you?"

"I promise," she said, very gravely, "and it is a very good idea. One can always do a man's work up there."

She ate a Nesselrode pudding while I enjoyed coffee and a cigar, to the extent that I forgot to drink the one and allowed the other to go out after a puff or two.

"Your money came from a good St. John's merchant who made it from the people of the outports," she said. "You might spend a little on them now, gracefully. They need it badly enough."

We remained silent for some time, thinking of the bleak coast of our big island, where the price of our little dinner would have represented a large sum, and then we left the restaurant and took a car up town.

When she finally held out her little hand to me it was warm, and I fancied that from it came a current that was comforting, though it may have been but the affectionate regard of some years of good friendship.

"You will dine again with me, next Thursday?" I asked her. "It will take me a few days to get ready."

"Don't you think that Gordian knot had better be cut at once?" advised Dora. "I won't change my mind, and you know I've always been an obstinate thing. There are important things for both of us to achieve, somewhere. I must grope about to find my share of them, for I feel like the ship that did not find itself till it encountered a storm or two. If I promised to

meet you next week you would keep on hoping. Do plunge right in now instead of shivering on the bank."

"Don't trouble about any more metaphors," I told her. "You promise to go home within a year?"

"I firmly intend to," she replied, "but you can't always depend on a woman's plans."

"If I can't depend on you I have very little left to believe in," I declared.

"I'm pretty sure I'll come," she said, "and---and God bless you, John!"

So we separated there, in the silent street, before the nurses' home where she had taken a room a few days after her graduation. I couldn't trust myself to say anything more.

The door closed upon her and I slowly walked back to my quarters, with a head full of dreary thoughts, and several times narrowly escaped speeding taxis and brought down upon myself some picturesque language.

I fear that I was hardly in a mood to appreciate its beauty.

CHAPTER II

From John Grant's Diary

Four weeks ago, this evening, I sat with Dora in that bright dining room at the Rochambeau. My description of that last meeting of ours is a rather flippant one, I fancy, but some feminine faces are improved by powder, and some men's sentiments by a veneer of assumed cheerfulness. That cut of mine has not the slightest intention of healing by first intention; it is gaping as widely as ever, as far as I can judge. Yet I am glad I made no further effort. I suppose a man had better stop before he gets himself disliked.

Yesterday morning I came out of a dilapidated dwelling in which I had spent the whole night, and scrambled away over some rocks. When I sat down my legs were hanging over a chasm at the foot of which grandly rolling waves burst into foam, keeping up the warfare waged during a million years against our sturdy cliffs.

Rays of dulled crimson sought to penetrate, feebly, through the fog, as if the sun knew only too well how often it had been defeated in its contest against the murky vapors of this hazy land.

My meeting with Mr. Barnett on the *Rosalind* was a most fortunate accident. The earnest little clergyman sat next to me at the table, and immediately engaged me in conversation. I gathered from him that he had been begging in the great city and had managed to collect a very few hundred dollars for his little church. He spoke most cheerfully of all that he meant to achieve with all this wealth.

"I am going to have the steeple finished," he said. "It will take but a few feet of lumber, and we still have half a keg of nails. Some day I expect to have a little reading room, and perhaps a magic lantern. I will try to give them some short lectures. I am ambitious, and hope that I am not expecting too much. We are really doing very nicely at Sweetapple Cove."

"Where is that?" I asked him.

The little parson gave me the desired geographical information and, finding me interested, began to speak of his work.

He was one of the small band of devoted men whose lives are spent on the coast, engaged in serving their fellow-men to the best of their abilities. The extent of his parish was scarcely limited by the ability of a fishing boat to travel a day's journey, and he spoke very modestly of some rather narrow escapes from storm and ice.

"If we only had a doctor!" he sighed. "Mrs. Barnett and I do our best. Things are sometimes just heartrending."

At once I manifested interest, and angled for further information. This was just the sort of place I had in mind. It appeared that the nearest doctor was more than a day's travel away, and that the population was rather too poor to afford the luxury of professional advice.

"We sometimes feel very hopeless," he told me.

"How do you reach Sweetapple Cove?" I asked him.

"There will be a little schooner in a few days," he answered.

"I am a physician," I announced, "and am looking for exactly that kind of a practice."

We were strolling on the deck at this time. Mr. Barnett turned quickly and grasped my arm.

"There is hardly a dollar there for you," he said. "No sane man would come to such a place to practice. And there is a little hardship in that sort of work. You don't realize it."

"I am under the impression that it is just the place for me," I told him.

"There is really good salmon fishing in Sweetapple River," he began, excitedly, "and you can get caribou within a day's walk, and there are lots of trout, and..."

I could see that he was eager to find some redeeming points for Sweetapple Cove.

"Behold the tempter," I laughed.

"Dear me! Of course I did not mean to tempt you," he said, flushing like a girl. "And I'm afraid you would have to live in some fisherman's house, and to furnish medicines as well as your services. Of course they might pay you something if the fishing happened to be good. It sometimes is, you know."

As soon as we arrived in St. John's I made many and sundry purchases, with a proper discount for cash, and three days later we sailed out of the harbor on a tiny schooner laden with salt, barrels of flour and various other provisions. In less than forty-eight hours we arrived in Sweetapple Cove. The delighted reception I received from Mrs. Barnett, a sweet lovable woman, exalted my ideas of the value of my profession. She simply gloated over me and patted her husband on the back as if his superior genius had been the true cause of my arrival. At once she made arrangements for my living with Captain Sammy Moore, an ancient of the sea whose nice old wife accepted with tremulous pride the honor of sheltering me. The inhabitants and their offspring, the dogs and the goats, the fowls and the solitary cow, trooped about me for closer inspection, and my practice became at once established.

I have taken some formidable walks over the barrens back inland, and have angled with distinguished success. The days are becoming fairly crowded ones.

Shortly after sunrise, the day before yesterday, I was called upon to go to a little island several miles out at sea. Captain Sammy and a man called Frenchy took me out there. Their little fishing smack is the cab I use for running my remoter errands. I found a man nearly dying from a bad septic wound of his right arm. I judged that he might possibly survive an amputation, but that the loss of the breadwinner's limb would have been just as bad, as far as his family was concerned, as the death of the patient. There was nothing to do but grit one's teeth and take chances. I remained with him throughout the night, and in the morning was glad to detect some slight improvement.

The keen breeze that expanded my lungs as I sat on the rocks did me a great deal of good. It rested me after the dreary vigil and presently I returned to my patient. I'm afraid that we men are poor nurses. We can keep on fighting and struggling and trying, but when we have to sit still and watch with folded arms the iron enters our souls, while the consciousness of helpless waiting is after all the bitterest thing we can contend against. Women are far more patient and enduring.

Constantly I renewed the dressings, and bathed the limb in antiseptics, and gave a few stimulating drugs. Then I would watch the man's hurried breathing and feverish pulse. But I could not remain with idle hands very long at a time, and frequently strolled out to breathe the sea-scented air, in some place well to windward of the poor little fishhouses that reeked infamously with the scattered offal of cod. A disconsolate man was trying to mend a badly frayed net and a few ragged children, gaunt and underfed, followed me about, curiously, whispering among themselves.

The sick man's wife sat most of the time, near the bed, hour after hour, a picture of intense, stolid misery. From time to time she wailed because there was no more tea. Always she hastened to obey my slightest request, clumsily, faithfully, like some humble dog to which some hard and scarcely understood task might have been given. One could see that she really had no hope. The usual way was for the men to fail to return, some day, when they went out and were caught in a bad storm, or when the ice-floes drifted out to sea, and then the women would wait, patiently, until the certainty of their bereavement had entered their souls. This one had the sad privilege of witnessing the tragedy. It was all happening in the little house of disjointed planks, and perhaps she took some comfort in the idea that she would be there at the last moment. It was easy to see, however, that she considered my efforts as some sort of rite which, at most, might comfort the dying.

Before noon, when the haze had lifted before the sweep of a north east wind, one of the children called. The mother went out, hurriedly, while I stood at the open door. About a mile away a stunning white schooner was steaming towards the entrance of Sweetapple Cove.

"I'm a-wonderin' what she be doin' here," said the woman, dully. "She ain't no ship of our parts. I never seen the like o' she."

There was a glinting of light cast forth by bright brasses, and I could see a red spot which appeared to indicate the presence of a woman on board, clad perhaps in a crimson cape or shawl.

We kept on staring at her for some time, as people do in forsaken places when a stranger passes by, and we returned to the bedside.

The day stretched out its interminable length, but the night was longer still. The children had been put to bed in dark corners, after a meal of fish and hard bread. The smallest had clamored for some tea.

"There ain't no more," said the mother.

I had noticed that she had put aside a very small package of this luxury, on a high shelf.

"Why don't you give them some?" I asked. "You forget that you have a little laid aside."

"There won't be none left fer you," she answered.

I ordered her to put the kettle on the fire at once and make tea for her young ones, and bade her take some also.

"I told Sammy Moore to bring some to-morrow," I told her.

I am afraid that I dozed a good many times, that night, on the little low stool near the bed. There was not much to be done. Gradually it dawned upon me that the man was getting better. The stimulants had produced some reaction, and the hot dry skin was becoming moister. I feared it might be but a temporary improvement, and hardly dared mention it. Yet the man was no longer delirious. Several times he asked for water, and once looked at me curiously, with a faint attempt at a smile, before his head again sank down on the pillow.

Finally the sunlight came again, shortly after the smoky lamp had been extinguished, and I went out of the house, when the chill of the early morning seized me so that for a moment my teeth chattered. The woman followed me.

"He do be a dreadful long time dyin'," she said, miserably.

I suppose that I was nervous and weary with the two long nights of watching, and lost mastery over myself. To me those words sounded heartless, although now I realize they came from the depth of her woe.

"You have no right to say such things," I reproved her sharply. "I don't think he is going to die. I believe that we have saved him."

Then she sank on the ground, grasping one of my chilly hands and weeping over it. These were the first tears she had shed and I saw how grievously I had erred. As gently as I could I lifted her to her feet.

"I'm sorry I spoke so gruffly," I said. "But I really believe that we are going to pull him through, and that we shall save his arm."

At noon-time we saw the white yacht coming out of Sweetapple Cove. She was speeding away in the direction of St. John's. The weather was beginning to spoil, and at the foot of the seaward cliffs the great seas, smooth and oily, boomed with great crashes that portended a coming storm.

Early in the afternoon the wind was coming in black squalls, accompanied by a rolling mist. As I looked towards the mainland I saw a fishing boat coming, leaning hard to the strong gale. An hour later Sammy and his man landed in the tiny cove and the old fellow came rushing towards me.

"You is wanted to come ter onst," he said. "They is a man come yisterday on that white yacht. He went up th' river fur salmon, jist after his boat left, and bruk the leg o' he slippin' on the rocks. Yer got to come right now,"

I took the small package he brought me and rushed up to the house with it. The improvement had continued, and I gave careful directions in regard to continuing the treatment. After this I descended to the tiny beach where the boat was waiting.

"She be nasty when yer gets from the lee o' the island," Sammy informed me. "I mistrust its gettin' worse and some fog rollin' in wid' it. Mebbe yer doesn't jist feel like reskin' it?"

"How about your wife and children, Sammy?" I asked. "There is no one depending on me."

He took a long look, quietly gauging the possibilities.

"I'm a-thinkin' we's like to make it all right," he finally told me.

"And what about you and the little boy, Frenchy?" I asked the other man.

"Me go orright," he answered. "Me see heem baby again."

So we jumped aboard. The tiny cove was so sheltered that we had to give a few strokes of the oars before, suddenly, the little ship heeled to the blow.

CHAPTER III

From John Grant's Diary

In a few minutes the slight protection afforded us by Will's Island was denied us. I was anxious to ask further details about this injured man we were hurrying to see, but the two fishermen had no leisure for conversation. A few necessary words had to be shrieked. Even before I had finished putting on my oilskins the water was dashing over us, and old Sammy, at the tiller, was jockeying his boat with an intense preoccupation that could not be interfered with.

The smack was of a couple of tons' burden, undecked, with big fish-boxes built astern and amidships. She carried two slender masts with no bowsprit to speak of, having no headsails, and her two tanned wings bellied out while the whole of her fabric pitched and rolled over the white crested waves. The fog was growing denser around us, as if we had been journeying through a swift-moving cloud. It was scudding in from the Grand Banks, pushed by a chill gale which might first have passed over the icy plateaux of inner Greenland.

This lasted for a long time. We were all staring ahead and seeking to penetrate the blinding veil of vapor, and I felt more utterly strayed and lost than ever in my life before. Our faces were running with the salt spray that swished over the bows or flew over the quarters, to stream down into the bilge at our feet, foul with fragments of squid and caplin long dead. We were also beginning to listen eagerly for other sounds than the wind hissing in the cordage, the breaking of wave-tops and the hard thumping of the blunt bows upon the seas.

"Look out sharp, byes, I'm mistrusting'," roared old Sammy.

There were some long tense moments, ended by a shriek from Frenchy by the foremast.

"Hard a-lee!"

The sails shook in the wind and swung in-board, and out again, with a rattling of the little blocks. The forefoot rose high, once or twice, with the lessened headway, and a great savage mass of rock passed alongside, stretching out jagged spurs, like some wild beast robbed of its prey. Frenchy, ahead, crossed himself quietly, without excitement, and again peered into the fog.

"Close call!" I shouted to the skipper, after I had recovered my breath, since I am not yet entirely inured to the risks these men constantly run.

"We nigh got ketched," roared back Sammy Moore. "I were mistrustin' the tide wuz settin' inshore furdern common. But I knows jist where I be now, anyways."

His grim wrinkled face was unmoved, for during all his life he had been staring death in the face and such happenings as these were but incidents in the day's work.

"I doesn't often git mistook," he shouted, "but fer this once it looks like the joke were on me."

The little smack continued to rise and fall over the surge. Yves, the Frenchman, remained at his post forward, holding on to the foremast and indifferent to the spray that was drenching him as he stared through the fog, keenly. My attention was becoming relaxed for, after all, I was but a passenger. Despite Sammy's close shave I maintained a well-grounded faith in him. It was gorgeous to see him speed his boat over the turbulent waters with an inbred skill and ease which reminded one of seagulls buffeting the wind or harbor seals playing in their element. Like these the man was adapted to his life, not because he possessed wonderful intelligence but owing to the brine which, since childhood, had entered his blood. The vast ice-pans had revealed their secrets to him and the North Atlantic gales had become the breath of his nostrils.

I can remember a time when I had an idea that I could handle a boat fairly well, but now I was compelled to recognize my limitations, while I really enjoyed the exhibition of Sammy's skill.

"We'd ought ter be gettin' handy," roared the latter to Frenchy, who nodded back, turning towards us his dripping, bearded face, for an instant.

Suddenly he extended his arm.

"Me see. To port!" he shouted.

Dimly, veiled by the fog curtain, of ghostly outline, a jutting cliff appeared and Sammy luffed slightly. On both sides of us the seas were dashing up some tremendous rocks, but directly ahead there was an opening between the combers that hurled themselves aloft, roaring and impotent, to fall back into seething masses of spume. There was a suggestion of tremendous walls over which voices were shrieking in the battle of unending centuries between the moving turmoil and the stolid cliffs, defying the battering waves.

Our little boat flew on, and suddenly the rolling and pitching ceased as if some magic had oiled the waters. Within the land-locked cove the wind no longer howled and the surface was smooth. It was like awaking from the unrest of a nightmare to the peace of one's bed. We glided on, losing headway, for Frenchy had let the sheets run. With movements apparently slow, yet with the deftness which brings quick results, the sails were gathered about the masts and made fast, and presently we drifted against the small forest of poles supporting the flakes and fishhouses. These were black and glistening with the rain and from them came an odor, acrid and penetrating, of decaying fish in ill-emptied gurry-butts and of putrefying livers oozing out a black oil in open casks.

We made our way over the precarious footing of unstable planks and shook ourselves like wet dogs, while Sammy stopped for a moment to hunt beneath his oilskins for a sodden plug of tobacco, from which he managed to gnaw off a satisfactory portion.

"Well, we's here, anyways," he observed, quietly.

"Sammy, you're a wonderful man!" I exclaimed, earnestly.

The old fellow looked at me, but his seamed face appeared devoid of understanding. Slowly there seemed to dawn upon his mind the idea that this might be some sort of jest on my part, and the tanned leather of his countenance wrinkled further into a near approach to a smile, as we started up the steep path leading up to the village.

Yet I had meant no pleasantry whatever, for really I was awed by the mystery of it all. In the fog that rolled in with the north-east gale we had left Will's Island, ten miles away, and skirted, without ever seeing them, some miles of cliffs. We had avoided scores of rocks over which the seas broke fiercely, and had finally dashed through a narrow opening in the appalling face of the huge ledge, unerringly. To me it seemed like a gigantic deed, beyond the powers of man.

The path began to widen, and Sammy again vouchsafed some information, taking up his slender thread of narrative as if it had never been interrupted.

"So they carries him up to th' house, on a fishbarrow, an' they sends for me, an' wuz all talkin' to onst, sayin' I must git you quick an' never mind what it costs. Them people don't mind what-nothin' costs, 'pears to me."

By this time we had risen well above the waters of Sweetapple Cove. The few scattered small houses appeared through the mist, their eaves dripping in unclean puddles. The most pretentious dwelling in the place is deserted. It boasts a small veranda and a fairly large front window over which boards have been nailed. In very halt and ill-formed letters a sign announces "The Royal Shop," a title certainly savoring of affluence. But it is a sad commentary upon the prosperity of the Cove that even a Syrian trader has tried the place and failed to eke out a living there.

Some dispirited goats forlornly watched our little procession for a moment, and resumed their mournful hunt outside the palings of tiny enclosures jealously protected against their incursions among a few anemic cabbages.

A little farther on the only cow in the place, who is descended from the scriptural lean ones, was munching the discarded tail of a large codfish which probably still held a faint flavor of the salt with which it had been preserved. Nondescript dogs, bearing very little resemblance to the original well-known breed, wandered aimlessly under the pelting rain.

Frenchy reached his dilapidated shack, and was the first to stop.

"Vell, so long," he said.

"*Au revoir a demain!*" I answered, as well as I could.

His somber, swarthy face brightened at the sound of words of his own tongue. I believe that to him they were a tiny glimpse of something well-beloved and of memories that refused to grow dim. For a moment he stood at the door, beaming upon me. A small boy came out, very grimy of face and hands and with a head covered with yellow curls. He was chiefly clad in an old woollen jersey repaired with yarn of many hues, that nearly reached his toes.

"*Papa Yves!*" he cried, leaping up joyfully, quite heedless of Frenchy's dripping oilskins.

The sailor lifted up the child and kissed him, whereupon he grasped the man's flaring ears as they projected from the huge tangled beard, and with a burst of happy laughter kissed him on both cheeks, under the eyes, in the only bare places.

We hurried on and soon reached one of the few houses distinguished from others by a coat of paint. By this time the evening was near at hand, yet the darkness would not have justified as yet a thrifty Newfoundland housewife in burning valuable kerosene. But from the windows of this place poured forth abundant light showing recklessness as to expense. Upon the porch were a few feeble geraniums, and some nasturtiums and bachelor's buttons twined themselves hopefully

on strings disposed for them.

At the sound of our footsteps the door was quickly opened. A young woman appeared but the light was behind her and her features were not very distinct.

"Couldn't you get him?" she cried, in sore disappointment.

"Yes, ma'am. That's what I went for," said Sammy. "I telled yer I'd sure bring him, and here he be."

I had come nearer, and then, I am afraid, I somewhat forgot my manners and stared at her.

CHAPTER IV

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Aunt Jennie:

I did try so hard to get you to come on this cruise with us. You said you preferred remaining in Newport to sharing in a wild journey to places one has never heard of, and now I am compelled to recognize your superior wisdom. I wish we had never heard of this dreadful hole. I am now reduced to the condition of a weepful Niobe, utterly helpless to contend against the sad trend of events. I know how much you disapprove of lingering, being such an active little body, and so I will tell you the worst at once. Poor dear Daddy has just broken his leg, and, of all places, in the most forsaken hole and corner of this dreary island of Newfoundland.

Daddy has always boasted of his perseverance in the pursuit of the unusual in sport. This time he found it with a vengeance. Our mate, who hails from these parts, once told him of this place, and implied that the salmon in the little river running down into this cove would take a fly whether awake or asleep, and jostled one another for the privilege. While Daddy is rather fond of a gun, you and I know that there are only two weapons he is really absorbed in. I suppose that the first is the instrument he uses to cut off coupons with, and the next is his salmon rod, which I would like to break into little pieces, for it has been the cause of turning our long bowsprit towards this horrid jumble of rock and sea. I considered that we were lucky to have found our way into Sweetapple Cove without any particular disaster, but of course such luck could not last long.

We ought never to have come any way, for our skipper, the descendant of Vikings, had implied that our schooner was in need of all sorts of repairs, and that sensible people did not start off on long cruises just after months in Florida which had converted the ship's bottom into a sort of vegetable garden. Daddy consoled him by telling him he could leave us there and go off to St. John's to the dry-dock.

You know how pleasantly Daddy speaks to people, and how they detect under his words a firmness which effectively prevents long discussion. Stefansson is really a racing skipper, but he likes his berth on the *Snowbird* and said nothing more. We reached this place where, for lack of level ground, the few houses use all sorts of stilts and crutches, and invaded the village to the intense amazement of the populace and its dogs.

Then came Daddy's genius for organization. Within two hours we had rented a little house for next to nothing a week, furnished it in sixty minutes with odds and ends from the yacht, including our little brass bedsteads, which the people here firmly believe to be pure gold, A wild daughter of the Cove, a descendant of the family that gave it its extraordinary name, was engaged as a general servant. Daddy's valet and the cook had wept when they saw the place, and Father informed them that they were rubbish and might go back with the *Snowbird*, which presently sailed off for the scraping it

appears to be entitled to.

Daddy at once selected a rod with all the care such affairs of state require, and set forth across the cove with two natives, in a dory. They went ashore on the banks of the little river and began to clamber over a terrific jumble of rocks. A salmon was caught so quickly that Father grew boyish with enthusiasm and capered over more rocks.

And then came the accident, Aunt Jennie, and I am still shaky, and tearful, and though I try to write like a normal human being I am desirous of shrieking. There was just a slip and a fall, and a foot caught between two boulders. Poor Daddy was dragged from the swift water into which he had been wading and placed in the bottom of the dory, a most damp and smelly ambulance.

Of course I dashed down to the shore as soon as people came to tell me what had happened, and naturally I got into everybody's way. It was strange to see how these very rough-looking men took hold of poor Daddy. They were just as gentle as could be, and made an arrangement of fish-carrying barrows upon which they lifted him up and brought him to the house.

I was weeping all this time and Daddy consoled me by telling me not to be a fool. Susie, our new handmaiden, simply howled. We were bundled out, chiefly by Daddy's language, and clamored for a doctor. It actually transpired that there was one in the place, to my infinite relief. The fact that he was gone to a little island away out at sea appeared to be but an insignificant detail. An ancient mariner whom Coleridge must have been acquainted with promised to go and bring him back. If the weather did not turn out too badly he would return in three or four hours. He informed me that it was beginning to look very nasty outside. It always does, in such cases, I believe.

I spent the afternoon trying to do all I could for Daddy, and occasionally climbed up on the cliff nearly adjoining our house, to watch for the boat. An abominable fog began to come up, rolling before a dreadful wind, and I moistened more handkerchiefs, since it was perfectly evident to me that no small boat would ever return to land in such a blow. Susie told me that I must not despair, and that people did really manage to work fishing boats in such weather, sometimes. I considered her to be a cheerful prevaricator, and told her she didn't know what she was talking about. At this she curtsied humbly and assented with the "Yis, ma'am" of the lowly, and all I could do was to keep on despairing.

It was really the most dismal afternoon I ever spent, and when it began to get dark I gave up all hope. After I had become thoroughly saturated with misery Susie came to me, grinning.

"It's heerd men a comin'," she told me. "Like as not it's th' doctor."

I dashed out of the front door and met two dreadful looking creatures in oilskins. As one of them was the ancient mariner I made up my mind he had failed in his mission. But the other stared at me for an instant, quietly stepped on the few planks we call the porch, and began to shed his outer skin, which fell with a flop.

"Are you the doctor?" I finally asked him.

He bowed, very civilly, followed me into the house, and the other man placidly sat down on the porch, while the slanting rain rattled on his armour. I need hardly tell you that these people are as amphibious as manatees.

Once within doors I scrutinized the doctor. He was a rather nice tall chap with hair showing slightly the dearth of barbers in Sweetapple Cove, a fact Daddy had informed himself of, for I had seen him looking disconsolately at a safety razor. This man was also rather badly unshaven, and a blue flannel shirt with a sodden string of a necktie formed part of his apparel. I have seen healthy longshoremen rather more neatly garbed. I'm afraid that at first I was badly disappointed.

I stood at the door of father's room, which is also the parlor and dining room, hesitating foolishly. At last I asked the man to come in.

"Daddy dear, here is the doctor," I said.

You know that father does not consider himself merely as a tax-payer, and a connoisseur in split bamboos. He prides himself upon his knowledge of men and, before trusting himself to this one, had to study him carefully. I could see that he was taken a little by surprise.

"Er---er," he hesitated, "are you a physician, sir?"

"Appearances are deceptive in these jumping-off places," answered the young man. "I possess a diploma or two, and such knowledge as I have is entirely at your service."

He didn't really seem to be at all embarrassed. His look was rather a pleasant one, after all, and suddenly I became inspired with confidence. I think Daddy was impressed in the same way.

"I'm in an awful fix," he announced. "I am quite sure that my leg is broken, and of course it requires the very best attention. I can afford to take no chances with it and need a first-class man. Are you quite sure...?"

The doctor sat down by the bed, quietly, and appeared to look at Daddy understandingly. He doubtless realized that he was in the presence of one of those men whose success in life, together with the possession of grand-parents, causes them to regard themselves as endowed with the combined wisdom of the law and the prophets. I am quite sure that he also detected the big fund of common sense which lurks in the keen grey eyes under Daddy's bushy eye-brows.

"You have my deepest sympathy, Mr. Jelliffe," he began. "I need hardly point out the fact that I am the only doctor available. I am going to do my very best for you. They have some very good men in St. John's, and we may be able to get one of them to come down here, in a few days, to look over my work. In the meanwhile your leg must be attended to so that no further harm will be done. Let us have a look at it."

"I'll have to trust you," said Daddy, very soberly.

"Of course you will have to, Daddy," I put in. "You must be very good. When you move your poor leg hurts you dreadfully, and the doctor will fix it so that it won't be so painful."

I stood at the head of the bed and poor Daddy allowed me to stroke his hand, a thing he usually resents. I know that he was in great pain and feared other unknown tortures. The poor man looked at the tall doctor's big hands as if he deemed them instruments of potential torture. One really couldn't blame him for having scant confidence in a man whose business appears to be the care of this poverty-stricken population.

The doctor was pulling off his heavy pea-jacket and appeared in dark blue flannel which revealed very capable shoulders. They reminded me of Harry Lawrence. The ancient mariner came in with a bag he had been sent for. He had also deposited his oilskins on the porch and respected other conventionalities by removing his great muddy boots and entering the room in huge flaming scarlet socks, neatly darned with white yarn. He smiled blandly at Daddy.

"Hope you is feelin' some better, sir," he said. "Don't you be talkin', for if you isn't t'won't be no time afore you is. You're sure in luck as how I could bring him, an' I'll jist lay yer a quintal as how he's goin' to fix yer shipshape."

Then there was a knock at the door and a dripping woman entered. There was not the slightest trace of timidity in her manner. Really, Aunt Jennie, I thought at first that she was the most awful frump I had ever seen. Her head was wrapped in a soaking little shawl, and her dress was a remnant of grand-mother's days. Yet the poise of her head, the pleasant smile upon her face and, more than all, her delightful voice, gave an immediate hint of infinitely good breeding.

"Can't I help?" she asked. "I'd be awfully glad to. I should have been in before but I was detained at the Burtons'. Had to look after the woman during your absence, Dr. Grant."

"I beg to introduce the providence of Sweetapple Cove," said the doctor. "Mrs. Barnett is the one person who proves the vulgar error that none of us is indispensable."

She threw off her shawl, laughing.

"The doctor and I often hunt in couples," she explained.

Her voice was really the most delightful thing you ever heard. I forgot her clothes, and her big boots, and went up to her, holding out my hand.

"Won't you let me take your shawl?" I asked. "It is sopping wet."

"I had an umbrella when I first came here," she said, "but it blew over the cliffs long ago. Thanks, ever so much. And now what can I do?"

"You are always on hand when help is needed, Mrs. Barnett," said the doctor. "Thank you for coming. I shall need you in a minute."

She gave him a quick little friendly nod and went to the bed.

"I hope that you are not suffering too much," she told Daddy. "Dr. Grant will have you all right in a jiffy."

"Thank you, madam," said Daddy, staring at her.

The doctor had been pulling endless things out of his bag. For all of their size his hands showed a quality of gentle firmness that was quite surprising and Daddy, under his ministrations, appeared to become less apprehensive.

"Now, Mrs. Barnett," directed Dr. Grant. "One hand under the knee, if you please, and the other should hold the heel. That's the way."

Rapidly he wound some cotton batting about the injured limb. Daddy had given one awful groan when his leg was pulled straight, but now he watched the winding of bandages and the application of plaster of Paris without saying a word. The doctor finally rubbed the whole thing smooth.

"That's all right now," he said. "We will let the leg down again."

Between them they gently lowered the limb upon a hollowed pillow, and Daddy looked much relieved.

"That is all for the present," said the doctor. "I hope we didn't hurt you too much, Mr. Jelliffe."

"I think it will be easier now," admitted Daddy. "I can't say that you made me suffer very much. I am obliged to you, and also to you, madam."

She treated him to a gentle, motherly smile, and grabbed her old wet shawl again.

"I'd be ever so glad to stay with you all night," she said, "but unfortunately one of my kiddies is teething and wants me rather badly. May I call in the morning?"

By this time father was utterly captured.

"You would be ever so kind," he said. "I can hardly thank you sufficiently."

She refused proffers of umbrellas and water-proofs, laughingly saying that she could not reach home much wetter than she was, and disappeared.

"Our parson's wife, Miss Jelliffe," explained Dr. Grant, "and the nearest thing to a blessing that Sweetapple Cove has ever known, I should say."

"She must be," I assented. "She is perfectly charming."

Then he went in the next room, where the mariner was waiting, sitting in a chair and contemplating his red socks.

"We're off again to-morrow morning to Will's Island," said the doctor. "Just let Frenchy know, will you? We shall start as soon as possible after I have found out how Mr. Jelliffe has passed the night."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the old man, lifting a gnarled hand to his tousled locks.

The doctor looked around him. His big frame seemed to relax, and a compelling yawn forced him to lift his hand to his mouth. Then he came in again.

"Good night, Mr. Jelliffe," he said. "I'll be here the first thing in the morning. You may take this little tablet if the pain is severe, but don't touch it unless you are really compelled to."

Daddy stretched out his hand, in a very friendly way, and he certainly looked approvingly at the young man. Then I accompanied the latter to the outer door. It was still raining and the wind blew hard.

"Good night, Miss Jelliffe," he bade me. "Your father's injury is quite a simple one and I have no doubt we shall obtain a good result."

He picked up his oilskins and put them on again.

"Thank you," was all I could find to say. His long steps rapidly carried him away and he disappeared in the misty blackness.

When I returned the old fisherman, whose name is Sammy, was standing by father's bed.

"It seems to me," complained Daddy, "that he might have offered to stay with me all night. I call it rather inconsiderate of him."

"We is fixed fer that, sir," asserted Captain Sammy. "I be goin' ter stay wid' yer. I'll jist set down by the stove and, case I should git ter sleep, jist bawl out or heave somethin' at me. First I'll go an' git a bite er grub, jist a spud er two an' a dish o' tea; likely th' old woman has some brooze fer me, waitin'. I'll be back so soon ye'll hardly know I been gone."

He looked at us, his kindly old face lighting up into a smile. Then he pointed with a stubby thumb in the direction the doctor had taken.

"He've been up three nights a-savin' Dick Will's arm, as means the livin' o' he and the woman an' seven young 'uns. I mistrust he'll maybe fall asleep a-walkin' less he hurries. 'Tis a feelin' I knows, keepin' long watches on deck when things goes hard."

"But I can watch my father," I protested.

"So yer could, fer a fact," he admitted, "but yer couldn't run out handy an' fetch doctor, so I might as well stay here an' ye kin do a job of sleepin'."

As he hurried out Susie came in from the kitchen, buxom and rosy of cheek.

"Th' kittle's biled ef you is ready," she announced. "Yer must be a-perishin' fer a sup an' a bite."

I shall have to stop now, Aunt Jennie dear, and goodness knows when this will reach you, as mails are very movable feasts.

But it has been a comfort to write, and I was too nervous and excited to go to sleep, for a long time. I really think I ought to go to bed now. That doctor is really a very nice young man, and I just love Mrs. Barnett. Any one would.

Please write as often as possible, for now we are prisoners for goodness knows how long in this place, and your letters will be worth their weight in precious stones. Tell me all that is happening. Have you heard from Harry Lawrence lately?

Your loving
HELEN.

CHAPTER V

From John Grant's Diary

When I awoke this morning, I was inclined to pinch myself, wondering whether I was still dreaming. In a moment, however, my recollections were perfectly clear. Yesterday evening I met people such as I should no more have expected to find in Sweetapple Cove than in the mountains of the moon. I am glad that my idea in coming here was not to convert myself into a hermit; I am afraid I should have been sadly disappointed. Mr. Jelliffe is a man just beyond middle age, shrewd and inclined to good nature. His daughter, like the rest of her sex, is probably a problem, but so far I can only discover in her an exceedingly nice young lady who dotes on her father and takes rather a sensible view of things.

It appears that they have been all over the world and, like experienced travelers, understand exceedingly well the art of adapting oneself to all manners of surroundings. In no time at all they had transformed their ugly little house into quite a decent dwelling.

Miss Jelliffe is a decidedly attractive young woman. Of course I can only compare her with Dora Maclennon. They belong to two different types. The one is a bustling little woman, very earnest, determined and hard-working, who looks to the world for something which must as yet be rather indefinitely shaped in her mind, and who is going to find it. The other, I should say, has no cut and dried aim or ambition. Her father or grandfather achieved everything for her, and she is as free as air to follow her every inclination. Both are unquestionably good to look upon, and, at least for the present, I hope it may not be treasonable to say that Miss Jelliffe is the more restful of the two. We men are apt to think that the privilege of striving and pushing forward should be exclusively ours, and when we see a woman occupied with something of that sort we are somewhat apt to resent it as an unjustifiable poaching in our preserves. For a long time I considered Dora's efforts to be something in the nature of growing pains, which would disappear in the course of time. Now I am not so sure of this. Yet when I think of the dear little girl my heart beats faster, and somehow I persist in believing that a day will come when she will drift towards me, and we will tackle the further problems of life together.

I must confess I am glad to have met the Jelliffes. Barnett and his wife have been the only people with whom one could exchange ideas unconnected with codfish. The parson is a splendid little chap, utterly cocksure of a lot of things I take good care not to discuss too deeply with him. Moreover he is away a good part of the time, and composes his sermons with a painstaking care which must be somewhat wasted on Sweetapple Cove. I don't believe the people are really interested in the meaning of Greek texts. When he is in the throes of inspiration none dare go near him and Mrs. Barnett, the good soul, walks on tiptoe and hushes her brood. I only meet her at various sick-beds. In her own home she is so tremendously busy that I feel I have no right to trespass too often. The baby requires a lot of care, and there are lessons to the others, and family sewing, and keeping an eye upon the little servant. Worshipping her husband takes up the rest of her time.

After I had my breakfast I left Sammy's house, where I have an office which would astonish some of my New York friends. I had scraped my face and put on fairly decent clothing in deference not only to my own preferences but also to the feelings of the newcomers.

I was hardly out of the house before Sammy's wife came running after me.

"You's forgot your mitts," she cried. "Here they is. I hung 'em up back o' th' stove ter dry. It's like ter be cold at sea an' ye'll be wantin' them."

I thanked the good woman, telling her that I could afford to be careless since I had her to look after me.

"Oh! Don't be talkin'," she answered, highly pleased.

I stopped for a moment to light my pipe. Mrs. Sammy was now calling upon her offspring to hasten, for it was a fair drying day. The sun was out and the ripples glimmered brightly over the cove. The people were climbing up on their flakes, tall scaffolds built on a foundation of lender poles, and were spreading out the split, flattened codfish, that would have to dry many days before it would be fit to trade or sell. Everywhere in the settlement women and children, and a few old men unfit for harder labor, were engaged in the same back-breaking occupation. The spreading out always seems easy enough, for they deal out the fishy slabs as cards are thrown upon a table, but the picking and turning are arduous for ancient spines stiffened by years of toil.

I also looked out upon the cove, where a few men in dories were engaged in jigging for squid, pulling in the wriggling things which had been attracted by a piece of red rag, their tentacles caught upon the upturned needles of the jig. They were dropped with a sharp, jerky motion on the slimy mass of their fellows, all blotched with the inky discharge. Out beyond the rocky headlands, in the open sea, the little two-masted smacks were hurrying to anchor or already bobbing up and down with furled canvas, rising, falling and yawing to the pull of the sea. At times, by looking sharply, one could

catch the gleam of a fish being pulled in, and sometimes one could hear the muffled thump of the muckle, when the fish was a big one.

The air was good indeed to breathe. The dull griminess of the village, so utterly dismal in the rain and fog of yesterday, had given place to something akin to cheerfulness. On the tops of the cliffs the scanty herbage, closely cropped by the goats, was very green, of the deep beautiful hue one only finds in lands drenched by frequent downpours. The sea was restless with long gentle swells which now only broke when they reached the bottoms of the rocks which they pounded, intermittently, with great puffs of white spray.

The goats were briskly clambering among the boulders; the dogs looked cheerful; the few chickens, no longer sad and bedraggled, scratched with renewed energy. At the entrance of the cove a few gannets wheeled, heavily, while further away a troop of black-headed terns screamed and darted about, gracefully, on long, slender, swallow-like pinions.

Even the houses, bathed in rejuvenating sunlight, looked more attractive. A few poor flowers in rare window-boxes perked up their heads. The puddles in the road were draining off into rocky crannies, and the very air seemed to have been washed of some of its all-pervading reek of fish.

I was thoroughly refreshed after a night during which I had slept so soundly that Mrs. Sammy, obeying instructions, had been compelled to enter my room and regretfully shake me into consciousness. Then I had poured much cold water over myself and used my best razor. Coffee and pancakes, with large rashers of bacon, were awaiting me, and I soon departed for the home of my new patient. Children called good morning, and a few ancient dames too old even for work upon the flakes nodded their palsied heads at me.

The house tenanted by the Jelliffes belongs to a man who is off to the Labrador, trapping cod with a crew of sons and neighbors. His wife has been only too glad to rent it to these very grand people from that amazing yacht, who have come all the way from New York, to the wonderment of the whole population, for the mere purpose of catching salmon. Her eldest daughter has been engaged as maid of all work by the tenants, and will doubtless compensate, in cheerful willingness, for her utterly primitive idea of the duties incumbent upon her.

Miss Jelliffe was sitting upon the porch. Wisps of her rich chestnut hair were being blown about by the pleasant breeze, and there is no doubt that her white shirtwaist with the rather mannish collar and tie, the tweed skirt with wide leather belt, and the serviceable low tanned shoes made a vision such as I had not expected to behold in Sweetapple Cove.

She smiled brightly as I came up and bade me good morning. Her pretty face had lost the worried, tearful look of the day before. I expressed the hope that her father had been able to obtain some rest.

"I am under the impression that Daddy slept rather better than I could," she answered, cheerfully. "Such a concert as I was treated to! I had always had an idea that my father was rather appalling, but your ancient sea-faring friend was positively extraordinary. After you left I read just a little to Daddy, and the hypnotic quality of my voice had rapid effect. After this Captain Sammy curled up on the floor, just like one of the local dogs, and spurned my offer of rugs and pillows with the specious excuse that if he made himself too comfortable and chanced to fall asleep he would never wake up. I went to my room to write a letter and presently the walls began to shake. You never heard such a duet."

"Is Mr. Jelliffe still asleep?" I asked.

"No, indeed! He has already clamored for his breakfast and is at present occupied with a bowl of oatmeal and some coffee."

Just then Frenchy came up, lifting his cap to the young lady. In one of his big paws he held his little boy's hand.

"Tak aff you cap to ze yong lady lak I tole you," he said, gravely. "Heem tink you a leetle sauvage."

The wide-eyed little chap obeyed the big sailor, his yellow curls falling over his eyes. He continued to stare at her, with a fat thumb tucked in a corner of his mouth.

"Me come say heem Beel Atkins heem go aff to St. Jean to-day. Heem got load of feesh."

"That is important news, Miss Jelliffe. Civilization is opening its arms to you," I told her. "Atkins can take letters and messages for you, and may be trusted to bring back anything you need, providing you write it all down carefully. This is also an opportunity of obtaining other surgical advice for your father."

"I need a lot of things," she exclaimed, "and there will be a message to our captain to hurry matters at that dry-dock. But I will have to consult my father."

"We go to-day?" Yves asked me, pointing towards Will's Island.

"Yes, Dick needs a lot of care yet," I answered. "But you will wait here and take some orders to Atkins first."

"Oui, orright, me wait," he said.

Miss Jelliffe had gone indoors and the man sat down on the porch, with the little chap beside him, and they gravely watched the gulls circling over the water. Yves is very big and rough looking, and his black beard is impressive. He gives one rather the idea of what the men must have been, who manned the ships of William the Conqueror, than the notion of a conventional Frenchman. Yet there is in him something very soft and tender, which appears when he looks at that child, with deep dark eyes that always seem to behold things beyond the ordinary ranges of vision.

"Ah! Glad to see you!" exclaimed Mr. Jelliffe as I entered the room. "A broken leg is no fun, but I can say that I got on rather better than I expected to. The pain has been no more than I can stand. I'll be through with this in a minute."

He swallowed his last mouthful of coffee, and Susie Sweetapple, the improvised domestic, took away a flat board with which she had made a tray.

"Is you real sure you got enough?" she enquired solicitously. "Them porridges doesn't stick long to folks' ribs, but if yer stummick gits ter teasin' yer afore dinner time jist bawl out. 'Tain't never no trouble ter bile th' kittle again."

"Thank you," said Mr. Jelliffe, as the girl left the room. "I have not yet decided, Doctor, whether that young female is an unmitigated nuisance or a pearl of great price. At any rate we couldn't get along without her."

In a few minutes I was allowed to inspect the broken leg, which was resting properly on the pillow. The swelling was not too great, and the patient declared that the confounded thing was doubtless as comfortable as such a beastly affair could be. Mr. Jelliffe possesses some notions of philosophy.

"A schooner is leaving to-day for St. John's, Mr. Jelliffe," I told him. "It will return in a few days, depending on the weather, and we could probably prevail upon one of the best surgeons there to come back with it."

My patient's eyes narrowed a little and he wrinkled his brow. He was looking at me keenly, like one long accustomed to gauging men with the utmost care.

"What is your own advice?" he finally asked.

I could not help smiling a little.

"Your fracture is not at all a complicated affair, and it looks to me as if the ends could easily be maintained in proper position. On the other hand I am still a young man, and desire to make no special claim to eminence in my profession."

"At any rate you are the local doctor."

"I suppose I represent all that this community can afford," I replied. "If I were you I would send for a consultant."

"The community doesn't seem to me to be so very badly off, as far as its doctor is concerned," said Mr. Jelliffe, slowly. "The other chap will come and undo this thing, and hurt me a lot more. I'm inclined to let things slide. This practice of yours ought to be a great thing for a stout man needing a reducing diet. How the deuce do you keep from starving to death?"

"Mrs. Sammy feeds me rather well," I replied.

My patient smiled.

"You're a smart boy," he said. "I'll admit you don't look very hungry. But how about the appetite for other things, for success in life, for the appreciation of intelligent men and for their companionship? Is there no danger of what you fellows call atrophy? Men's intellects can only maintain a proper level by rubbing up against others."

For a moment he stopped, and then went on again.

"I beg your pardon, Doctor. I'm afraid that all this is none of my business. I am sure you will take excellent care of me, and I don't see the need of sending for any one else."

"I will do my best for you, Mr. Jelliffe," I answered.

He held his hand out to me, in the friendliest way. I think we are going to get on together very well. It is pleasant to meet people who are so secure in their position that they do not feel the slightest need for snobbishness.

I soon left for Will's Island, where I remained for some hours. Frenchy's boy came with us. He's a lovable little fellow, and manifested his admiration for "*la belle dame*" as he calls Miss Jelliffe. He is an infant of discriminating taste.

It was very encouraging to note a real improvement in the fisherman's condition, and I returned in a cheerful state of mind. In the afternoon I again called on the Jelliffes, and was chatting with the old gentleman when Mrs. Barnett, with her two oldest clinging to her skirts, put her head in at the door and cheerfully asked how the invalid was getting on.

"I won't come in," she said, "my little chaps would soon turn the place upside down."

"Do bring them in," urged Miss Jelliffe. "Daddy is ever so fond of children."

The parson's wife accepted the invitation.

"I daresay I will be able to hold them in for a few minutes," she said.

Miss Jelliffe is certainly a bright girl. I am positive that she recognized at once in Mrs. Barnett a woman who would adorn any gathering of refined people. The homemade dress mattered nothing, nor the garb of the little ones, which showed infinite toil combined with scanty means for accomplishment. It was delightful to observe the positive deference and admiration that were mingled with the perfect ease of the young woman's manner.

At their mother's bidding the little fellows said their greeting very politely. Miss Jelliffe kissed them and at once insured their further behavior by sitting on the floor with them, armed with chocolates and magazine pictures.

"You are exceedingly kind to visit us, Mrs. Barnett," Mr. Jelliffe assured her. "I hope I may have the pleasure of meeting your husband soon."

"I expect him back to-morrow," she answered. "He's away on a short trip. Sometimes he goes quite a distance up and down the coast, and occasionally it is---it is rather hard at home, when the weather gets very bad."

She looked out of the window, with a movement that was nearly mechanical, and which had become habitual during long hours of waiting.

"But he likes it," she continued. "He says it is a good work and makes one feel that one is worth one's bread and salt. And so, of course, we are very happy."

I noticed that Miss Jelliffe was studying her. A look of wonder seemed to be rising on the girl's face, as if it surprised her to find that this cultured, refined woman could be contented in such a place.

"Yes, I think I am getting along very well," said Mr. Jelliffe, in answer to a question. "This young man seems to know his business. I was just hinting to him, this morning, that such a village as this can offer but a poor scope for his ability."

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Barnett, laughingly. "Please don't let him hear you. I have no doubt that what you say is perfectly true, but we could never do without him now. He has only been here a short time, and it has made such a difference. Before that we had no doctor, and---and it was awful, sometimes. You can't realize how often Mr. Barnett and I have stood helplessly by some bedside, wringing our hands and wishing so hard, so dreadfully hard, for a man like Dr. Grant to help us. Once we sent for a doctor, far away, and he came as soon as he could, but my little Lottie was already..."

A spasm of pain passed over her face, and there was a quickly indrawn breath. Then she was quiet again.

"I hope he will never leave us," she said. "He may miss many things here, but it is a man's work."

"I don't feel like leaving," I told her, and she rewarded me by one of those charming smiles of hers.

Presently she took leave, and Miss Jelliffe looked at her father.

"Isn't she wonderful!" she exclaimed. "I can hardly understand it at all."

"It isn't only in the big places that people do big things," he answered. "What about that child she referred to, Doctor?"

I told him how the little one had been taken ill, and how they had been obliged to take her to the head of the cove, over the ice, until they were able to find a place where a pick could bite into the ground. Miss Jelliffe stared at me, as I spoke, and I could see her beautiful eyes becoming shiny with gathering tears.

On the next day, as I was doing something to the plaster dressing, she came into the room, hurriedly.

"I've been out there," she said. "What a poor desolate place in which to leave one's loved ones. Won't you let me help? I think I am getting on very well with my untrained nursing. I want as much practice as I can get."

"I am bound hand and foot," complained the patient. "These women are taking all sorts of unfair advantages of me. And, by the way, Helen, I want you to go out more. You are remaining indoors so much that you are beginning to lose all your fine color."

"I look like an Indian," she protested laughing.

"Then I don't want you to get bleached out. You must go out walking more, or try some fishing, but be careful about those slippery rocks. I can play no other part now than that of a dreadful example."

"I am not going to budge from this room," declared Miss Jelliffe. "You know that you can't get along without me. Besides, there are no places that one can walk to."

"I insist that you must get plenty of fresh air," persisted her father.

"There is no fresh air here," she objected. "It is a compound of oxygen, nitrogen and fish, mostly very ripe fish. One has to breathe cod, and eat it, and quintals are the only subjects of conversation. Codfish of assorted sizes flop up in one's dreams. Last night one of them, about the length of a whale, apparently mistook me for a squid, or some such horrid thing, and was in the very act of swallowing me when I awoke. I'm afraid, Daddy dear, that the fresh air of Sweetapple Cove is a dreadful fiction. But it must be lovely outside."

She was looking through the door, which stood widely opened, towards the places where the long smooth rollers broke upon the rocks, and beyond them at brown sails and screaming birds darting about in quest of prey.

"You are hungering for a breath of the sea, Miss Jelliffe," I told her. "Sammy and Frenchy are waiting for me to go to Will's Island again. With this wind it will be only a matter of three or four hours there and back. Could you stand a trip in a fishing boat?"

"Just the thing for her. No danger, is there, Doctor?" asked Mr. Jelliffe.

"Not on a day like this," I replied. Miss Jelliffe made a few further objections, which were quickly overruled. Finally she gave Susie all sorts of directions, kissed her father affectionately, and was ready to go.

"We'll be back soon, Daddy. You are a dear to be always thinking about me. I know I am very mean to leave you."

"The young lady'll be well took care of, sir," declared Captain Sammy, who had come in to say that the boat was ready.

So we went down to the cove where Frenchy, already apprised that such a distinguished passenger was coming, was feverishly scrubbing the craft and soaking the footboards, endeavoring, with scant success, to remove all traces of fish and bait.

"It's dreadful, isn't it?" said Miss Jelliffe as we passed by the fishhouses. "I know that when I get back home I shall never eat another fish-cake. And just look at the awful swarms of flies and blue-bottles. And the smell of it all! It is all undoubtedly picturesque, but it is unspeakably smelly."

The men were busily working, and girls and boys of all sizes, and one heard the sound of sharp knives ripping the fish, and the whirring of grindstones, and the flopping of offal in the water. These people were clad in ancient oilskins, stiff and evil with blood and slime, but they lifted gruesome hands to their forelocks as Miss Jelliffe went by and she did her best to smile in answer.

"Couldn't they be taught to be a little cleaner?" she asked me. "Isn't it awfully unhealthy for them?"

"It is rather bad," I admitted, "and they are always cutting their hands and fingers and getting abominably infected sores. They only come to me when they are in a more or less desperate condition. Yet one can hardly blame them for following the ways of their fathers, when you consider the lack of facilities. They can't clean the fish on board their little boats, as the bankers do on the larger schooners, and there is no place in which they can dispose of the refuse save in the waters of the cove. They don't even have any cultivable land where they could spread it to fertilize the ground. It must drift here and there, to go out with the ebb of the tide or be devoured by other fishes, or else it gets cast up on the shingle. The smell is a part of their lives, and I am nearly sure that they are usually quite unconscious of it. Moreover, they are always harassed for time. If the fishing is good the men at work in the fish-houses ought to be out fishing, and the girls should be out upon the flakes. They often work at night till they are ready to drop. And then perhaps comes a spell of rain, days and weeks of it, during which the fish spoils and all their work goes for nothing. Then they have to try again and again, with hunger and debt spurring them on. And the finest part of it is that they never seem to lose courage."

"I wonder they don't go elsewhere and try some other kind of work," suggested Miss Jelliffe.

"I dare say they are fitted for little else," I replied. "And besides, like so many other people all over the face of the earth they are attached to their own land, and many get homesick who are transplanted to other places. They seem to have taken root in the cracks between these barren rocks, and the tearing them away is hard. So they keep on, in spite of all the hardships. They get lost in storms and fogs; they get drowned or are frozen to death on the ice-pans, nearly every spring, at the sealing, for which they are paid in shares. This naturally means that if the ship is unsuccessful they get nothing for all their terrible toil and exposure. Indeed, Miss Jelliffe, they are brave people and hard workers, who never get more than the scantiest rewards. I think I am becoming very fond of them. I'm a Newfoundlander, you know."

"Was it home-sickness that brought you back?" she asked.

"It may have been sickness of some sort," I answered.

She looked at me, without saying anything more, and we stepped on board the boat, after I had guided her over the precarious footing of a loose plank which, however, she tackled bravely.

CHAPTER VI

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Auntie:

During these long evenings there is absolutely nothing for me to do except to inflict long epistles upon you. Dear Daddy seems to be making up for some of the lost sleep of his youth, and is apt to begin early the unmusical accompaniment to

his slumbers.

We are now able to dispense with the nice old mariner who watched him so effectively the first night. Daddy said the competition was too great for him to stand, and explained that he wanted a monopoly. You will be delighted to hear that as far as we can tell the poor leg is doing nicely; at any rate the doctor seems to be pleased. I had no idea that our patient would be so easily resigned to his fate. He is just as good as good can be.

To console you for reading about the hardships I must tell you that I had one of the times of my life to-day. An ultimate analysis of it would reduce itself to a trip from a dirty shore, in a dirty boat, to a dirty island, at least that part of it that was not daily scrubbed by the Atlantic billows. Of course this may be somewhat exaggerated, but the places one departs from and arrives at are somewhat trying to sensitive noses.

That young doctor I spoke of is the responsible party, aided and abetted by Daddy. Between them they just bundled me away, under some silly pretense that I needed fresh air. It is possible, after all, that they may have been right.

We went down to the fish-houses and flakes that crop out like queer mushrooms on stilts all over the edges of the cove, and it was a shaky damsel who shuddered over the passing of a wobbly plank. The crew of two waited below in the boat, and smiled encouragingly, so that I had to try and show more bravery than I really felt. I had no desire to intrude among the squids; one sees them dimly through the clear water and they impress one, as they move about, as resembling rather active rats. The cod are more partial to them than I ever shall be. Then there was a rather rickety ladder down which I scrambled. I am sure the crew had never seen silk stockings before, but their heads were politely turned away. A large, exuberantly whiskered Frenchman in picturesque rags gave me his hand and helped me down with a manner worthy of assorted dukes and counts; and there was a little boy who sat on a thwart and looked wistfully at me.

"De leetle bye, heem want go, if mademoiselle heem no mind," said the Frenchman, bashfully, with a very distinct look of appeal.

The little fellow also sought my eyes, and held his ragged little cap in his hands. He was simply the curliest darling, clad in a garment of many colors made of strange remnants and sewed by hands doubtless acquainted with a sailor's palm but unfamiliar with ordinary stitching.

Naturally I bent down and lifted him up and put him on my knees, recognizing in this infant the nicest discovery I have yet made on this amazing island. His little pink face and golden curls imperatively demanded a kiss. He is just the sweetest little fellow you ever saw, and looks altogether out of place among the sturdy urchins of the Cove. Then I had to put him down, because of course I had flopped down in the wrong place. I notice that in small boats one always does. The child took his cap off again and said "merci," and I had to smile at Yves, the Frenchman, whose grin distinctly showed that the way to his heart lies through that kiddy.

We were off at once, and I sat astern near the ancient. Yves had gone forward and the doctor, after the usual totally unnecessary concern as to rugs and either useless things, followed him and appeared to practice his French on the sailor.

"That there Frenchy," Captain Sammy confided to me, "is most crazy over th' young 'un. I never did see sich a thing in all me born days."

"He must be awfully proud of such a dear little son," I answered.

"There's them as says it ain't the son o' he," replied Sammy. "He don't never talk about the bye. They says he jist picked him up somewheres, jist some place or other. You would hardly think what a plenty they is as have fathers or mothers

neither, along th' coast."

This opened to me a vista of troops of kiddies wandering up and down the cliffs, wailing the poor daddies that will never be given back by the rough sea, and the mothers who found life harder than they could bear, and it saddened me. You always said I must beware of my imagination, but I think there was a funded reality in that vision. Then I was compelled to look about me, for we were passing through headlands at the narrow mouth of the cove, the long lift of the open sea bore us up and down again, softly, like an easy low swing. That terrible reek of fish had disappeared and the air was laden with the delightful pungency of clean seaweed and the pure saltiness of the great waters. North and south of us extended the rocky coastline all frilled, at the foot of the great ledges, with the pearly spume of the long rollers.

It was very early when we arrived in the *Snowbird*, and I was not on deck very long. It didn't seem nearly so beautiful then, and I had no idea that it would be like this.

"It is perfectly marvelous," I told Captain Sammy. "But it is a terrible coast. How do you ever manage to get back in storms and fogs? The mouth of the cove is nothing but a tiny hole in the face of the cliffs."

"Times when they is nought but fog maybe we smells 'un," he replied, with the most solemn gravity.

"I hadn't thought of such an obvious thing," I replied, laughing. "It seems quite possible. But how about gales?"

"They is times when we has to run to some o' the bays north or south of us fer shelter," he answered. "I've allers been able to fetch 'un."

"But what if you were carried out to sea?"

"Then likely I'd git ketched, like so many others has, ma'am."

And then, Aunt Jennie dear, in spite of the shining of the bright sun upon the glittering water and the softness of the air that was caressing my face, I felt very sad for a moment. It looked like a very cruel world for all of its present smiling. On this coast the elements seem always to be waiting for their prey, just as, in the shelter of ledges deep beneath our keel, unspeakable slimy things with wide glaucous eyes are lying in watch, with tentacles outspread.

"It all seems very dreadful to me," I said.

But the old fellow, though he nodded civilly in assent, had not understood me in the least. This was clearly the only world with which he was acquainted; the one particular bit of earth whereupon fate had dropped him, as fertilizing seeds are dropped by wandering birds. I daresay he is unable to realize any other sort of existence, excepting perhaps in some such vague way as you and I may think of those canal-diggers of Mars. Close to us, to port, we passed a big rock that was jutting from the water and over which the long smooth seas washed, foaming with hissing sounds.

"He nigh ketched us, day I fetched doctor back to yer father," Sammy informed me. "Ye mind t'were a bit rough that day, and ye couldn't tell yer hand afore yer face, hardly, t'were that thick, and tide she'd drawed us funder inshore 'n I mistrusted. The wind he were middlin' high an' gusty, too. I don't mind many sich hard times a-makin' th' cove. We was sure glad enough ter get in."

"I never thought of it in that way," I exclaimed. "It certainly was an awful afternoon, and it must have been horribly dangerous."

"I telled 'un afore startin' as how t'were a bit of a job, an' he asks me kin I make it, an' I says I expect I kin, like enough, wid luck. Then he tells me ter think o' th' old woman an' th' children, an' I says it's all right. Frenchy he were willin' too, so in course we started."

Then, perhaps for the first time, I took a real long look at that doctor, who was sitting forward, perched on the head of a barrel. He was laughing with Frenchy, and held the boy on his lap. I decided that he belongs to a class that is familiar to us. You know his kind, Aunt Jennie, keen of eye, full of quiet determination, and always moving forcibly, even if slowly, towards success. We have seen lots of them on the football fields, at Corinthian yacht races, wherever big chaps are contending and care but little for the safety of their necks as long as they are playing the game.

To me the strangest thing about this man is that he appears to be thoroughly adapted to these surroundings, and yet would be equally at home in what we choose to call our set, just like that dear woman Mrs. Barnett. I can't help wondering what he is doing here, I mean apart from his obvious work which, in all conscience, appears to be hard enough.

He was pointing out something to the little boy, in the distance, so that I stared also and caught a puff of vapor above the water.

"It's a whale, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yis, ma'am," replied Sammy. "It's one o' they big sulphur-bottoms. Them little whaling steamers is mighty glad to get hold o' that kind. They grows awful big. I've seed some shockin' big fellows."

"I'd like to see one caught. It must be ever so exciting," I said.

"There ain't no whalin' stations in these parts, but they tells me some of 'em 'll tow them little steamers miles and miles, even wid' engine half speed astern. Then other times they gits 'em killed first shot out o' the gun."

After this I looked around again. I know you don't care for small boats, but it is delightful to be so close to the water, and it gives one a sense of keen pleasure one often misses in bigger ships. They seem to be so much more alive.

I must acknowledge that after a time I began to observe the doctor again. I presume it is a fault of our present education, Aunt Jennie, that we young girls are not much used to being neglected by young men. This one was really paying little attention to me. Even when a man's daily garb includes a flannel shirt one expects him to be attentive, if he is nice. Of course I don't suppose any one here knows how to starch and iron white shirts and collars, so that the doctor can't help his raiment, which is better adapted to the local fashions. You must not think that he seems to be restrained by a sense of respectful deference especially due to the daughter of one whom the silly papers are fond of referring to as belonging to the tribe of magnates. His manners are perfectly civil and courteous, showing that he has been accustomed to move among nice people. He took the trouble to ask whether I were comfortable, to suggest a rug which I declined and to ask if there was anything else he could do. But after that he went forward to practise his French on Yves, who frequently grinned with pleasure. Nor has he seemed to be particularly elated at the privilege of attending a rich yacht owner, who may represent a decent fee. I know perfectly well that he takes a great deal more interest in the fisherman we went to see.

The island towards which we were sailing was rising from the sea, and Sammy pointed it out to me, in the distance, faintly azure in the slight haze. We were sailing with a fair wind, our little sails drawing steadily and the forefoot casting spray before it in pearly showers.

"Won't you let me take her?" I asked.

Sammy opened astonished eyes and doubtfully relinquished the tiller to me. Isn't it queer how people of our sort are always deemed to be quite helpless with their hands? I may boast of the fact that the ancient mariner was soon satisfied that his craft was in fairly competent ones. I had to use just a little more strength than I had expected to, and to stand and brace myself against the pull. But it was glorious and made me feel to its full extent the delight of the sea. In a moment I felt that my cheeks were red enough to satisfy Daddy himself, who is always a strenuous advocate of robustious femininity. He has no use for the wilted-flower effect in girls. My locks, of course, were disporting themselves as they pleased, and I am sure that I began there and then to strew the bottom of our ship with hairpins.

Then I got the one great genuine compliment of my youthful existence.

"*La belle dame qui gouverne!*" exclaimed Yves' little boy.

Of course the other two turned at once to behold the beautiful lady who was governing, as the Gallic language calls steering. I shall give that infant a supply of chocolate which will make his big blue eyes open widely. Such a talent for discrimination should be encouraged. That pard of a Frenchman was smiling in approval, and the doctor was evidently taking notice. When a girl wears a white jersey and blue skirt, and she has a picturesque cap, and is engaged in the occupation of steering, which brings out many of one's best points, she has a right to expect a little admiration. It worked and presently the doctor was sitting at my side, which goes to show that he is but a weak male human after all.

"They are splendid little boats, are they not?" he said.

"Yes, indeed. The rig reminds me of some of the sharpies they use on the Connecticut coast. But these are regular sea-going craft, and must beat up to windward nicely."

"You are quite a sailor," was his obviously indicated remark.

"I've done a good deal of small-boat sailing on the Sound," I informed him, "out of Larchmont and those places, and in Great South Bay. I suppose I've been a good deal of a tomboy."

"You've been a fine, strong, healthy girl, and you still are," he replied, quietly.

It was only such approval as Harry Lawrence, for instance, might have bestowed on a blue-ribbon pointer. The man considers me as a rather nice specimen and, with all due modesty, I am inclined to agree with him.

By this time we were rapidly nearing the island. As far as I could see it was nothing but a rough mass of rocks better suited to the tenancy of sea-gulls than human beings. Everywhere the waves were breaking at the foot of the cliffs and monstrous boulders. A great host of sea-birds was rising from it and returning; in the waters near us the dear little petrels dotted the surface with black points, while slow-flying gannets traveled sedately and active terns rioted in the air. Coots and other sea-ducks rose before our boat and, from time to time, the little round heads of harbor seals, with very human-looking eyes, bobbed on the seas.

"Isn't it perfectly delightful," I cried. "I could never weary of watching all these things, and what is that big duck, or is it a goose, traveling all alone and flying straight as an arrow?"

"It is just a big loon. The Great Northern Diver, you know."

"I don't think I ever saw them flying. I shall always recognize one again. They are regular double-enders, pointed at both ends. Is it the same sort of loon that we see on the Maine and Adirondack lakes?"

"The very same," he replied. "I dare say you are well acquainted with its voice."

"Indeed I am; it used to give me goose-flesh when I first heard it, ever so long ago. It's a dreadfully shivery sound."

The man smiled, as if he thought this a pretty fair description.

"It is rather spooky," he admitted, "but I love it as a typical sound of the wilderness. It is just redolent with memories of the scented smoke of camp-fires, of game-tracked swamps and big forests mirrored in deep, calm waters all aglow with the lights of the setting sun."

This interested me. It is evident that this doctor is not simply a fairly well educated dispenser of pills and a wielder of horrid instruments. There is some tincture of sentiment in his make-up.

"How do you enjoy the practice of your profession in Sweetapple Cove?" I suddenly asked him, rather irrelevantly.

"I have an idea that it is a sort of practice for which I am fairly well fitted," he answered, slowly, and still looking at the birds. "A fellow can never be sure that he would make a success in the larger places. Here you will admit that the critical sense of the population must be easily satisfied. I have no reason to doubt that I am at least the half a loaf that is better than no bread."

Of course I could only smile. He had said a lot, very pleasantly, without giving me the slightest bit of information. To-morrow I intend to go and have a chat with Mrs. Barnett and pump her dry. I notice that I am rather a curious young person.

"Jist keep her off a bit now," advised Sammy. "They is a big tide settin' in."

A slight pressure on the tiller was enough, and Yves loosened the sheets just a little. On our port side we could see the cliffs, dark and rather menacing, which as yet failed to show the slightest indenture within which a boat might lie.

"I think I will give you the tiller now," I told Sammy.

"If you'll not be minding," he answered.

I am discovering that these people have an inborn sense of courtesy. Their broad accent, which is a mixture of Scotch and Irish and other North British sounds, is rather a pleasant one. It was quite evident that I was to suit myself in the matter of steering the boat. If I objected to relinquishing the tiller owing to a preference for running up on the rocks I was entirely welcome, as far as I could judge from Sammy's words. I am beginning to love the old man.

He took the helm and I swung my arms against my sides, for my muscles felt just a little bit sore.

"I'd like to do this often," I informed him. "It is fine for one's arms."

"It's sure fine fer the pretty face of yer," he asserted, rather timidly. "The color on it an' the shinin' in yer eyes is real good to see."

"You are very complimentary," I laughed.

Then the old man looked at me, quite soberly, and I could see that a misgiving had made its way in his dear old soul.

"I mistrust I doesn't jist know what that means," he said, rather worried. "Ef it's anythin' bad I'm a-beggin' yer pardon."

"You are a perfect dear, Captain Sammy," I told him. "Indeed it means something very nice."

Profound relief appeared upon his countenance. I am discovering that in Sweetapple Cove one must limit one's vocabulary. The old man would probably not appreciate chocolates, but he deserves them.

We were dashing on, at a safe distance from the rocks, and suddenly there was an opening in the cliffs, with a tiny bay within. Yves pulled in the sheets a little and we sailed into the deep, clear water of the tiny cove.

There was a small beach of rolling shingle and, beyond this, clinging like barnacles to the rocky hillside, were a couple of decrepit houses. Some big flakes and a fish-house were built over the water, on spidery legs. A few children, very stolid of face and unkempt, watched our arrival and stared at me. A man, in half-bared arms dotted about the wrists with remnants of what they call gurry-sores, stood at the water's edge, waiting to lend a hand. There appears to be no anchorage in this deep hole. The sails were quickly wrapped around the masts and our forefoot gently grated against the pebbles. Then all the men jumped out and dragged the boat up, using some rollers.

"She'll do now," announced Sammy. "Tide's on the ebb, anyways."

There was no lack of hands to help me jump out on the little beach. Frenchy's small boy had clambered out like a monkey and, like myself, was an object of silent curiosity to the local urchins. The scent of fish prevailed, of course, but it was less pronounced than at Sweetapple Cove, very probably for the unfortunate reason that very few fish had been caught, of late. Indeed, it was a fine drying day and yet the poor flakes were nearly bare.

"Bring up the barrel, Sammy," said the doctor. "I'm going up to the house. I don't think I'll keep you waiting very long, Miss Jelliffe."

He hastened up, scrambling up the rocky path, and entered the house. I followed him, perhaps rather indiscreetly. This queer atmosphere of poverty had affected me, I think, and I suddenly became eager to see whether I could not be of some help.

A woman had met him at the door, with an effort at a smile upon her thin, seamed face, that was pale with scanty food and haggard from long watching at night.

"Un do be sayin' as th' arm be better a lot," she informed him. Then she stared at me, just for a moment, and smiled again.

"That's fine," said the doctor. "We'll have another look at it directly. You can come in if you wish to, Miss Jelliffe."

There was nothing but just one fairly large room. The patient was lying on a bed built of planks and his right arm was resting on a pillow, wrapped up in an enormous dressing.

"You sure is a sight fer sore eyes ter see," said the man.

"I hope I'm one for sore arms too," said the doctor, cheerfully. Then he turned to me.

"It would perhaps be best for you to leave for a few minutes, Miss Jelliffe," he said. "It won't take long."

But I didn't feel that I could leave, and he began to cut through bandages and dressings. Oh! Aunt Jennie dear! I didn't realize that people could have such dreadful things the matter with them. It made me just a little faint to look at it, and I had to turn away. There was but a slight injury at first, I was told, and it had become awful for lack of proper treatment and care. Dr. Grant, I was also informed by old Sammy, was confronted at first with the horrible problem of either taking fair chances for the man's life by an amputation which would have meant starvation for the family, or of assuming the risk of trying to save that arm upon which the woman and her little ones were depending. Such things must surely try a man's soul, Aunt Jennie. The doctor told me that he had gone out of the house and sat on a rock, to think it over, and had looked at the flakes with their pitiful showing. The kiddies were ravenous and the wife exhausted with care. Then he had stared at the other old house, now abandoned by a family that had been unable to keep body and soul together in the place.

And so he had been compelled to decide upon this great gamble and spent three nights and days in watching, in a ceaseless struggle to save that arm, using every possible means of winning his fight, knowing that the penalty of failure was death. It was no wonder that he looked happy now that he knew he had won.

I suppose that such things happen often, Auntie dear, but we have never seen things like these, and they make an awfully strong impression.

Dr. Grant was working away, looking well pleased, and I handed him a few things he needed.

"That's fine!" he declared, after he had completed a fresh dressing. "You are well enough now to come back with me to the Cove, Dick, because that arm must be attended to every day and I can't come here so often. You will be able to stand the trip all right and I'll send you back as soon as you are well."

"I sure kin stand anythin' so long as yer says I kin," answered the man. His eyes were full of a confidence one usually sees only in happy children.

For a few minutes the wife had gone out of the house, and she returned, breathlessly.

"They is all laughin' down ter th' beach," she announced. "They is Frenchy's little bye, all wid' yeller curls, a-playin' wid our laddies, and Sammy Moore he've brung a barrel o' flour, and a box wid pork, and they is more tea and sugar. What d' yer think o' that?"

She was much excited, and looked from her husband to us, nervously, as if fearing to awaken from a dream.

"That ere trader he said I couldn't have no more, afore I sent him a few quintals o' fish," said Dick, "I don't see how it come."

"You had to have it," said the doctor, just a little bit gruffly. "You can pay me back after you get to work again."

The woman grabbed his arm, and made him wince, and then she returned to the beach again and brought back the box.

"Beggin' yer pardon, ma'am," she said. "Jist set down still fer a minnit. I kin bile th' kittle now an' you'll be havin' a dish o' tea."

"Thank you ever so much," I answered, as pleasantly as I could. "I don't want to give you so much trouble, and we are going back at once."

The woman looked sorely disappointed.

"It's awful good tea," she pleaded. "Th' kind as comes in yeller packages, and they is sugar too."

I turned to Dr. Grant. A nearly imperceptible smile and nod from him showed me that I had better accept. It was evident that the poor creature could not understand how any one could refuse tea, the only luxury of her hard life.

"I'll change my mind, if you will let me," I said. "I really think I would enjoy it very much."

Then she smiled again, and went up to the little stove, and I followed her. Dr. Grant had gone out for a moment.

"Doctor un' says Dick goes back wid' un'," she said. "He be th' best man in the whole world, ma'am. Says he'll take pay when fishing gets better. I mistrust he'll be waitin' a long spell. It must be most twelve dollars, all the things he've brung."

For a moment the prospect of this huge debt sobered her, and a tear ran down her cheek.

"And what about the doctor's pay?" I asked.

"I doesn't know," she answered, helplessly. "It's sure a turrible world."

From this I judge that the financial returns of Dr. Grant's practice must be more than meager. If I had had any money with me I would have given it to this poor creature, but I had no pockets and had never thought of the need of a vanity bag and purse for a visit to Will's Island.

The woman looked out of the door, and saw that the doctor had gone down to the beach and was talking to the men, apparently engaged in making some arrangement at the bottom of the boat whereon to lay his patient.

"I doesn't know what we'll do," she said again, hurriedly. "But there never was a good man the like o' he. You ain't got a man yet, has you, ma'am?"

"No, I'm a spinster yet," I declared, smiling.

"He's sure the best ever was. Mebbe he might go to courtin' you, ma'am, and what a happy woman ye'd be."

I don't think I blushed, Aunt Jennie, or showed any particular embarrassment. I think I simply recognized a tribute of adoration rendered by the poor soul to one who, in her weary, red eyes, deserved nothing less than worship.

"I am quite sure he is a splendid man," I answered, quietly. "He is also taking care of my father, who broke his leg on the rocks, while salmon-fishing."

"Oh! I knows yer now," said Mrs. Will. "Sammy he told us how you come in that white steam schooner, wi' brass shinin' all over."

"Yes," I replied.

She began to stare at me, much interested.

"Sich a bonnie lass ye be! I wisht he'd take a fancy ter ye!" she exclaimed. "Ye'd sure never find a better man nowheres an' ye look as good as he do. I mistrust ye'd make an awful fine woman fer he."

I could only smile again. Fancy my meeting with matchmakers in this rocky desert. The poor thing meant well, of course, and I could make no further answer, for Dr. Grant was returning. He packed all his things away in his bag, and I went over to the fisherman's bed.

"I am so glad that you are getting along so much better," I told him.

"Thank yer kindly, ma'am," he answered. "I'se sure a whole lot better an' now we has grub too."

You know how sweet the fields are after a storm, Aunt Jennie. Here it also looked as if some dreadful black cloud had lifted, so that the sun shone down again on this desolate place and made it beautiful to the sick man.

Then I had to swallow some strong tea, without milk, which I abhor. I trust I managed it with fortitude. The doctor also had to submit.

"The day is fast approaching when I shall perish from an aggravated case of tea-poisoning," he confided to me. "Everywhere, under penalty of seeing long faces, I am compelled to swallow it in large doses. I lie awake nights seeking vainly for some sort of excuse that will be accepted without breaking hearts."

"I hope that when you feel the symptoms coming you will hasten back to the security of civilization," I told him.

"Even that is open to question," he answered.

And so we brought the poor man home, Aunt Jennie, and I'm beginning to feel dreadfully sleepy, so I'll say *au revoir*.

CHAPTER VII

From John Grant's Diary

Atkins has just returned from St. John's, bringing loads of things for the Jelliffes. He consulted me timidly as to how much he might charge them for freight, for I am beginning to share with Mr. Barnett the honor of being considered as a general bureau of information. I craftily obtained his own views, and suggested a slight increase. Mr. Jelliffe audited the bill and gave the man five dollars extra for his trouble, so that by this time the whole family is weeping with joy. Atkins also brought me a batch of medical journals and a letter.

To look at Dora's handwriting one would judge that the young woman must be at least six feet high. The letters are so big and bold that they would never suggest her actual five feet four, with a small fraction of which she is rather proud. As usual she tells me little about herself, saying that I can easily understand the nature of her work in the tenements. Of course I can and, what is more, I am chagrined to think she is toiling harder and enjoying herself less than I. Here I have a chance at great breaths of pure air, whereas in New York she is ever hurrying through sordid little East Side streets and breathing their emanations. I prefer the fish-houses, and if Miss Jelliffe were acquainted with some of those streets she would think as I do. The people I deal with here are grateful and happy to see me. Dora's mob is apt to suspect her motives, to distrust her offers of care and instruction, and to disagree entirely with her ideas of cleanliness. I wish she were here; it seems to me that a partnership in this place could accomplish wonderful things. I would build a bit of a hospital and she could boss the patients to her heart's content.

The little girl says that she approves of my doings, but complains that I write rather flippantly, at times. Considering that she has bidden me to avoid carefully all matters relating to the tender passion what else can I do? She says that if I persevere I shall realize that I am doing good work. We are all seeking achievement, she tells me, and she is sure I am accomplishing great things.

Poor little Dora! I wish I were as sure of this as she seems to be. As a matter of fact I am constantly disgruntled at the lack of facilities. How can a man do big work in surgery with no assistants? The least I should have is a nurse. I have written to tell her so.

Day before yesterday I took Miss Jelliffe over to Will's Island. I really think she had lost a little of her color in her assiduous care of her father, and I was pleased to see the roses return to her cheeks on her way there. I would have thought that a young woman of her class would require a great deal of attention, but this young lady appears to be just as independent in her way as Dora is in hers. She was very much at home in the boat, and old Sammy just eats out of her hand. She has long ago gathered him into the fold of her adorers. Ten minutes after we left she was running our little ship and handling the tiller understandingly.

She is a young woman whose life will be cast in pleasant places, and she awaits the future cheerfully, secure in the belief that it can bring but happiness. Dora, on the other hand, is prospecting with shovel and pick, and I'm afraid they may blister her little hands.

When we arrived at Will's Island the young woman followed me into the house. I noticed that she shuddered just a little at the sight of Dick's arm. It was a novel thing to her, and I must say she met it bravely. Indeed it was rather fine to see how quickly she adapted herself to those surroundings. She held bandages for me and handed me the solutions with quick intuition. Also she was delightfully simple and kind in her treatment of poor Dick's bewildered wife.

I decided to bring the man to the Cove. He insisted that he was perfectly able to walk down to the boat, but staggered as soon as he tried to stand up and would have fallen had I not been prepared for him. Sammy and Frenchy carried him down to the boat and lifted him on board, where they stretched him on the foot-boards which we had taken the precaution to upholster luxuriously with dried seaweed. An old sack, stuffed with the same material, constituted a pillow.

Dick's wife and her brother, with the children, waved their hands at us as we left the little bay and started on the long run close-hauled to the mainland.

For a short time Miss Jelliffe remained near Sammy. She was peering at the retiring cliffs.

"Who would ever have thought that men would cling to such places?" she said. "I don't know whether I am glad or sorry that I came."

One could see that she was moved. Life had taken a wider aspect for her. She doubtless knew of poverty and suffering, but to her they had been abstract things near which her footsteps had never carried her.

"In another year or two it will be deserted," I told her. "The few sticks on the island have all been cut down, and they have begun to burn the boards of the abandoned house, though they also get a little driftwood for fuel. That is the story of many places on this coast, after the people have exhausted the scanty supply of wood."

She evidently thought it marvelous that such desolate bits of rock should have found human limpets to cling to them and be able to support life after a fashion. Then she began to look at the man who was lying in the bottom of the boat. Although he was very pale and weak he looked contentedly at the sky and the fleecy clouds, and when his eyes caught

hers he smiled bashfully. And the instinct then moved her, which lies in every proper feminine heart, however dormant, to mother something or somebody.

The screaming feathered life no longer interested her, nor the surging of the crested waves against the cliffs, nor the cleaving of the water by our little ship. She took a step forward and sat down on the rough boards, beside this wreck of manhood we were bringing in, unmindful of the dried fish-scales that would flake off upon her skirts. It was surely an unconscious movement of hers when her hand went out and rested on the fisherman's rough paw.

I saw him stare at her, his eyes filled with wonderment and gratitude, for men of these places know little of tender care.

"How do you feel now?" she asked him, gently.

"I feels like I once did after a day an' a night on th' ice," he replied, slowly. "I mind there wuz four on us to a small pan as had broke loose. An' two they give out with th' cold, an' wuz dead afore mornin', but th' steamer as had lost us in th' fog she jist sudden loomed up, all ter once, an' took Tom Pilley an' me off an' we wuz saved. I mistrust that's jist how I feels again now."

The girl turned her eyes towards me, and they were moist. She had understood the man and realized the time he had spent in despairing resignation, with the image of death ever before him during the long battle against cold and starvation. Then life had come, like a flash, out of the smothering mists, and soon he had been ready to struggle on again. And it was evident that the dreary prospect of such an existence prolonged was enough to make him happy once more.

After this she remained silent for a long time. Hitherto, in her existence, sorrow and suffering had appeared like some other wonderful things occurring in nature, such as the forces holding atoms together or compelling bodies to gravitate. One knew of such things, of course, yet one was unconscious of them. Now they were assuming an importance she had never realized before. Her head bent low, as if she were being chastened by some strange feeling of reproach.

It was perhaps the soothing touch of her hand that caused Dick to fall asleep, and Miss Jelliffe, with cramped limbs, rose to her feet.

"See how quietly he is resting now," she said. "I should think that you would feel ever so proud of what you have done. I'm sure I hope you do."

I had taken charge of the tiller, upon which she also laid her hand. I dare say that I was a little surprised, and did not answer at once.

"I don't think that I ever realized before how much just one man may accomplish," she continued.

"I am afraid that in my profession most of us who try to be honest with ourselves are inclined to deplore how very little we can achieve," I replied.

"No man has any right to be entirely satisfied with his efforts," she declared, "and I think all this is a magnificent thing to be devoting one's energies to."

"I am glad if I am sometimes able to justify an indulgent faculty for having granted me a parchment permitting me to prune my fellow mortals, as Holmes puts it," I answered.

She looked at me, seriously, and shook her pretty head.

"You are not speaking at all seriously," she said.

Dora has accused me of flippancy, and this young lady states that I don't talk seriously. Yet a fellow has a right to dislike the danger of being unjustifiably placed in the category of meritorious people. I couldn't very well tell Miss Jelliffe that I was doing all this at the bidding of a little nurse with whom I am mightily in love. Dora has as yet given me no right to speak of her as my affianced.

"What I wish to know is how you are going to be paid for your work in this case," pursued Miss Jelliffe, "and for the things you have given to these people? And who pays for this boat and the wages of the men? Of course if I am indiscreet you must say so."

"I am the owner, in perspective, of absolutely unlimited codfish, Miss Jelliffe," I told her. "Some day these people will bury me under an avalanche of quintals. Still, it is also possible that they may come on the installment plan. One hundred and twelve pounds of fish may seem an unusual fee for a rather protracted case, but consider how far it will go in the feeding of a lone bachelor. Even though it may be small recompense it is promised with an honest and kindly heart. I am led to expect huge amounts when some of the men get back from the Labrador, and still more will flood my coffers if the shore catch is good and all sorts of other wonderful things happen. These people actually mean it, and worry themselves considerably over the matter. Some of the idiots actually refuse to send for me for the specious reason that they have nothing to pay me with, and permit themselves to die off in the silliest way, without my assistance."

"Of course all that is mostly nonsense," said the young lady, decisively, "but---but I don't exactly see how you manage to get along. Of course just one glance such as I have seen that poor Dick give you ought to be a nice reward for any man, but then that sort of thing doesn't exactly provide..."

"I am fortunate in having a little money which, in Sweetapple Cove, stretches out to a fairly important income, so that I am able to invest in futures, if that be the proper financial term. In the meanwhile I am having a rather good time," I answered.

For quite a while she remained silent, seeming to be engaged in profound calculations. After this she again watched the waters and the rugged coast, and the birds wheeling and screaming over shoals of fish.

We soon neared the entrance to Sweetapple Cove and Miss Jelliffe looked at it with renewed interest. Beyond those fierce ramparts with their cruel spurs dwelt men and women, most of whom she probably considered to be among the disinherited ones of the earth, eking out a bare living from hand to mouth.

"Isn't it too bad that they should all have to strive so hard for the little they get," she said, suddenly.

"They do it willingly and bravely, Miss Jelliffe," I said. "Here as elsewhere, of course, the rain falls on the just and the unjust, and usually spoils their fish."

When we landed some men came out of the fish-houses, for the time of the midday meal was at hand. I called for volunteers to bring a hand barrow.

"Who's got a bed in his house that I can put Dick Will in for a few days, till he gets better?" I asked.

A number of offers were forthcoming at once. Finally he was carried away, with two sturdy men at the handles, while others walked alongside, supporting the patient in a sitting posture. He had begun by protesting.

"I is sure I kin walk now, if ye'll let me try," he said.

"You must do just as you are told," Miss Jelliffe admonished him. "You and I know nothing about these things and we must obey the doctor. You know he is ever so proud of your arm and you mustn't dare to run chances of spoiling his beautiful work."

"No, ma'am, not never," he declared, properly ashamed of himself and quite aghast at the prospect.

The procession caused some excitement in the village, and doubtless much discussion on the part of the good women. I have no doubt that some of them lectured their husbands severely for their failure to offer suitable inducements. They are always eager to be helpful.

"We has three beds i' th' house," the lucky contender had announced, proudly. It was only very late in the afternoon that I discovered the domicile to be tenanted by three adults and seven children, most of whom now cheerfully curl up on the floor. This, however, is never considered as a hardship by a Newfoundlander. To him anything softer than a plank is luxury.

When I saw Miss Jelliffe back to her house she asked me to come in for lunch. I thanked her and assured her that I would accept her kind invitation another time, as I had to go at once to another patient.

And so Miss Jelliffe turns out to be an exceedingly womanly young woman, which, after all, is the only kind we poor imperfect men are able to admire. When the chance came for her to show courage and sympathy she seized upon it instinctively. I am sure Dora would be ever so fond of her, and I wish that they could meet one another.

CHAPTER VIII

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dear Aunt Jennie:

Harry Lawrence was telling me one day that the proper study of man is girl, and vice versa. It is his modification of the ancient and mossy saw.

Daddy is doing very well, and now that he is asleep through the hypnotic virtues of a best seller which I have read to him in large doses, I resume my correspondence with you, and, incidentally, my study of man. He is really very interesting, Aunt Jennie, with the tiniest bit of secretiveness as to his own purposes in life which, of course, makes one more curious about him. In a frock coat, with gardenia in his button hole, he would make an ideal usher at a fashionable wedding. A few days ago, when we took that trip to Will's Island, I observed that he has capable limbs, properly clean-cut features and a general appearance of energetic efficiency. There are scores just like him, that we meet on golf links and tennis courts, and, in spite of his rough garb, he really is a most presentable young man.

I received your letter yesterday, and of course my own Auntie Jennie could not have foreborne to say that there is no island so deserted that I would not find a nice young man in it. I consider this statement as merely displaying the most ordinary and even superficial acquaintance with the laws of gravitation.

By this time I am naturally entirely at home in the social circles of Sweetapple Cove. The ancient dames grin at me, most toothlessly and pleasantly, and since I recklessly distributed all my stock of Maillard's among the urchins I have a large following among the juvenile population. To guard against the impending famine I have obtained from St. John's some most substantial and highly colored candies at very little a pound which are just now quite as popular to an indiscriminating taste. I wish I had not been so prodigal with the other ones.

I have foregathered with Mrs. Barnett a great deal and have simply fallen in love with her. Aunt Jennie, dear, she is a lady to her poor needle-pricked fingers' ends. She is one of the numerous offspring of an English parson who was the seventh or eighth son of an inpecunious baronet, I believe. Her husband starved as a curate in the most genteel fashion, for some years, and suddenly announced that he was coming here. We don't know whether Ruth was quite so subservient after the wedding was over, for I understand that some brides change to some extent after marriage. Mrs. Barnett was a Ruth before and remained one ever since.

She quietly packed up her trunks and her infants and doubtless bought the tickets, as Mr. Barnett was probably writing a sermon or visiting old ladies up to the last moment. Then she found herself here and immediately made the best of it, and that best is a thing to marvel at. She is a beautiful, tired-looking thing in dreadful clothes who wears an aureola of hair that is a perfect wonder. Her back is beautifully straight and she is capable of a smile I wish I could imitate.

She has the softest, cultured, sweet, English accent, which came with a little quiver of her voice when she told of a little one who died here, before there was any doctor. The three that are left are to her as Cornelia's jewels.

I would just give anything to bring her to New York, give her the run of the best *couturieres* and show her to some of our diamonds-at-breakfast dowagers. As Harry would say, she would make them look like thirty cents. They would perish with jealousy. She holds the savor and fragrance of centuries of refinement.

Yesterday I went to their little church. It was built by Mr. Barnett and the inhabitants, who cheerfully gave their labor. Every board of it represents untold begging and saving. It was a nice, simple, little service, in which the people were much interested and sang hymns with fervor and plenty of false notes. My voice is hardly worth the money that has been squandered upon it, but such as it is I began to sing also. To my intense dismay I was soon singing alone, for the rest of the congregation respectfully stopped. Mr. Barnett looked at me most benevolently over his spectacles, but this was hardly enough to subdue my sudden stage fright.

On the day before the nice little man called on us, soon after dinner, which here is a midday function. Before this particular feast I had apologized to Daddy for leaving him alone and going sailing for a few hours.

"That's the worst of you women-folk," he rebuffed me. "Just because a fellow happens to be fond of you, you must pretend that you are entirely indispensable. I got on very nicely, thank you, and your absence had no deleterious influence upon my leg. There is some slight pain in it, whether you are here or not."

"I know that the charm of my conversation makes you forget it at times," I told him.

"I don't deny the charm," said Daddy, who is the most scrupulously polite man, as you know, "but just now the delight of something to eat is what I'm hankering for."

"You are going to have Newfoundland turkey," I told him.

Daddy looked at me incredulously, and then his countenance fell.

"Don't tell me you are referring to codfish," he said.

"That is the sad news," I told him. "It is going to be perfectly delicious, and you will have to wait a moment."

So I turned up my sleeves and armoured myself in a blue gingham apron before invading the realm of Susie Sweetapple, who only knows how to boil things, including the tea. Like a true artist I engaged in an improvisation. The only really bad thing about codfish, Aunt Jennie, is its intrusive quality when it is prepared by the hundreds and thousands of quintals. Otherwise, like eggs and potatoes, it is capable of a multiplicity of avatars. We brought the dish back in triumph.

"Here, at last, is some return for the money squandered upon my education," I announced. "Aren't you glad I took a course in cookery?"

But Daddy refused to commit himself until after he had thoroughly sampled my effort.

"It is first rate," he said, "and you can take another course if you like."

"You know I brought the cookery book with me," I informed him, "but I've stopped using it. It tells one to take pinches of this, and pints of that, and cupfuls of other things that have never been heard of in Sweetapple Cove. It is dreadfully discouraging. I suggested roast beef to Susie, for to-night, and she stared at me and I laughed at my own folly. There is just one recently imported cow in the place, and a small calf, and they're alive, as are the goats. I can't reconcile my mind to the idea of a live cow being beef, and the calf is a personal friend of mine."

"I have hitherto considered you as being somewhat ornamental," said Daddy. "Now that you are also proving useful I am deeming you a profitable investment."

So we had lunch together, for I can't get used to the custom of calling it dinner.

"That was a splendid sail we had," I said. "The sea was perfectly delightful. And that poor man was so glad to be brought here. Dr. Grant is doing wonderful things."

"A smart chap," commented Daddy. "If he has to do this for a living I'm sorry for him, and if he isn't compelled to he's probably some sort of useful crank."

"At any rate Sweetapple Cove appreciates him," I said.

"I have no doubt he's an angel with pin-feathers sprouting all over him," retorted Dad. "But it isn't business, which I take the liberty of defining as the way of making the best of one's opportunities instead of frittering them away. He has unquestionably done a few dozens of poor devils a lot of good, including myself. But he could find many more cripples in any big city, and a few of them might have bank accounts."

Just then we heard some one whistling. I was interested to note that the tune was from a fairly recent comic opera that can hardly have reached the general population of Sweetapple Cove.

"There is your crank," I said, rather viciously.

He knocked at the door and came in, breezily, as he generally does.

"I've got to be off," he announced. "I shall probably not return till to-morrow night, or perhaps the morning after. You are getting along very well, Mr. Jelliffe. Just let me have another look before I go away."

The inspection seemed to be entirely satisfactory.

"Well, I'll run now," said Dr. Grant. "I'll come and see you the moment I get back."

He hurried out again, and I saw him join Sammy and the Frenchman. I waved my hand at him as the boat was leaving the cove, but I suppose that he wasn't looking for he made no answer, though Yves wigwagged with a flaming bandanna.

"Now wouldn't that jar you?" said Daddy. "Wouldn't it inculcate into you a chastened spirit? Doesn't he consider me as an important patient? Just comes in and grins and runs away again, for a couple of days, as if I were not likely to need him at any moment. He's the limit!"

"I don't really think he is going away just for the fun of it," I objected.

At this moment Susie Sweetapple burst into the room like a Black Hand bomb. It is one of her little ways.

"Parson's coming," she declared, breathlessly, and nodded her head violently to emphasize the importance of her statement.

"I suppose it is Mr. Barnett," I said. "They expected him back to-day. He has been away to a place they call Edward's Bay."

"I presume it is," assented Daddy. "His arrival appears to cause the same sort of excitement on this population as the fire-engines produce among the juveniles of New York, judging from Susie's display."

The girl had run to the door and opened it widely. Then she backed away before a little man who removed a clerical hat that was desperately green from exposure to the elements, and which revealed a shock of hair of a dull flaxen hue doubtless washed free of any pigment by salt spray and rain. His garments were also of distinctive cut, though they frankly exposed well-meant though unavailing efforts at matching buttons and repairing small rents. He bowed to me, his thin face expanding into a most gentle and somewhat professional smile, and he expressed commiseration at the sight of Daddy in his bed.

"I hope I don't intrude upon your privacy," he said, with an intonation just as refined as that of his wife, though scarcely as sweet. "I took the liberty of calling, having been informed of your very distressing accident. I fear you have not finished your repast, and perhaps I had better..."

"Do come in and take a seat," I told him. "It is ever so kind of you to call."

"I am very glad to see you, sir," said Daddy, very cordially. "We have not had many opportunities to welcome visitors here, and even our doctor is too busy a man to pay long calls."

"Yes, quite so. Indeed he is at times exceedingly busy. We think him an extremely nice young man; quite delightful, I assure you, and he does a great deal of good."

The man was rubbing his thin little hands together, with his head cocked to one side, looking like an intellectual and benevolent sparrow.

I must say that I was impressed by him. From conversations with the fishermen I had gathered the impression that Mr. Barnett was a perfectly fearless man on land and water, and I had imagined an individual cast in a rather heroic mold.

It hardly seemed possible that this little parson was the subject of the tales I had heard, for he bore a tiny look of timidity and, I was sorry to see, of overwork and underfeeding. But the latter may have been dyspepsia.

"This is rather a large field to which we have been called," he continued. "It gives one very fine opportunities as well as some difficulties to contend with. But of course we keep on striving. It is not missionary work, you understand, for the people are all very firm believers. It is merely a question of lending a helping hand, to the best of one's ability."

"It must be dreadfully hard at times," I put in. "You had quite a long sail to get here, didn't you? And isn't it perfectly awful in winter?"

"I have been carried out to sea, and things have looked rather badly sometimes," he said, deprecatingly. "But one must expect a little trouble now and then, you know."

Daddy began to ask him questions. You know how he prides himself on his ability to turn people inside out, as he expresses it. The poor little man answered, slowly, smiling blandly all the time and looking quite unfit, physically, to face the perils of such a hard life. I became persuaded that under that frail exterior there must be a heart full of strength to endure, of determination to carry out that which he considers to be his duty.

"You know I really am afraid I'm a dreadful coward," he suddenly confessed. "I have been rather badly frightened some times."

"My father was the bravest man I ever knew," said Daddy, "and he acknowledged that he was scared half to death whenever he went into battle, during the war. Yet he was several times promoted for gallantry in the field. I feel quite sure that you must have deserved similar advancement, more than once."

Mr. Barnett looked at him, doubtfully, and with a funny little frightened air.

"I am afraid you must be chaffing me," he said, with a tentative smile.

"No, sir, I am not," clamored Daddy. "Bravery lies in facing the odds, when you have to, and putting things through regardless of one's fears. The chap who never gets scared hasn't enough brains to know danger."

The uneasy look of the parson's face gave way to a pleased expression.

It was interesting to watch Daddy getting at all the facts, as he calls it, and I suppose that it is a precious talent. In the shortest possible time he knew the birth rate, the chief family histories, the rates for the transportation of codfish to the remotest parts of the world, and how many barrels of flour it took to keep a large family alive for one year, besides a few hundred other things.

During a lull I asked Mr. Barnett whether he would have some tea. Your cultivated taste is the one I have followed as regards this beverage, and I have an ample provision. Before the full-flavored North China infusion, which I kept out of Susie's devastating hands, and the little biscuits coming from the most British-looking tin box, I saw the Reverend Basil Barnett, late of Magdalen, gradually becoming permeated by a sense of something that had long been missing from his life. When he first caught the aroma he looked incredulous, then his features relaxed in the smile of the expert utterly satisfied.

"Mrs. Barnett and I are exceedingly fond of tea," he said, after I had compelled him to let me fill his cup for the third time.

To-morrow I shall discover some manner of making the dear woman accept a pound or two of it. The appreciation of her spouse made me think of some lion-hearted, little, strenuous lady with an inveterate tea-habit. Can you understand such a confused statement? I realize that it is badly jumbled. At any rate he held his cup daintily, with three fingers, and looked at it as Daddy looks at a glass of his very special Chateau-Larose.

"I shall have to go now," he announced, perhaps a little regretfully. "I hear, Miss Jelliffe, that you have helped minister to the needs of that poor Dick Will. I am going to see him now. By the way, I trust I may have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow at our little church, if you can leave your dear patient long enough."

"Of course I'll come," I promised, "and I would be glad to go with you now and see Dick. I know Daddy won't mind, and I should like to see whether I can do anything to make the man more comfortable."

"Run along, my dear," said Daddy.

Mr. Barnett expressed thanks, and we walked away together. I actually had to shorten my steps a little to accommodate myself to his quick, shuffling gait. It is queer, Aunt Jennie, but before this tiny, unpretentious parson I feel a sense of deference and high regard. To think he is able to overcome his fears, that his gracile body has been called upon to withstand the bufferings of storms, and that his notion of duty should appear to raise him, physically, to the level of these rough vikings among whom he labors, is quite bewildering. And the best of it is that when he talks he is entirely free from that didactic authority so often assumed by men of his cloth. He just admits you into his confidence, that is all.

"Mrs. Barnett has told me of your kindness to her and the little chaps," he said. "I am so pleased that you have become acquainted. The thing a woman misses most, in places like this, is her circle of friends. But she is the bravest soul in the world, and although she worries a good deal when I am away in bad weather she always looks cheerful when I return. I have been blessed beyond my deserts, Miss Jelliffe."

The little man looked up at me, and I could see that his face was bright with happiness, so that I had to smile in sympathy. I don't know that I have ever realized before what a huge thing love and affection mean in the lives of some people, how they can cast a glamour over sordid surroundings and reward one for all the hardships.

"I am glad that you are happy," I told him. "I think that you have become very fond of the place and of these people."

"I shall miss them if ever I am called away," he acknowledged, looking at the poor, unpainted houses and the rickety flakes.

Dear Auntie Jennie, it looks to me as if these were people to be envied. To the parson life is the prosecution of a work he deems all-important, and which he carries on with the knowledge that there is always a helping hand lovingly to uphold his own. And yet I admire his wife still more deeply, for she looks like a queen who loves her exile, because the king is with her.

We went into the house in which Dick found shelter. The men were away fishing, of course, but two women were there, with their fair share of the children who swarm in the Cove. At once aprons were produced for the polishing of the two rough chairs of the establishment.

"We has some merlasses now," one of the women told me, proudly. "Th' little bye he be allers a puttin' some on bread an' leavin' it on th' cheers."

Daddy is calling me, so good by for the present. I am so glad the people of Sweetapple Cove interest you.

Lovingly,
HELEN.

CHAPTER IX

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Auntie:

Would you believe that the time here flies at least as fast as in New York during Horse-Show week, although one gets to bed earlier. I am beginning actually to enjoy this place, strange as it may seem. Had it not been for poor Daddy's accident I should have been the most contented thing you ever saw. He sends his love and says I've just got to learn stenography and type-writing so that when he breaks more legs he can write to you daily. I believe he's forgotten the use of a pen except to sign checks with. His patience is wonderful, but he calls it being a good sportsman. I believe there is a great deal in that word.

It is queer that one can make oneself at home in such a little hole, and find people that are quite absorbing; I mean the natives, as well as the others. The whole place is asleep by eight or nine, unless there has been a good catch of fish, when the little houses on the edge of the cove are full of weary men still ripping away at the cod, that are brought in huge piles dwindling very fast after they are spread out to dry. Daddy gets batches of newspapers, by the uncertain mail, but finishes by nine and requests to be permitted to snore in peace. I write hurriedly for an hour or two, and finally succumb to the drowsiness you may find reflected in these pages.

On returning from my visit to Dick Will, Daddy looked at me enquiringly, as I am his chief source of local news and the dear old man is becoming nearly as absorbed in Sweetapple Cove as in Wall Street.

"The parson has gone to pay other visits," I told him, "but I couldn't leave you any longer. He is such a nice little man. He asked if he could read a chapter from the Bible, and Dick said he would be very glad. When it was finished the man looked as if he were thinking very hard, and Mr. Barnett asked if anything were puzzling him. Then Dick asked about the ice in the Sea of Galilee, because big floes were often ankle-deep and he had often seen men who looked as if they were walking on the water. Mr. Barnett explained that there was no ice in that country."

"And what did Dick say?" asked Daddy.

"Then how does they do for swiles?" was what he asked, and when he was informed that there were no seals in Galilee Dick expressed commiseration for the poor people.

"They are a pretty ignorant lot," commented Dad, laughing heartily.

"Few of them have the slightest chance of obtaining any education," I replied. "And Mr. Barnett was so nice to him, explaining things. Then he said nothing at all about the chastening effect of suffering. That seems to be something these people know about. The parson just said that we were all so glad to see him getting well again. You know, Daddy, the admonitions of some dominies sound rather like hitting a fellow when he's down. Mr. Barnett isn't that kind."

"I expect that he belongs to a first-rate kind, my dear," said Daddy. "There are all kinds of religions, but the only one I respect is that of the simple, trusting soul."

"I met Mrs. Barnett and asked her to come in to supper," I informed Dad. "We have plenty of canned chicken left and Susie's brother brought in a lot of beautiful trout. The man thought that fifteen cents a dozen would be about the right price, but he left it to me, and I couldn't beat him down. When he brought them Susie disdainfully informed him that fish was grub for poor people, and that we had lots of lovely things in cans. I insisted on taking the trout."

"If you continue to squander money in that way I'll have to cut down your allowance," threatened Daddy, whereupon I reminded him that he had never made me one and that I had always sent the bills to him.

He was laughing. I think it's the nicest thing in the world for a girl to be such pals with her father. I wouldn't give one of the nice grey hairs on his temples for all the nobility and gentry of Europe and the millionaires of America. Then I went to get the chess-board and the dear man gave me all the pawns I wanted and proceeded to wipe the floor with me, as Harry says. We played on till it began to get dark and Susie came in with the lamp which she placed in the bracket fastened to the wall.

"Like as not it'll be rainin' soon," she announced. "The swallows is flyin' low and the wind he've turned to sou-east, so belike it'll be pourin' in a while. How's yer leg feelin' the night, Mister, an' is there anythin' else I might be doin' fer yer?"

"No thank you, Susie," he replied.

"So long as parson's comin' I better make hot biscuits too. He's after likin' them, an' I kin open one o' they little white crocks o' jam. He holds more'n what ye'd think a wee bit man the likes o' he would manage to, though he don't never fat up, an' it goes ter show as grub makes brains with some folks, an' blubber in others."

I could make no answer to such highly scientific statements, and in a few moments a knock was heard at the door, upon which our handmaiden precipitated herself.

"Come right in," she said. "Don't take notice if yer boots is muddy fer I'll be scrubbin' th' floor ter-morrer. Yer must have been ter the Widdy Walters, for they is a big puddle afore her door, even this dry weather we've had couple o' days. Come right in an' welcome fer everybody's glad ter see yer."

Having thus amply done the honors Susie backed away and our two guests came in. The parson actually had a dress-suit which smelt most powerfully of camphor balls and Mrs. Barnett wore something that must have been a dear little dress some years ago, in which she looked as sweet as sweet can be. They were both smiling ever so brightly, and the little lump that was rising in my throat at the sight of these pathetic clothes went back to wherever is its proper place.

"Good evening, Mr. Jelliffe," said the parson, and repeated his greeting to me. "It feels a little like rain. I see that you have been playing chess. Dear me, it is such a long time since I have had a game."

I told him that this was a very imprudent remark, for which my father would make him pay dearly. I am afraid his sense of humor is drawn down rather fine, or lying fallow, or something. I had to explain that he would be captured and made to play whether he wanted to or not, whereat he beamed.

Susie came in again to get our little table ready, and brought up the barrel-top which is her latest improvisation of a tray for Daddy's use. I rose to assist in the preparatives but Susie scorned my aid.

"Ye jist set down an' enj'y yerself," she commanded me. "'T ain't every day one has th' parson to talk ter. I kin shift ter do it all an' it's no use havin' a dog an' doin' yer own barkin', like the sayin' is. Th' biscuits is done brown an' th' kittle's on the bile."

She ran out again for our dishes, and Daddy turned to our two friends.

"You are looking at an abject slave and a young lady who is getting fairly tamed, though at times she still rebels. Both of these young women exercise authority over me all day long until the ownership of my own soul has become a moot question. When my leg is properly spliced again I shall take that freak Susie to New York and exhibit her as the greatest natural curiosity I have been able to find on the island."

Mrs. Barnett laughed, ever so pleasantly, and declared that Susie was a good girl whose intentions were of the best.

Then Daddy went on to explain to Mrs. Barnett the mystery of our presence here. He told how our second mate had boasted of the salmon that swarmed in Sweetapple Cove, and how in a moment of folly he had decided to forsake the Tobique for that year and explore new ground. I was the one who had suggested camping out, practically, if we could find a little house, while we sent back the yacht for repairs, at St. John's. We were expecting it soon. The accident, of course, had to be thoroughly described.

"It was a beautiful fish, madam, a perfect beauty," he went on. "A clean run salmon of twenty pounds, if he was an ounce, and as strong as a horse. I had to follow him down stream and, first thing you know, I toppled over those confounded rocks and my leg was broken. The fish went away, towing my best rod and reel towards the Cove."

The parson said grace and we sat down. I am happy to say that they enjoyed Susie's culinary efforts, and we had the nicest chatty time. Just as we finished we all stopped conversing and listened. The rain was pelting down upon our little window panes and the wind came in heavy gusts, while, far away, the thunder was rolling. Then, after a time, we heard steps upon the little porch and I rose to open the door. It was Dr. Grant, engaged in the very necessary formality of removing his dripping oilskins.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Please do so," I answered. "We didn't expect you back until to-morrow. My father will be delighted to see you, as will your other friends."

He came in and sat down after he had greeted everybody. The poor man looked quite worn and harassed. It was a distinct effort that he made to speak in his usual pleasant way, and I could see that something troubled him.

"I think I will leave you now," he said, after a few moments. "I just wanted to find out how Mr. Jelliffe was getting on. They are expecting me at Sammy's,"

"Oh! Do rest for a moment," I told him. "You look very tired."

He sat down again, looking at his feet.

"The wind died down and the tide was bearing us away," he explained. "We had to take to the oars. Pulled a good fifteen miles. We were rather hurried, for we could see this storm coming up. I'm glad we made the Cove just in time."

We could all hear the rain spattering down violently. Flashes of lightning were nearly continuous and the thunder claps increased in intensity while the wind shook our little house.

"It is all white water outside now," he said, listening. "Well, I'll be off now."

"Yer ain't a goin' ter do nothin' o' the kind," interrupted Susie, who had just entered with another plate. "There's plenty tea left an' if there ain't I kin make more. Ye jist bide there till I brings yer some grub. Ye're dead weary an' needs it bad."

"Do stay," I sought to persuade him.

"Thank you, you are very kind," he said.

One could see that for the moment he didn't care whether he had anything to eat or not, yet he managed to do fair justice to Susie's cooking.

"I am feeling a great deal better now," he soon announced. "I think I was rather fagged out. We came back so early because I found I was no longer needed. I am ever so much obliged to you. I'm afraid I am not very good company to-night and I will be back early in the morning. That plaster cast is getting a little loose. We will split it down to-morrow and have a good look at things."

Mrs. Barnett had risen also and was looking at him. In her eyes I detected something that was a very sweet, motherly sympathy. Her quick intuition had shown her that something had gone entirely wrong. Her smile was so kind and friendly that it seemed to dissolve away something hard that had come over the surface of the man.

"Isn't there anything that we can do for you?" she asked.

"Nothing!" he exclaimed. "What can any one expect to do? What is the use of keeping on trying when one has to be forever bucking against ignorance and stupidity? There is nothing the matter with me. Just a dead woman and baby, that is all. Just a poor, hard-working creature that has scarcely known a moment of real happiness in this world. She had five little ones already, clinging to her skirts, and a lot of stupid neighbors. I know the kind of advice she got from those silly old women. 'No use callin' in th' doctor. Them things comes on all right if yer has patience. They doctors does dreadful things. I's had seven an' here I be, an' no doctor ever nigh me.' Oh! I can hear the poor fools speaking, and naturally she took their advice. Then, of course, when she was gasping for breath and beginning to grow cold they sent for me, thirty miles away, and when I landed they told me it was all over, and I found them moaning, with a wild-eyed man huddled up in a corner hardly able to understand, and a lot of little ones crying for food."

He stopped and wiped his brow with his handkerchief, and looked around him, without appearing to see any of us. It was like a pent-up stream that had burst from its dam, and the flood was not yet exhausted.

"I felt like cursing the lot of them," he continued, "and giving them the tongue-lashing of their lives. But much good it would have done, and I managed to hold myself back! I couldn't help telling them that they should have sent for me three days ago, when things began to go wrong. They know well enough how to weep over their misery, but no one can make them use their silly heads. They keep on coming with infected gurry sores as if arms could be saved after they've nearly rotted away, and send for me to see the dying, as if I could raise them from their beds."

He had stopped suddenly, and looked embarrassed.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I should not have spoken of these things. They are all a part of the game. I daresay I ought to have gone up on the hill, back of the cliffs, and had a good bout of bad language all to myself, where none could hear me."

Neither the parson nor his wife appeared to be the least bit shocked at this. They knew from long experience the things that try men's souls.

"I'm glad you've spoken," I told him. "It has relieved you, I'm sure, and we all sympathize with you."

Long ago, Aunt Jennie, you told me that a man is nothing but a grown-up boy. This one looked around the room. Daddy was smiling at him in his dear friendly fashion, and the other two were kindness itself.

"A fellow doesn't always take his medicine like a little man," he said, apologetically, "and you're all ever so good."

Then he left, still looking just a little bit ashamed of himself, as I've seen fellows do in a defeated crew when they have sunk down for a moment on their sliding seats.

"I think the boy feels alone, sometimes," said Mrs. Barnett. "He has really a great deal to contend with. But he is a splendid fellow, and I'm sorry for him. Every one loves him in Sweetapple Cove, you know."

Presently the two left us, after I had promised to go to the little church on the next day. Susie had come in with a lighted lantern, clad to her feet in an ancient oilskin coat, and insisted on seeing them home. They thanked us very charmingly and I watched their departure, the reflections of the light playing over the deep puddles on the road.

Then I sat down by Daddy's bed, pondering.

"A penny for your thoughts, daughter," he said.

"I was thinking that men are very interesting," I told him. "Dr. Grant always looks like such a strong man."

"And now you think you have discovered the feet of clay?"

"Well, it seemed quite strange, Daddy."

"I'll tell you one thing, girly," he said. "Never make the fatal error of thinking any one is perfect. It is a mistake that young people are rather apt to indulge in. There are little weak points, and sometimes big ones, in all of us."

"I suppose so," I assented, "but these were such dreadful things he told us about. It seems so terrible that they should happen at all. It has made me feel unhappy. I thought that doctors got used to such things."

"There are a lot of things a fellow never gets used to, my dear," answered Daddy. "This one is young yet, but he will probably never get over the sense of rebellion which comes over a man, a real man, who finds himself butting his head against stupidity and ignorance. Don't you make any mistake about that fellow Grant! The poorest kind of chap is the one who is always letting things slide. This is a tough, square-jawed, earnest chap, of the sort who put their hearts and souls into things, right or wrong. The man who has never felt or shown weakness is a contemptible egotist. The cocksure fools always have perfect faith in themselves. Those two men, the big and the little one, are both pretty fine specimens, and in their own ways they are equally strong. They're made of the right stuff."

I don't exactly know why, but I felt greatly pleased. Daddy is a mighty keen man of the world, and his judgment of others has been one of his great assets.

"I wish we could help too, Daddy," I told him.

"We may, if we find a way," he answered. "I'm going to investigate the matter."

When Daddy says he is to investigate, something is going to drop, with a dull thud. At least that's the way Harry Lawrence puts it. By the way, Aunt Jennie, what has become of him, and why hasn't he written to me?

Your loving
HELEN.

CHAPTER X

From John Grant's Diary

I slept rather late, this morning, and came out of the house feeling very fit. Had it not been for my blistered hands nothing would have remained to show what a hard pull we had yesterday, excepting the unpleasant feeling that I made rather a donkey of myself last evening. My only excuse, and a mighty poor one, is that I was rather played out and developed a silly grouch.

I had only gone a little way when I met Mrs. Barnett. She came towards me with her hand outstretched, smiling in her usual pleasant way.

"Right again and topside up," she exclaimed, brightly. "Sammy was just telling me what a hard time you had to make the cove, yesterday. Those broad shoulders of yours give you an advantage over my husband. He would have had to go off towards North Cove. It is fine to be as strong and big as you."

"Mrs. Barnett," I said, fervently, "you are an awful humbug."

She cocked her head a little to one side, with a pretty motion she sometimes unconsciously affects.

"Out with it," she said. "Explain yourself so that I may repent and be forgiven."

"There is nothing to be forgiven you," I declared. "I would like to place you on a pedestal and direct the proper worshipping of you. None but the most superior kind of a woman can take a fool chap and turn his folly around so that he may be rather pleased with it. I expected a good wiggling from you, and deserve it."

"That sort of thing is one of the most important functions and privileges of a woman," she answered. "Men need it all the time for the smoothing out of their ruffled feelings."

"The men shouldn't allow them to get ruffled," I said.

"There speaks the wise man," she laughed, "nor should the sea permit itself to get stormy. Were you not explaining to me the other day that the wind allows the climbing up of the sap in swaying trees, and that the stirring of the waters keeps them pure and fit to maintain the unending life beneath them?"

"It seems to me that I did."

"Well, I suppose that a little storminess now and then serves some useful purpose in a man, and if he only can have a woman about him, to see that it doesn't go too far, it will do him a lot of good. You should get married."

"Of course I ought to," I replied, "and moreover I would give everything in the world if only...."

I interrupted myself, considering that since Dora Maclennon and I are not engaged, and that she merely represents to me a longing which I often consider as a hopeless one, I have no right to discuss her, even with this dear kind woman.

"You have already found the girl?" asked Mrs. Barnett, her eyes filled with the interested sympathy always shown by the gentler sex in such matters.

"I have found her," I replied, "but she is very far away from me, and it is just a case of having to grin and bear it."

Then her blue eyes opened widely, and with an exquisitely gentle touch she placed her hand on my arm.

"You poor dear boy!" she said, with the sweetest little inflection of voice, that held a world of friendliness and compassion.

"I am afraid you will think I am in a perpetually disgruntled state," I told her. "Nothing of the kind! I eat the squarest kind of square meals every day and really enjoy the work here. If it were not a bit trying, from time to time, it wouldn't be worth a man's while to tackle it."

"That is the way to talk," approved Mrs. Barnett.

So we shook hands again and I left her, thinking what a splendid thing it must be for a fellow to have such a tower of gentle strength to lean upon.

I went over to the Jelliffes' and cut down the plaster dressing. The broken leg is doing very well, as was to be expected, and I was much pleased.

"That's doing splendidly," I told him. "A little more patience for a couple of weeks and we'll have you walking up and down the village, a living advertisement of my accomplishments."

"A couple of weeks!" exclaimed Mr. Jelliffe. "That sounds like three or four. I know you fellows. No one ever managed to get anything definite out of a doctor, with the possible exception of his bill."

I laughed, but refused to commit myself by making any hard and fast promises, and Miss Jelliffe came in.

"Daddy enjoyed himself ever so much last evening," she said. "He likes Mr. Barnett and grows enthusiastic when he speaks of Mrs. Barnett. I must say that I share his views."

"They are made of the salt of the earth," I asserted.

"Yes, there can be no doubt of that," she said. "But doesn't it seem dreadful that a gently nurtured woman should be placed in such surroundings, with no means of obtaining anything but the barest needs of existence? She has to stand all the worries of her own household and, in addition, is compelled to listen to the woes of all the others."

"And any help that she can extend to them," I added, "saving that of sympathy and kind words, is always at the cost of depriving herself and her little ones. And yet she is doing it unceasingly, and goes about in shocking clothes and with a smile on her face, cheerfully, as if her path in life lay over a bed of roses."

"That's what I call a fine woman, and a good one," said Mr. Jelliffe, "but I'm sure it is her devotion to that little man that has brought out all her fine points. His people are her people and she has adopted his ideals."

The front door was widely opened on this pleasant day, and, as I was finishing the dressing, Miss Jelliffe was dreamily looking out over the cove and following the circling gulls. I think that, like myself, she wondered at the simplicity of it all. A woman loved a man and clung to him, and from that moment their personalities merged, and their thoughts were shared, and a rough, rock-bound, fog-enwrapped land became, for all its hardships, a place where a man could do great work while the woman developed to the utmost her glorious faculties of helpfulness and tender unselfishness.

To me there could be no doubt that this couple had made of their union something very noble in achievement, though they were so quiet and simple about it all. In so many marriages the partnership is but a poor doggerel, while in others it is a poem of entrancing beauty, filling hearts with happiness and heads with generous thought.

"You have been staring at me for a whole minute, Doctor," said Mr. Jelliffe, suddenly. "Anything particularly wrong or fatal in my general appearance?"

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," I said, in some confusion. "You are looking ever so well and I wish I could hurry your leg on a little faster. Nature has ordained that bones will take just about so long to mend. And now I am going away to play. Practice happens to be quite slack to-day and Frenchy should be waiting outside with my rod. I am going to see whether I cannot deceive an innocent salmon into swallowing a little bunch of feathers."

"How dare you speak of such things to an inveterate old angler, after tying him up by one leg!" exclaimed my patient, shaking his fist at me. "You fill my heart with envy and all manner of uncharitableness. I call it the meanest thing I ever heard of on the part of a doctor. Here I am, without even a new Wall Street report wherewith to possess my soul in patience. Run away before I throw something at you, and good luck to you!"

"I haven't dared to ask Miss Jelliffe whether she would like to cast a fly also," I said. "I suppose she will have to stay and nurse your wounded feelings."

"She has stuck to me like a leech since yesterday morning," complained the old gentleman, "excepting for the short time when she went to church. I don't seem to be able to get rid of her. Wish you would take her away with you and get me some salmon that doesn't come in cans. She will doubtless have plenty of rainy days during which she will be compelled to stay indoors with me, whether I like it or not."

"I have a half a mind to take you at your word, to punish you," said Miss Jelliffe.

"This should be a great day for a rise," I sought to tempt her.

"I suppose I can be back in time for lunch?" she asked.

"Certainly. You can come back whenever you want to," I assured her.

"Don't you really care, Daddy?" she asked her father.

"What I care for is broiled salmon, fresh caught and such as has not been drowned in a net like a vulgar herring," answered the latter.

We were away in a few minutes, walking briskly down to the cove, where we entered a dory which Frenchy propelled. Our craft was soon beached at the mouth of the small river and we walked up the bank by the side of the brawling water. When we reached the first pool we sat down on the rocks while I moistened a long leader and opened my fly-book.

"I think we will begin with a Jock Scott," I proposed.

"No, let us try a Silver Doctor," she urged me. "It seems best adapted to present company. It's just a fancy I have, and I'm generally lucky."

As we were speaking a silver crescent leaped from the still surface, flashed for a second in the sunlight and came down again to disappear in the ruffled water.

"Heem a saumon magnifique!" exclaimed Yves.

"You must try for him, Miss Jelliffe," I said. "You are to make good that statement that you are lucky. There is a big rock under the water, just over there where you see that dark spot. He will be likely to rest there. It is a beautiful clean run fish. Now take my rod and cast well up stream and draw your fly back so that it will pass over that spot."

"Oh, no, you try," she said, eagerly. "Isn't he a beauty!"

But I insisted and she took the rod, a fourteen-foot split bamboo. She looked behind her, to see that the coast was clear. There were no bushes for her to hook and no rise of ground to look out for.

"Steady, Miss Jelliffe," I said. "Don't get nervous. If he rises don't try to strike. They will hook themselves as often as not. Begin by casting away from that place until you get out enough line, then get your fly a little beyond that spot and draw in gently."

"I've caught plenty of big trout," she said, excitedly, "but I've never landed a salmon. I am nearly hoping that he won't take the fly. I won't know what to do."

"There has to be a first time in everything," I told her. "Just imagine you're after a big trout."

She appeared to become cooler and more confident, letting out a little line, retrieving it nicely, and lengthening her cast straight across the stream. The rod was going back expertly, just slightly over her right shoulder, and the line whizzed overhead.

"Easy," I advised her; "it is a longer rod than you are used to."

She waited properly until the line had straightened out behind her, and cast again.

"That is plenty, now for that rock, Miss Jelliffe," I said.

There was another cast, with a slight twist of her supple waist. The fly flew out, falling two or three yards beyond the rock and she pulled back, gently, her lure rippling the dark surface. Then came a faint splash, a vision of a silvery gleam upon the water, which smoothed down again while the line came back as light as ever.

"Easy, easy, don't cast again in the same place," I advised.

She obeyed, but sore disappointment was in her eyes.

"Did I do anything wrong?" she asked, eagerly.

"Not a bit. He never touched the fly. But I always like to wait a minute before casting again after a rise, and I think we will put on a smaller Doctor. His attention has been awakened and he will be more likely to take it."

I quickly changed the fly and Miss Jelliffe, with grim determination, went to work again. Soon she brought the lure over the exact spot but met with no response. Once more without the faintest sign of a rise. A third time, and suddenly the reel sang out and a gleaming bolt shot out of the water.

"Now steady, Miss Jelliffe! Easy on his mouth. Let him run. If he slackens reel in. That's the way! We'll have to follow him a little, but try to keep him from going down stream too far."

Her eyes were eager and her face flushed with the excitement. The wisps of her glorious hair were floating in the wind as she stepped along the bank, steadily, while I stood at her side without touching her, but with a hand ready in case of a slip or a misstep. Frenchy followed us, carrying a big landing-net and a gaff. His face bore a wide grin and he was jumping with excitement.

The fish turned and took a run up the pool, again shooting out of the water in a splendid leap. Then he turned once more, giving Miss Jelliffe a chance to reel in some line. For a short time he swam about slowly, as if deeply considering a plan of conduct. At any rate this was followed by furious fighting; he was up in the air again, and down to the bottom of the pool, and dashing hither and yon, the line cleaving the water. At times he seemed to try to shake his jaws free from the hook. Miss Jelliffe was now pale from the excitement of it. Her teeth were close set, excepting when she uttered sharp little exclamations of fear and renewed hope. But always she met his every move, deftly, and was quick to follow my words of advice. Then followed a period of sulking, when he went down deep and refused to budge, with the tense line vibrating a little with the push of the current. I began to meditate on the wisdom or folly of throwing a stone in the water to make him move, but suddenly he cut short my cogitations and shot away again, heading up-stream.

"Fight him just a bit harder, Miss Jelliffe," I advised. "Don't allow him to get rested and try to put a little more strain on the rod; it can stand it and I'm sure he's well hooked."

"But my arms are getting paralyzed," she complained, with a little tense laugh. "They are beginning to feel as if they would never move again."

"I should be glad to take the rod," I said, "but afterwards you would never forgive me. I know that you want to land that fish yourself."

Her little look of determination increased. She was flushed now. Under the slightly increased effort she made the salmon began to yield, taking short darts from side to side, which began to grow shorter.

"Walk down a little with him, to bring him into shallower water," I advised, and took the gaff from Yves. Then I waded in until I was knee deep and kept very still, but the fish took another run.

"Never mind," I cried, "keep on fighting even if your arms are ready to drop. A steady pull on him. That's fine! Bring him again a little nearer. That's the way! He is mighty tired now; just a bit nearer. Good enough!"

The iron of the gaff disappeared under water. Miss Jelliffe was giving him the butt, and her lips quivered. Then I made a quick move and a splashing mass of silver rose out of the stream with mighty struggling. I hurried ashore with it and held it up.

The great contest was over. Miss Jelliffe put down the rod and her arms sank down to her side, wearily, yet in another moment she knelt down upon the mossy grass beside the beautiful salmon.

"Oh! Isn't it a beauty!" she cried. "Thank you ever so much! Wasn't it a wonderful fight he made! I could never have managed it without your help. You're a very good teacher, you know, and I can understand now why you men just get crazy over salmon fishing. I'll be just as crazy as any one from now on. How much does he weigh?"

I pulled out my spring scale and hooked up the fish. We all watched eagerly as the pointer went down.

"Twenty-two; no, it's twenty-three and just a little bit over. I know it is the best fish taken from Sweetapple River this year. They haven't been running any larger," I said.

Then we all sat down again and admired the fish. Frenchy and I lighted our pipes, and I took the little Silver Doctor from the leader. It was just the least bit frayed but still very pretty and bright, with its golden floss and silver tinsel, its gold pheasant tips, blue hackles and multicolored wings.

"I will be glad if you will keep this fly," I told Miss Jelliffe. "You must hold it as a souvenir of your first salmon."

"Thank you! I will keep it always," she answered, brightly. "It will be a reminder of much kindness on your part, and of this beautiful day. Just look there, above the pool, where the little spruces and firs are reflected in the water that sings at their feet on its way down. How still it is and peaceful. Oh! It has been a glorious day!"

I must acknowledge that she was very charming in the expression of her enjoyment. There is nothing *blase* about this handsome young girl. I followed the hand she was pointing. The river above was like some shining road with edges jewelled in green and silvery gems. High up a great osprey was sailing in the blue, while around us the impudent Canada jays were clamoring. From this spot one could see no houses, owing to a bend in the river, and we were alone in a vastness of wilderness beauty, with none but Frenchy near us, who looked like a benign good soul whose gentle eyes shared in our appreciation.

"I think it is your turn to try the pool," Miss Jelliffe finally said.

"Not this morning," I answered. "You have no idea how the time has gone by, and how much I have enjoyed the sport. We will leave the pool now and go back. You know you were anxious to return in time for your father's lunch. From now henceforth we will know this as the Lady's Pool, and I hope to see you whip it again on many mornings, before you sail away."

"Please don't speak of sailing away just now," she said.

I took up the rod and the gaff, while Frenchy took charge of the salmon and the landing-net, and we walked down stream, past the first little rapids, to the place where we had left the dory.

"Won't Daddy be delighted!" exclaimed Miss Jelliffe.

"He will have good reason," I answered.

By this time we could see the cove and its rocky edges, upon which the rickety fish-houses and flakes were insecurely perched on slender stilts. A couple of blunt-bowed little schooners were at anchor, and some men in boats were catching squid for bait.

"This is picturesque enough," said Miss Jelliffe, "but I miss the beauty of all that we have just left."

"I'm sure you do," I answered, "yet this view also is worth looking at. It is not like the peaceful slumbering villages of more prosperous lands. It represents the struggle and striving for things that will never be attained, the hopes of those yet young and the reminiscences of others becoming too old to keep up the fight. In many ways it is better than a big town, for here the people all know one another, and no one can starve as long as his neighbor has a handful of flour. Sweetapple Cove is a fine place, for sometimes the winds of heaven sweep away its smells of fish and fill deep the chests of sturdy men who fight the sea and gale instead of fighting one another, as men so often must, in the big cities, to retain their hold upon the loaves and fishes."

"I suppose we all look for things that can never be attained," she repeated after me, with a look of very charming, frank friendliness.

I sometimes wonder whether I wear my heart upon my sleeve for those pleasant daws to peck at. At any rate they do it gently, and both Mrs. Barnett and this young lady are birds of a very fine feather.

So we entered the boat and were rowed over to the landing-place, but a few hundred yards away, where the Frenchman's little fellow was waiting, patiently, with one arm around a woolly pup with which he seemed to be great friends. As soon as we were ashore he left the dog and came up to Miss Jelliffe.

"*Bonjour*," he said. "*Je t'aime bien*."

Yves blushed and smiled, apologetically, at this very sudden declaration of love, but the girl stooped, laughing, and kissed the little chap, passing her hand over his yellow locks.

One is ever seeing it, this love of women for the little ones and the weaklings. We men are proud of our strength, but may it not be on account of some weaknesses hidden to ourselves that women so often love fellows who hardly seem to deserve them. It is a thing to wonder at. Dora, I am very sure, knows all the feeble traits I may possess. Will the day ever come when these may prompt her to think it would increase her happiness to take me under her protecting care?

"Won't you come over to the house?" Miss Jelliffe asked me.

"I am afraid that I rather need a wash," I said, "after handling your big salmon. Frenchy will take it over to your house. I must find out whether any one has been looking for me. In Sweetapple Cove there is no such thing as office hours, you know. People come at any time, from ever so many miles away, and sit down patiently to await my return."

"Well, good-by, and thank you again, ever so much. You must certainly come to-morrow and help us dispose of that fish."

She extended her hand, in friendly fashion, and I told her I was glad she had enjoyed herself.

"We are going out fishing again, are we not?" she asked. "I want more lessons from you, and I should like to watch you at work."

I told her that I would be very happy, and scrambled away up the path to Sammy's house. Then I looked back, before opening the door. I saw her still walking, followed by Frenchy who bore the salmon in triumph. I could see how lithe she was and how the health and strength of out-of-doors showed in her graceful gait.

"It is not good for man to live alone," I told myself, and after Mrs. Sammy had informed me that there were no pressing demands for my services I had lunch, after which I went to my room to write to Dora. I am doing the best I can not to bother the little girl, yet I'm afraid I always turn out something like a begging letter. But she always answers in a way that is ever so friendly and nice. In her last letter she dragged in again the fact that we were both still young, with the quite inaccurate corollary that we didn't know our own minds yet. I told her my mind was made up more inexorably than the laws of the Medes and the Persians, that it was not going to change, and that if her own mind was as yet so immature and youthful that it was not fully grown, she ought to give me a better chance to help in its development. I suppose that in her answer she will ignore this and speak of something else. That is what always makes me so mad at Dora, bless her little heart!

CHAPTER XI

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Aunt Jennie:

I was looking at the calendar, this morning, and thought that some one had made an extraordinary mistake, but I am now convinced that it will be four weeks to-morrow since we first arrived in Sweetapple Cove. Your accounts of delightful doings in Newport are most interesting, yet I am sure that with you the time cannot possibly fly as it does here.

At present dear old Daddy is reclining in a steamer chair on the porch of our little house, and his crutches are resting against the wall. They are wonderful things manufactured by Frenchy, whom Dr. Grant considers as an universal genius. When they were first brought to us I was inclined to whimper a little, for I had a dreadful vision of them as a permanent thing. It was a regular attack of what Daddy, in his sarcastic moments, calls silly, female fears.

"Don't tell me he is always going to need them!" I cried to the doctor.

This man has a way of setting all doubts at rest. Just one look of his frank clear eyes does it. I really am not surprised that these people all just grovel before him.

"Not a bit," he answered decisively. "He doesn't really need them now, but it will be a little safer to use them for the present. In a week or so we will make a bonfire of them."

Daddy has been sitting as judge and jury over his poor leg. Such measurings with steel tape and squintings along the edge of his shin-bone, and such chapters of queries and answers! But now he is perfectly satisfied that it is what he calls an A 1 job, and looks at his limb with the prideful interest of a man who has acquired a rare and precious work of art.

How can you possibly say that I must be yawning myself half to death and longing for the fleshpots of Morristown? If I could have my own way I would build an unpretentious cottage here, but of course I would insist on a real bath tub. And I would come and spend the most pleasant months, and cultivate my dear friends the populace, and those delightful BARNETTS and Frenchy's kidlet, who is a darling and my first real conquest.

The doctor and I have caught more salmon, and some sea-trout, and I have taken lessons in knitting from some ancient dames whose fingers trembled either from old age or the excitement of the distinction conferred upon them. They don't

despise my ignorance but are certainly surprised at it. I am not certain that I have not prompted the arising of certain jealousies, though I do my best to distribute myself fairly. I cannot as yet turn a heel but I have hopes. Some day I will make Daddy wear the things, when he puts on enormous boots and goes quail shooting, after we go South again. I shall select some day when he has been real mean to me, and be the blisters on his own heels!

The *Snowbird* is now riding in the cove, having been manicured and primped up in the dry-dock at St. John's. Daddy says that it was an economy, for the dock laborer of that fortunate city does not yet regard himself as an independent magnate. Our schooner and its auxiliary engine are, of course, objects of admiration to the natives. They know a boat when they see one. Stefansson would have a fit if he saw a rope end that wasn't crown-spliced, or a flemish coil that was not reminiscent of the works of old masters. The way he keeps his poor crew polishing the brasses must make life dreary for them, yet they seem to scrub away without repining. I have told you that Jim Brown, our second, is a native of these parts and responsible for our coming. Now he lords it in the village dwellings, where he is considered as a far-traveled man who can relate marvelous tales of great adventures to breathless audiences.

Daddy, of course, directed that every one should be made welcome on board. You should have seen these big fishermen coyly removing their heavy boots before treading our decks---I believe that "snowy deck" is the proper term---lest they should mar the holystoned smoothness. They have entered with bated breath the dining and sitting room, explored the mysteries of the galley and peeped into the staterooms.

"Jim he've written once ter the sister o' he," Captain Sammy told me one day. "He were tellin' how them yachts wuz all fixed up an' we wuz thinkin' as how in travelin' he'd got ter be considerable of a liar, savin' yer presence, ma'am. But now I mistrust he didn't hardly know enough ter tell the whole truth."

A few bystanders nodded in approval. I need hardly tell you that our invasion is still a subject of interest in the place. From my bedroom window, where I was trying to knit one afternoon, I heard some men who were conversing, standing peacefully in the middle of the little road, in spite of a pouring rain, which they mind about as much as so many ducks. The only fat man in Sweetapple Cove was speaking.

"Over to England they is them Lards an' Jukes, what ain't allowed in them States, but I mistrusts them Jelliffes is what takes the place o' they in Ameriky."

"I dunno," doubted another, "th' gentleman he be kinder civerlized fer a juke. Them goes about wid little crowns on the head o' they, I seen a pictur of one, onst. But Lards is all right. Pete McPhay he saw one, deer huntin', two years ago, an' said he'd talk pleasant to anybody, like Mr. Jelliffe. That's why I thinks he's more like a Lard nor a Juke."

This conclusion seemed to meet with general approval, and the men went on.

Dr. Grant came over to us fairly early this morning, and joined us on the little porch.

"Good morning," he said. "You must be glad that the term of your imprisonment is drawing to a close, Mr. Jelliffe. You will soon be on your way home. As a matter of fact there is nothing to prevent your leaving in a few days. We could easily put you in your berth on board, well braced up, and in four or five days the *Snowbird* would be at anchor off the New York Yacht Club float."

"I am suffering from the deteriorating influence of prolonged idleness, Doctor," said Daddy. "I have become thoroughly lazy now, and don't care to start until I can hop on board without assistance, and walk the deck as much as I want. This daughter of mine has developed an uncanny attachment to the place; she sometimes tries to look sorry for me, but she is having the one grand time of her childhood."

I protested, naturally, but he paid no attention and went on.

"Now that I can sit on this porch I get any amount of company. I know every one in the place and feel that I am acquiring the local accent through my prolonged conversations with the natives. I am utterly incapable of thinking of desirable parcels of real estate, and bonds leave me indifferent. I reckon in codfish now, like the rest of the population. I caught myself wondering, yesterday, how many quintals the Flatiron Building was worth."

"I am sure you must miss your daily paper," said the doctor.

"A short time ago that was one of the flies in my ointment; but now I am at peace. Why remind me of it?"

Daddy delights in chess with the parson and long talks with the doctor. I can see that he has become really very fond of him. Mr. Barnett is much more frequently with him, and they have tremendous battles during which it looks as if the fate of empires depended on the next move, but when the doctor comes Daddy looks ever so pleased and his voice rings out with welcome.

I announced that I was going over to old Granny Lasher, who would get me out of trouble with that heel I was puzzling over.

"Just look at her, Doctor," said Daddy. "Did you ever see such rosy cheeks? This has done her a lot of good; of course she has always been a strong girl, but there is something here that has golf and motoring beaten to a standstill. She is becoming horribly proud of getting those salmon. I will have to take down her pride, some day, and show her what an old fellow like me can do. I am ever so much obliged to you for taking such good care of her."

Now you and I, Aunt Jennie, know that men are silly things at best. Of course I am grateful to Dr. Grant for looking after me so nicely, but why should he deserve such a lot of credit for it? Don't all the nice young men like to look after girls? They enjoy it ever so much. But somehow this Dr. Grant enjoys it without undue enthusiasm. I am really ever so glad that he never looks, as so many of the others do, as if he were pining for the moment when he can lay his heart and fishy fees, which he never gets, at my feet. He is just a splendid fellow, Aunt Jennie, who looks as strong and honest as the day is long. We are all very fond of him.

"The only thing that hurts is that I have had none of the fishing," said Daddy. "I have made up my mind to return another year and let the Tobique take care of itself. By the time I am well enough to fish there will not be another salmon that will rise, this year."

"No, Mr. Jelliffe," answered the doctor. "The salmon are beginning to cease their interest in flies, but the trout are biting well."

"I have nothing to say against trout," said Daddy, "but I feel like crying for a salmon as a baby cries for the moon. There is not much in life outside of salmon and Wall Street. Even when I have to go to California I troll a little on Puget Sound, but it doesn't come up to fly-fishing."

I left them, deeply engaged in this absorbing subject. I think I have discovered something rather noteworthy in this salmon fishing. It is the effect that our interest in the matter has on the population. To them a fish means a cod; it is the only fish they know. All others are undeserving of the name, and are compelled to appear under the guise of their proper appellations. The taking of fish is a serious business, and one that does not pay very handsomely, as far as these people are concerned. Therefore they cannot understand that one may catch fish for amusement, and so we are enwrapped in a halo of mystery. Dr. Grant has told me that some of them have darkly wondered whether Daddy was not investigating

this island with a view to buying it for weird purposes of his own, such as obtaining a corner on codfish and raising the price of this commodity all over the world. Isn't it funny that even here some notion of trusts and corners should have penetrated? Of course they would be delighted to have the price of cod raised; it is the dream of their lives.

But most of them have accepted us as natural, if freaky, phenomena with which they were previously unacquainted, and which have thus far shown no objectionable features. They have become ever so friendly, yet never intrusive, and I like them ever so much.

That poor fellow Dick was shipped back to his miserable little island, two weeks ago, happy in the possession of a useful right arm. It was quite touching to hear him speak of the doctor. And speaking about Dick reminds me of the man's wife, with those peculiar ideas of hers. You remember about them, don't you? Would you believe, Auntie dear, that all the other women about here are just as bad? They seem to be matchmakers of the most virulent sort. They boldly ask me if I am going to marry the doctor, and when, the poor silly things, and if I deny the impeachment they bring forth little smiles of unbelief.

When I showed my last stocking to Granny Lasher she announced that it was much too small.

"Didn't yer ever look at the big feet o' he?" she asked.

"The big feet of who?" I asked, in an elegant form of speech.

"Th' doctor," she answered.

"But these are for my father," I objected.

"Sure, I ought ter have knowed that," she replied. "Ye'll be practicin' on he first, and when yer does real good work ye'll be knittin' 'em fer th' doctor."

"Mrs. Sammy knits stockings for him," I said, severely.

"Well, when he's yer man ye'll not be lettin' other wimmin folks do his knittin' fer he," persisted the ancient dame.

I simply refuse to argue any more with them. They have that idea in their hard old heads and it cannot be dislodged. If you and I had been Newfoundlanders, Auntie dear, we would have married early and been expected to knit stockings, in the intervals of work on the flakes, for the rest of our natural lives. The maidens of this island entertain visions of coming years devoted to the rearing of perfect herds of children, to assorted household work, to drying fish and knitting stockings for their lords and masters, until the end.

I even have a suspicion of Mrs. Barnett, sweet good soul though she be. I walked up to her house yesterday, having met Dr. Grant on the way. He left me at her door, and when I came in she looked at me, wistfully, and I intercepted the tiniest little sigh from her.

"What is the trouble?" I asked her.

"Oh! Nothing in the world, my dear," she answered, in that sweetly toned voice of hers. "Do you know, when you were coming up the path I thought that you and the doctor made the handsomest couple I have ever seen."

I laughed right out, perhaps because I sought to conceal the fact that I was just the tiniest bit provoked. She had said this with a little hesitancy, as if she had been just timidly venturing on deep waters. She looked at me, and I think she sighed again, and immediately asked for my very expert advice about cutting into a piece of very cheap goods that has come from St. John's, and with which she expects to make a dress for herself. I felt like crying, and laid bare my profound ignorance, and then we had a good laugh together, for she was at once as bright again as she always is. Then I played with the kiddies, who are cherubs, and we had tea, and when I left she looked at me again, with those beautiful wistful eyes. I am afraid. Aunt Jennie, that she is in league with the rest of the feminine population. I think I am beginning to be glad that we are going away soon.

When I returned to our house I found Dr. Grant still there. He has not been very busy lately, but he was showing symptoms of an early departure, returning certain flies he had been discussing to a very large fly-book.

Of course, Aunt Jennie, he is not at all responsible for this foolish talk, and I had no reason to be unpleasant to him.

"I am sorry you are going," I said. "I hear that for the time being the crop of patients is diminishing."

"It rather looks that way," he answered, "and I must say I am glad of it. It is only a lull, I suppose, and I'm going to take advantage of it. Sammy reminded me to-day that September has come and that the stags are beginning to shed their velvet. I think that your father and you would like some venison. I shall enjoy it too, I can assure you."

"Oh! How I wish I could go," I exclaimed, foolishly enough.

"But there could be nothing easier," he explained, quietly. "I have a very nice little tent which I brought with me when I came here, and you could take Susie Sweetapple with you. The two men and I can build a little lean-to anywhere. It is really worth trying. I have explored a bit of that country, and I am sure you would enjoy a look at it."

"It sounds very attractive, Daddy," I said.

"If there is one thing I am longing for," said the dear old man, "it is a decent bit of meat. The cook on the yacht and the steward may possibly be able to fill Susie's place for a day or two. You go right along, daughter."

And now, Aunt Jennie, I am recklessly going away to furnish more gossip for the ladies of the place, bless their poor old hearts. I have been interviewing Susie, whose voluble conversation is often amusing, and find that she also entertains some queer ideas. Of course I undeceived her at once. Daddy doesn't think there is the slightest impropriety in the trip, deeming Susie a sufficient chaperon. The ladies here of course never indulge in such masculine pursuits as hunting, but none of them will consider my doing it as any more wonderful than my going fishing. It will be but one more of the peculiar doings of them "Merikins."

By the way, Harry Lawrence has written. You know, Auntie dear, that he is one of the few very nice fellows to whom I have had to hint, as gently as possible, that I am awfully happy with old Dad. He was the only one of them to put out his hand, like the good, strong, red-headed, football wonder that he is. I can hear him now:

"Shake, little girl," he said, smilingly. "You are not ready yet, are you? I am not going to believe that this is your last word, and we'll just pretend I didn't speak, and go on being good old pals as before. My chance may come yet."

I remember that I felt quite gulpy and shaky when he said that, and that I wished at the time that I had been able to think of him otherwise than as a good old friend, just to see him grin happily again, as he so often does. He tells me he has only just returned from abroad, having remained longer than he expected to. He says that motoring in Norway is very

interesting. He also says he has half a mind to run up here and see what sort of a digging we are living in. You know that Daddy thinks a lot of him, and that Harry dotes on Dad. The boy thinks there is no one like him, which shows what a sensible fellow Harry is.

Well, I am going to bed early, to prepare for a very long tramp to-morrow. I will tell you all about it next time I write,

Your loving
HELEN.

CHAPTER XII

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Darling Aunt Jennie:

As the boys keep on exclaiming in *Stalky & Co.*, I gloat!

I have now utterly and forever become one of those bold females, as your cousin Theresa calls them, who so far forget the refinement of their sex as to indulge in horrid masculine pursuits, and go afield clad in perfectly shocking garb, looking like viragos, to emulate men in barbarous sports. After this open and glorious confession I hasten to tell you that I have actually killed a caribou, and a most splendid one. I suppose that some day my much flattered photograph may appear in an illustrated Sunday supplement, under some such heading as "Our Society Dianas." I have spent two most wonderful days and shall never forget them if I grow to be twice as old and plain as Miss Theresa.

We started in the early morning. Of course I was awake before Susie knocked at my door, and only waiting for her to help me lace those high boots of mine. She is the only woman I ever knew who can make knots that will not come undone until you want them to. I suppose that it is an inherited trait from her ancestry of fishermen and sailors.

We rowed across the cove to the place where we land when we go salmon-fishing. I was distressed when I saw the size of the packs the men were carrying, for it looked as if they had prepared for an excursion beyond the Arctic Circle, and of course it was chiefly on my account. Susie clamored to be allowed a bundle also but neither Sammy nor Frenchy would hear of it.

"Ye'll be havin' ter help th' lady when we's on the mash," Captain Sammy told her.

I discovered later that the mash is really a marsh, or swamp, or rather a whole lot of them. Sammy opened the procession, followed by Yves. Then I came, aided and abetted by Susie, and the doctor closed the imposing line, also bearing a big pack. Whenever the nature of the ground permitted Susie would walk beside me and impart her views. She trudged on sturdily, her feet enclosed in a vast pair of skin boots borrowed from some male relative. The evident disproportion in the sizes did not trouble her in the least.

"I got four pair o' stockins," she informed me, "an' me feet feels good an' aisy."

A little later she imparted to me some of her views on the sport we were pursuing.

"Huntin' is man's work," she said, "but I doesn't say as a woman can't do it if she's a mind ter, like anythin' else. One time I shot me brother's gun at a swile, and it liked ter have knocked me jaw awry. I had a lump on it fer a week an' I let mother think I had the toothache. Anyways I scared the swile real bad, an' meself worse. That time I were cookin'

aboard a schooner on the Labrador, as belonged ter me cousin Hyatt, him as is just a bit humpy-backed. He got one o' them dories wid a glass bottom, an' they say his back crooked a kneelin' down ter see the cod, afore settin' the traps."

"What kind of traps?" I asked her.

"Them as is big nets leadin' inter a pocket where the cod gets jest shut in," she informed me.

"Wasn't it horrid to go on such a long trip and stay on a boat so long?" I enquired.

"Sure, but we mostly gets landed there. They has shacks or little houses, an' flakes built up, in some places."

"It must be very disagreeable," I said.

"Laws, ma'am. They is allers some hard things about workin' the best one knows how ter make a livin' an' help one's folks. The worst of it was havin' no other wimmin folks ter talk to."

"Do you mean that you were alone with the crew?"

"Sure, ma'am. They wouldn't have no use fer a lot o' wimmin. They was a chap once as wanted ter kiss me an' I hove th' back of me fist ter his jaw, most shockin' hard. It give me sore knuckles, too, but I reckon a girl kin allers take care of herself an' she has a mind ter."

I looked at her vigorous shoulders and was disposed to agree with her statement. It is a splendid thing, Aunt Jennie, for girls to be strong and sturdy enough to help themselves, sometimes, as well as to help others. I have a notion that it is a good thing that the day is passing away of the girls of the fainting sort who were brought up to backboards and mincing manners. That girl has self-reliance and willingness stamped all over her, and it is good to see.

The men were going well. At first I had been surprised at the slowness of their gait, but I soon realized that they could keep it up all day, in spite of their loads. Yet once an hour they stopped for a breathing spell of a few minutes, during which they wiped their foreheads and sometimes had a pull at their pipes. We no longer had any view of the sea. Below us and to one side, Sweetapple River was brawling over rapids, resting in pools, or riffing over shallows. It wound its way through a little wooded valley, fairly well grown with small spruces and firs whose somber greens were often relieved by the cheery, lighter hue of birches. The junipers, as they call tamaracks in Newfoundland, were beginning to shed their yellowing needles, and many of them were quite bare, or else dead, with gnarled limbs fantastically twisted.

Several times we put up ptarmigans, that flew away with the curious "brek-kek-kex" that is their rallying cry, showing white spots on their dull-hued plumage, which would soon grow into the pure, snowy livery of winter days. A few snipe flew up from the side of water-holes, with shrill cries and twisting flights. Far away on the marsh we saw a flock of geese, pasturing like so many sheep, while one of their number played sentinel, perched high up on a hummock.

"When deer gets alongside o' geese they is happy," Sammy informed me. "Th' caribou knows nothing kin get nigh so long as the honkers is keepin' watch."

After this we were walking on one of many paths we had followed, well-trodden and some inches below the level of the grey moss.

"I had no idea there would be enough people here to make these paths," I said to Dr. Grant. "And why do so many of them cross from time to time?"

"They are made by the caribou, every one of them," he replied. "Most of these have been abandoned for a long time. The people of the Cove sometimes come as far as this, and by dint of firing their heavy sealing guns loaded with slugs they may have made the deer shy. We shall soon see plenty of tracks, for the hunters seldom go farther than this, Sammy tells me. You see, they would have a hard time bringing the meat home. They have to sled it out with dogs or carry it on their backs. We are going farther, since we are not looking for a whole winter's provision."

The barren over which we traveled was beginning to be much wider, and the clumps of straggling trees less frequent. Far away there was a range of little mountains, tinted with purples and lavenders, rather indistinct in the distant haze. The sun was lighting up bright spots where the peat bogs held miniature lakes, among which were tiny islands of bushes and low trees dotting the great marsh. Here and there small tamaracks stood quite apart, as if their ragged dress had caused them to be ostracized by the better clad spruces and firs.

Suddenly the men stopped near a little tree, and I saw that much of its brown bark had been stripped off. On the white wood beneath there were some curious dark red spots.

"A big stag has been rubbing his horns here within a day or two, Miss Jelliffe," the doctor told me. "You ought to see one of them at work. Their horns must itch desperately when they are ready to shed their velvet, for they hook away at these saplings as if they were actually fighting them. Such blows as they give; one can hear them quite far off. Look at this place where the wood has actually been splintered off. These marks are dried blood. And now look down at your feet. This fellow is surely a big one, the ground is soft and he has left a huge track. You will notice that the toes are widely separated, and that the dew claws have also left their mark. No other deer than the caribou ever make that fourfold imprint, and they only do it on muddy ground or in snow."

"How I wish I could see him!" I cried, excitedly.

He had taken out a pair of field glasses, and was sweeping the great barren with them.

"One does not often see the stags on the marsh at this time of the year," he said. "They usually remain in their lairs among the alders on the edges of ponds and streams. But I think I see something."

I strained my eyes in the same direction. Far away, against the sky-line, I thought I discerned little dark dots which appeared to be moving, and the doctor handed me the glasses.

"You are far-sighted," he said. "I see that your eyes have caught them. Now take a nearer look at them."

"Oh! I can see them ever so plainly now," I exclaimed.

"They are two does with their fawns, I think," he said.

"I'm afraid you are mistaken," I told him. "One of them has antlers, but not very large ones."

"Very true," he replied, "but the caribou does, alone in the whole deer family, frequently have them. They are never as large as with the stags."

"I can see them feeding along quietly, with their noses on the ground, and sometimes they look up, and now one of them is scratching her ear with her hind foot. It is the prettiest thing I ever saw. Now they are going on again, slowly. You are not going to try and kill them, are you?"

"A starving man may shoot anything for food," he answered, "but we must look for something we would not be ashamed to kill."

So they lifted up their packs again, and we resumed our journey, until hunger compelled us to stop near one of the little wooded islands growing out of the silvery barren. Near at hand a tiny rivulet was tinkling, from which the kettle was filled. Sammy and Yves cut down some tamarack sticks while the doctor undid one of the packs and brought out a frying-pan and some tin cups and plates. In a very few minutes the kettle was boiling and bacon frying with a pleasant sputtering. There was bread and butter, and a jar of marmalade.

"Thus far I entirely approve of caribou hunting," I declared. "I have an idea that such a picnic as this must be the most delightful part of it."

The wind was blowing briskly, and the trees swaying to its caress. Moose-birds began to gather around us, calling out with voices ranging from the shrillest to deep raucous cries, sometimes changing to imitations of other birds. They became very tame at once, and hopped impudently among us, cocking up their saucy little heads and watching us. Susie happened to put a little bacon on a piece of bread, beside her on the clean moss, the better to handle a very hot cup of tea, and one of the jays pounced upon it and dragged it away.

"Git out o' there, ye imp!" she cried. "Them birds would pick the nails offen yer boots if they was good ter eat."

"They are ever so pretty," I said. "And oh! look at that poor little chap. He hopped into the frying pan and scalded his toes."

The indignant bird flew away, uttering perfectly disgraceful language, but the others seemed to be quite indifferent to his fate and remained, bent on securing every discarded crumb.

After this a flight of yellow-leg snipe passed by. Dr. Grant began to whistle their soft triple note and the wisp of birds circled in the air, coming nearer and nearer until, becoming suspicious, they winged their journey away. And then we were invaded by a troop of grosbeaks who gathered in the neighboring bushes, their queer, tiny voices, seeming quite out of place, coming out of such stocky, strong little bodies. In the meanwhile a woodpecker was tap-tapping on a dead juniper. It was all so very different from the cruel, ragged coast with its unceasing turmoil of hungry waves breaking upon the cliffs. Here there reigned such a wonderful peace, interrupted only by the song of birds. There were soft outlines in the distance, and everywhere the scent of balsams. Of course it was all very desolate; a vast swamp dominated by sterile ridges of boulder-strewn hills; an immense land of peat-bogs and mosses, grey and green and purplish, upon which only the caribou and the birds appeared able to live. Yet it was no longer a place where the fury of the elements was ever ready to unchain itself against poor people clinging to their bare rocks. The breath of one's nostrils went ever so deep in one's lungs, and one's muscles seemed to gather energy and respond ever so much more efficiently than they ever did in big towns.

"I don't think I ever before realized the beauty of great waste places," I said. "It looks like a world infinite and wonderful, over which we might be traveling in quest of some Holy Grail that should be hidden away beyond those pink and mauve mountains."

The doctor smiled, in his quiet way.

"Yes," he said. "One feels as if one could understand the true purpose of living, which should be the constant effort to attain something ever so glorious that lies beyond, always beyond."

I wonder just what he meant by that, Aunt Jennie?

Soon our little caravan went on, and we began to see many tracks of caribou, chiefly does and fawns. In low swampy places we several times came across old wind-and rain-bleached antlers, shed in the late fall of the previous year.

We had traveled for a couple of hours since luncheon when we stopped for another breathing spell. Sammy was explaining the lie of the country to the doctor, who nodded. Then the latter showed me a tiny valley where ran, amid a tangle of alders and dwarf trees, a large brook that wandered slowly, with many curves, to join the river far away on our right.

"At this time of the year there is not much chance of finding a stag in the open," he said. "They remain in places like that, hidden in the alders until it is time for them to wander off and make up their family parties. Are you very tired, Miss Jelliffe?"

I assured him that I was still feeling ever so fit.

"We are only about a mile and a half from the place where we are to camp for the night," he told me. "The others will go there and get things ready. Frenchy can return here for my pack. If you would like to come with me and hunt along the brook we should make it a somewhat longer journey, owing to the many bends, but we should have a chance of getting a stag."

Of course I told him that I should like it ever so much, and we made our way down a slope while the others continued along the ridge. Indeed I was not tired at all. Notwithstanding the sodden moss in which our feet had been sinking for hours, and the peaty black ooze that held one back, I had no trouble in following Dr. Grant, who was carefully picking out the best going.

After we reached the brook we went along the bank, but were soon compelled to leave it owing to the impenetrable tangles of alders, around which we had to circle. The doctor stopped to show me some tracks of otters, and then we came to a place where the bank was steep, and a little smooth path was worn down upon its face, leading into the water.

"An otter slide," he explained. "They run up the bank and toboggan down into the water, again and again. It is a sort of game they play."

"How I should like to see them!" I exclaimed.

He put a finger up to his lips, enjoining silence, and led the way towards a deep pool. Then he turned and lifted up his hand. We remained motionless, hidden behind a rank growth of alders and reeds, and I suddenly saw a little black head upon the water and caught the gleam of a pair of bright eyes. Then came a splash, and the ruffled water smoothed over. We waited, but never saw him again.

"That was a big, old, dog otter," said the doctor.

We continued on our winding way, finding a very few tracks of does and fawns, but occasionally we came across the broad imprint of a big stag.

"He must be living somewhere around here," whispered my companion.

He looked very alert now, noting every sign and stopping to investigate the waving of grasses and the motions of leaves. We peered in every tangle of bush and shrub, and moved as silently as we possibly could.

We had slowly been following the stream for nearly an hour, and were on the edge of the brook when the doctor quickly knelt down, and of course I followed his example. He pointed towards some alders ahead of us.

"See those tops moving?" he whispered.

"I see them bending with the wind," I replied, in the same low voice.

"There is no wind here," he said. "It must be a stag or a bear in there."

We kept on watching and, Aunt Jennie, my heart was beating so with the excitement of it that I could hardly keep still. But I insist that I was not the least bit scared. I rather think that Dr. Grant impresses one as a man who could take care of bears or anything else that might threaten one. Presently, above the green leaves, appeared something that looked like stout, reddish branches. We could see them only for an instant, and then they went down again.

"It's a big, old stag," whispered the doctor.

"What shall we do?" I asked.

"I am going to give you a shot," he said.

"I shouldn't dare. I am sure I should miss," I answered.

"You must try. You know that you are the lucky one. I am going to leave you here with the rifle and I shall crawl back a little way. If we went on he would jump away on the other side of the alders and that would be the last of him. I am going off to the right, and then I will walk slowly towards him. The river is shallow here, and it is the only open spot. He will surely jump in it, and probably stop for a second to see what is coming, for he won't smell me. You will have a fine chance at him from here."

He placed the gun in my hands, already cocked, and was gone, noiselessly, in an instant. I watched those bushes eagerly, and once again saw the big tops of those antlers above the alders. Behind me everything was wonderfully still, and I could hear the beating of my heart. The doctor seemed to have been swallowed up by the wilderness, and I have never felt so entirely alone as at that moment. An instant later I realized that a strange thing was happening; I was no longer nervous, and my hands were perfectly steady. After this, away to the right, I heard the faintest crackling of branches and the horns appeared again, absolutely still for a moment. Then another little branch cracked, and there was a turmoil in the bushes, a splashing over the shallow, gravelly bottom of the little stream, and the great, gray-brown body and white, arching neck of the stag appeared, like a thing out of a fairy book. The head was noble, poised on that snowy neck, and the antlers looked like a tangle of brush. The lithe thing stopped, the sensitive ears went back, and he started again.

But the gun had gone up to my shoulder, Aunt Jennie, quite instinctively, and for a fraction of a second I saw that wonderfully feathered neck in the notch of the sight, then a brown place that was the beginning of the shoulder, and I pulled the trigger. His long trot changed to a furious, desperate gallop. A leap up the further bank carried him out of my sight, and I was now so flurried that I never gave him a second shot. Indeed I felt so badly that I wanted to sit down and have a good cry.

I heard the doctor, who was tearing through the bushes, just as Harry Lawrence used to butt his way through a football line.

"You've got him," he yelled. "They never run like that unless mortally wounded. We'll have him in a moment!"

"Do you really think so?" I cried, breathlessly.

"Come on and see for yourself," he answered, and in our turn we splashed through the shallow water and found the track on the other side. This we very carefully studied, so as to be able to distinguish it from others, and then we went on, very cautiously, both walking on tiptoe. He was ahead of me, with the cocked rifle in his hand, but after going a short distance he stopped, suddenly, and began to fill his pipe, with the most exasperating coolness.

"Why don't you go on?" I asked, indignantly.

"Don't you think I deserve a pipe?" he said.

"You don't deserve anything," I told him. "I want my stag."

"*Mademoiselle est servie*" he said, laughing. "And you are indeed a most lucky young woman."

"Where is it? Where is it?" I cried. "You are trying to be as mean as can be just now, and I won't speak to you again to-day or any other day if you don't stop."

But I was looking around as I spoke and suddenly, under a little clump of birches, I saw something that made my heart beat fast again, and I dashed away, shouting, as I verily believe, and running as fast as the deer when I had last seen him. I had the advantage of the start and I beat the doctor to the quarry. It was lying there, the most splendid thing you ever saw, and I am sure I spoke in awed tones, as one does in a big cathedral.

"I had no idea that it would be so big. Oh! The beautiful clean limbs! And what a head! Those big flat horns in front that run down nearly to his muzzle are just wonderful! It seems to me that I just saw him for a second and pulled the trigger, and there was a little report that I scarcely heard, just as if the gun was a little toy thing, and now he is lying there and I don't know whether to be glad or sorry."

"You should be glad," he told me. "You might hunt for many months without meeting with such a head as that. Now that it is all over it may seem a bit tragic, but you must remember he was just a tremendous, handsome brute, ready at all times to fight others to the death, to kill them in his blind fury of jealousy. And those who fall to the gun may perhaps have met the best end of all. Think of the poor old stags dragging themselves to some tangle in order to escape the wolves or bears and lynxes, and whose last glances reveal things creeping towards them or great birds waiting to peck their eyes out. Man is seldom as cruel as nature proves to be, for it is everywhere harsh and brutal. Little dramas are constantly taking place under this very moss we tread, and those dear little black-headed birds, over there in the bushes, are killing all day long. You and I realize that the killing is the least part of the sport, but we wanted meat and came out for it ourselves, instead of hiring butchers to do the slaughtering for us. Moreover, you have a trophy which you will take back with you, and which will be one more souvenir of Sweetapple Cove."

I felt that I was brightening up again.

"How beautiful it is!" I said again, quite consoled. "Look at that long, white beard under his neck, and how deeply brown his cheeks are!"

"We must count the points," he proposed.

He went over them several times, with the greatest care.

"There are thirty-nine good ones," he said, "besides one or two little ones that will hardly come up to the mark. It is a big beamy head with broad flat horns. You will seldom see a better one, Miss Jelliffe."

We sat there for a moment, and presently heard some one coming through the woods. It was the two men who were hurrying towards us.

"Camp ain't a quarter mile away," shouted Sammy. "Us heered the shot an' come down. My, but that be a shockin' monstrous big stag. He's lucky, ma'am, doctor is. I mistrust he don't miss often."

"Miss Jelliffe fired that shot, Sammy," announced the doctor.

"Well, now! It do beat all! So yer done it yerself, did yer, ma'am? I'll fix him up now and bring th' head in by an' by. Don't yer be feared, I knows how ter take a scalp off fine fer stuffin'. To-morrer we'll take the meat. He's not long out of the velvet. Go right over ter the camp an' shift yer wet boots. Frenchy he'll show yer. Kittle's bilin' an' everything ready. It do be a fine day's work."

They all looked so happy that the last doubt left my mind. Frenchy was positively beaming with delight, and I had to show them just where I stood when I shot, and to explain everything. Then we trudged cheerfully towards camp, keeping for a while by the edge of the brook, which we had to cross again. We came to a tiny waterfall, and above it was the outlet of a little lake, deep and placid-looking. Some black ducks were swimming on it, not very far away, and I was shown a beaver's house.

"That's the real, wild outdoors that I love," I declared, stopping for a moment. "How calm and still it all is. Look at the feathery smoke drifting away over there. I suppose it is the camp."

For a moment there was a bit of bad going, over some wind-fallen trees, and the doctor held out his hand for me.

"Thank you," I said. "It seems to me that I am all the time having to thank you, you are always so kind. I must say that you are a perfectly stunning guide."

So we got to the camp, laughing, and Susie had to be told the story all over again, while I changed shoes and stockings in the little tent, where there was the thickest possible bed of fragrant balsam, covered with blankets.

It is getting late, Aunt Jennie, and I'll have to tell you the rest of it another time. It was perfectly glorious.

Really I think it is a pity that Dr. Grant should bury himself in such a place. He ought to live in our atmosphere, for he is entirely fitted for it.

So good night, Aunt Jennie, with best love from your
HELEN.

CHAPTER XIII

From John Grant's Diary

During the years that I spent abroad, in study, there were times when a tremendous longing would come over me, so great that I was sorely tempted to run away, even if for a few weeks only, and revel in the satisfaction of my desire. It would seize upon me during long evenings, when I was sometimes a little wearied with hard work. I hungered at such times for the smoke of a camp-fire, for its resinous smells, for the distant calls of night birds, for the crackling flames that cast strange lights upon friendly faces.

All this was ours on the evening we spent after our little caribou hunt. Miss Jelliffe, who had had some slight experience with small target rifles, made a good shot at a fine stag, and we were all very cheerful. The fire burned brightly before the tent she shared with Susie, and the dry dead pine with logs of long-burning birch crackled merrily. Over the little lake, behind the dark conifers and the distant hills, the sun had gone down in a glory of incandescent gold and crimson.

After we had finished our supper we all sat around the blaze and the tales began, of big caribou and mighty salmon. Yet after a time, as one always must in this country, we drifted off to stories of the never-ending fight against mighty powers.

Very simply, in brief sentences, with short intervals to permit of more accurate recollection, good old Sammy opened to us vistas of unending fields of ice whereupon men slew the harp-seals, and pictured to us the manner in which the toll of death sometimes turns against the slayers. He also spoke of fishing schooners tossed by fierce gales, drifting by the side of mountainous bergs of ice rimmed with foam from the billows lashed in fury, and of seams that had opened as the ship spewed off its creeping oakum. I am sure we could all see the men at the pumps, working until their stiffened arms and frozen hands refused the bidding of brains benumbed by cold and hunger.

"Yes, ma'am, it's hard, mighty hard, times and times, but when yer gets through wid it ye'll still be there, if yer has luck, and them as doesn't get ketched gets back ter th' wife an' young, 'uns, an' is thankful they kin start all over again."

I saw how interested Miss Jelliffe was, and did my best to draw the man out. Like most real fighters he was little inclined to live his own combats over again, yet when he was once started it took little effort to keep him going. After this I questioned Frenchy, very carefully, for he is even less inclined than the other fishermen to talk about himself. I have never known the secret, if there be one, in the life of this man, alone of his people on this shore, with that child of his. He is always ever so friendly, and looks at one with big, dog-like, trusting eyes, but I have never sought to obtain a confidence he does not seem to be willing to bestow on any one. For this reason I merely asked him whether he had traveled much in foreign lands, as a sailor.

Then, as he puffed quietly at his pipe, the man gradually expanded just a little, though never speaking of anything he had personally accomplished. His tales, contrasting with Sammy's, took us to hot countries, with names that were rather vague to us.

He led us up some rivers tenanted by strange beasts wallowing in fetid mud which, when disturbed, sent forth bubbles that burst with foul odors, and made more unbearable the tepid moisture one had to breathe. Hostile, yellow people in strange garb slunk along the banks, hiding behind bamboos and watching the boats rowed by white men nearly succumbing to the torpor of the misty heat, while pulling with arms enfeebled by the fevers of what he called *La Riviere Rouge*. There had been fighting, nights and days of it, and once he had forgotten everything and awakened on board a ship that was out of sight of land. Now the trade winds were blowing, and many of the sick and wounded felt better, yet the great sharks kept on following because of the long bundles that were daily dropped overboard, done up in sail cloth and weighted at the feet. And when one arrived in port there were poor old women who called for Jean-Marie and for Joseph, and who sank fainting on the docks. But others were happy.

I could see that Miss Jelliffe was deeply interested in these tales of things related very simply, very naturally, as if the sailor had spoken of catching squid or under-running trawls. She wondered, as I did, why this man who had sailed so

many seas should have drifted here and taken up his life in a strange land with the little yellow-haired boy in which his heart was enwrapped.

Sammy and Susie listened open-mouthed to those tales of things they could not realize or understand, for they could make little out of them, since the man was often hard pushed for words, using a good many from his own tongue.

"Why don't you go back to your own country?" asked Miss Jelliffe, very softly.

But he made no answer, pretending not to have heard her question. For an instant she looked at him, then turned her head away. I also saw that a strange moisture had gathered in the big man's eyes, lighted as they were by the flames into which he peered, as if seeking in them lost things that were past redeeming.

For some time we all remained very silent, as if oppressed by the awe of these tales, and I had to take a desperate measure to change the trend of thought. In a low voice I began to sing a lilting Irish melody with a sweet refrain in which Miss Jelliffe joined, soon followed by Sammy's deep tones and Susie's shrill ones, while Frenchy began to keep time with a blackened pot-stick.

So it was only a few minutes before cheerful thoughts returned to us, as the darkness deepened and the stars glittered, clear and close at hand. Then we finally said good-night and Miss Jelliffe sought her tent, attended by Susie.

We men went away to our lean-to, and talked a little longer before stretching out for a sound night's sleep. And it seemed but a few instants before we were up again, with the sunlight beginning to stream over the distant hillocks towards the sea that was now hidden from us. I took my rod to the outlet, where trout were rising, and returned soon to find that coffee was being made while the men were cutting bacon and chopping more wood.

Then Susie came to us, wanting some hot water and hurriedly returning to the tent. Finally the flaps were turned aside and the young woman came out, rosy of cheek and bright-eyed. Susie had a small fire before her tent, and Miss Jelliffe held her hands before it for a moment. When she came towards us I was kneeling on a small rock at the water's edge, cleaning trout, while Frenchy was scraping away at the caribou head, the scalp of which hung over a pole, to dry a little after a good salting. Sammy was smiting away at an old pine log for more firewood.

"Good morning," she cried. "It is a perfect shame that you allowed me to sleep so long. Oh! The beautiful trout! Where did you get them?"

I explained my capture, and told her that a few moments had been enough to secure all that were needed for all hands. The two men grinned at her delightedly, as she went up to them, happy and smiling, and she had to inform them that she had spent a wonderful night of such sleep as no one could possibly get outside of the wilderness.

"Isn't it all lovely and cheerful!" she exclaimed. "Now I insist on being useful too. Won't you let me fry the trout?"

She knelt by the fire, holding a frying pan whose hollow handle had been fitted with a long stick. The big dab of butter soon melted, and in a moment the trout were crepitating and curling up in the pan, sending forth heavenly odors.

"We can take our time," I told her, "for we will not look for another stag to-day. All that meat is going to make a heavy load to take back."

"But it is a shame," she said, contritely. "You were going for a hunt, and now that I have killed the stag you won't have any sport at all."

"I have had as good sport as any man has the right to expect," I said. "Please don't believe that it all lies in pulling a trigger. It is just this sort of thing that makes hunting glorious; the cheery fire and the flapping tent doors, the breeze ruffling the lake, the sitting at night by the fire and the tales we heard there. I will agree never to kill a caribou again if you will only furnish me with such sport as this from time to time."

"I was just thinking," she said, "that I am a law-breaker. I have no license to kill caribou."

"I have no doubt that you may be forgiven if you will send the money to St. John's and apply for a license. Then you can shoot two more, with an easy conscience."

"I will certainly send it," she replied, "but you ought to keep that head, you know."

"No indeed, it is yours, and you must take it back with you to be mounted. If I should ever return to New York I will ask you to allow me to have a look at it."

"I shall never forgive you if you don't call," she answered, charmingly. "But don't speak just now of going back to New York. I don't think I shall ever leave a place with such regret. I simply refuse to think of it."

It was really delightful to see this splendid girl, brought up in the most refined surroundings and yet so influenced by the glamour of the outdoor life. To the strong and healthful there can be no attraction in great towns that may not be dwarfed by the great pulsing of the lands sought by the lovers of rod and gun. Here she had gathered new ideas and unwonted thoughts. She is the best example I have ever seen of the sturdy, beautiful girlhood of modern life, and is an utter pleasure to look upon.

After a time we started towards Sweetapple Cove. The meat, or as much of it as we could carry, had all been tied up in packs. I was able to take a good load of it and Susie trudged along, bearing the big caribou head upon her shoulders.

"Tain't much the weight on it," she said, "but it's clumsy. Them men has all they kin lug an' I'm a goin' ter hoof it erlong wid this, jest ter show willing."

Walking back seemed quite a different thing. After leaving the little lake we had climbed up, but now we were again on the great marshy barrens which inclined down towards the sea.

"Now," said Miss Jelliffe, during a spell of resting, "I should be utterly lost if I were alone. Nothing seems at all familiar and it is all a great jumble of little green islands of vegetation, of grey moss that is endless, of twisted junipers and lonely boulders. I don't know where I am, but I am perfectly happy, since some one knows the way."

Of course I was only acquainted with the general lie of the land, but the direction was quite clear to me. I wish everything was as straight-forward and clear as the way to the Cove.

"I am quite ashamed of myself," she continued. "I am the only one who is carrying nothing and is perfectly useless. I wonder your backs are not broken with those tremendous loads."

But the two men only grinned.

"It is nothing when you get used to it," I said, "providing one ever really gets used to a hard grind. But there are people to whom strong physical effort is a punishment while others simply accept it, grit their teeth, and carry the thing out."

"I suppose one has to learn how to accept things cheerfully," said Miss Jelliffe. "My life has been such an easy one that I have never had to try to bear heavy burdens."

"I am sure you will do it courageously, if ever the time comes," I answered.

Then we took up our packs and went on, making rather slow progress, as we were not pressed for time and the loads were heavy. In the middle of the day we took our lunch near a little brook, and, after starting again, we soon saw, from the summit of a little hill, the bright and glittering sea. Before us descended the valley of Sweetapple River, looking like a silvery ribbon winding in and out among the trees. To one side of us there was a rocky hill, once swept by a storm of flames and now tenanted only by the gaunt skeletons of charred firs and tamaracks. In the mistiness ahead of us the coast line, with its grim outlines softened, lost itself and melted away as if nature, in a kindly spirit, had sought to throw a veil over brutal features and covered them with a mantle of tender hues.

"This is ideally beautiful," said Miss Jelliffe. "I can understand that you may hesitate to leave all this to return to the grime of great cities."

Thus we returned to the Cove, and the girl hastened to her father, eager to tell him of our hunt and to show him the great head. I went with her to the house, and took pleasure in seeing the interest shown by the old gentleman. He certainly is a good sportsman.

"If Helen hasn't thanked you enough," he said, "I want to put in my oar. I am really extremely obliged to you for giving her such a good time."

I left in a short time and Miss Jelliffe put out her hand in her frank and friendly way. I must say she is a girl in many thousands.

And now I wonder why I am writing all this. My diary, begun in self-defence at a time when I expected to spend so dreary a time that an addled and rusted brain would result unless I sought hard to keep it employed, scarcely has an excuse for being, now. The Jelliffes and the Barnetts, with the good people of the Cove, are surely enough to keep a man interested in the world about him. It has simply become a silly habit, this jotting down of idle words.

CHAPTER XIV

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Aunt Jennie:

I am writing again so soon because I don't think I can sleep, to-night. I know that some people can't possibly slumber off when they are over-tired. That must be the matter with me, though I never realized it.

We had no more hunting after we killed that caribou. That night we camped, and I heard stories, from two poor, humble men, that made my head just whirl, for they were really Odysseys, or sagas, or any of the big tales one ever heard of. It would seem, Aunt Jennie, dear, as if the world is not at all the prosy thing some people take it to be. I suppose that the great knights and warriors are altogether out of it now, but I find that it is running over with men one usually never hears of, who accomplish tremendous things without the slightest accompaniment of drums or clarions.

We started back after a night during which I slept like a dead thing, but naturally I was the most alive girl you ever saw when I awoke. The men went away to where we had left the dead stag and returned with big haunches and other

butcher-shop things, which they packed up in huge loads. It appears that my lucky shot has contributed considerably to the provisionment of Sweetapple Cove.

By the way, this place, which I once rather despised, looked most attractive when we came down towards it from the hills. I could see the beautiful, white *Snowbird* at anchor, looking very small, and the sunlight played on the brass binnacle which shone like a burning light. Near it, very lowly and humble, rode the poor little fishing smacks that are far more important to the world's welfare than our expensive plaything. The crop of drying cod was spread out on the flakes, as usual, and tiny specks of women and children were bending over them, turning the fish, piling them up, bearing some of them away on hand-barrows, and bringing fresh loads to scatter in the sun.

When we reached the house we found Daddy lying on the steamer chair. He was engaged in deep converse with our skipper, who left at once. The doctor only remained a few minutes, and then Susie appeared, her rubicund face framed in the mighty antlers of my quarry. Daddy laughed heartily.

"The two Dianas of Sweetapple Cove!" he exclaimed. "My dear, you ought to bear the bow and quiver and to sport the crescent on your queenly brow. Now tell me all about it! How are you, and what kind of a time have you had? I need not ask about the sport for you have brought the evidence with you. Isn't it a wonderful head? I call it rather cruel to be parading such things before a poor cripple."

"I'm sure glad enough ter get rid o' he," quoth Susie, with a sigh of relief. "It lugs fair clumsy. I'll be goin' over ter Sammy's house now. He've got the tenderlines in th' pack of he and ter-morrer ye's goin' ter feed on something worth bitin' inter. Ef yer doesn't say so I'll be awful fooled. And yer better shift yer stockin's right now, ma'am, 'cause walkin' all day in the mash is bound ter soak yer feet spite o' good boots. I'll be back in a minnut."

The good creature dashed away on her errand, and we were left to tell our tales.

"It was perfectly splendid, Daddy," I told him. "I hope they have taken good care of you and you were a dear to let me go. I have had such a wonderful time!"

"I am delighted, my dear," he said, "but now you had better run away and follow Susie's advice."

"Just a moment, Daddy," I pleaded. "I have had wet feet for two days and a minute more won't hurt me. Indeed I killed the big caribou, and Dr. Grant was ever so kind, as he always is. He said he would try to come in for supper. Oh! You ought to have seen that big stag, and how proudly he stepped out into that brook, all alert, and how he started to run. And then I shot, and the doctor found him for me. It was wonderful!"

"That doctor is a fine fellow," said Dad.

Of course I agreed with him. It is quite amazing how Daddy has taken to Dr. Grant, but then I don't see how one could help it. The doctor is a very quiet man, excepting when he gets enthusiastic or mad about things, and one thinks at first that he is rather distant in his manner. But when you know him much better he comes right out and shows just as much red blood as those boys at home. I wonder why he keeps on living at Sweetapple Cove?

So I went off to change my shoes and stockings, which were quite soaked through, and then I sat again with Daddy and told him a lot more about our trip. I wish I could have explained everything to him, but of course I couldn't make him see the color of those far-away hills and the perfect beauty of those great marshes. I told him all about the camp by the little lake, and the winding distant river, and the cries of the ptarmigans and the loons, and the finding of the stag.

"Helen dear," said Daddy, who had been looking at me in that keen way of his, "I don't think I ever saw you so enthusiastic before. Your mind has been fully opened to the charm of the wilderness, and that is something that city people seldom understand. You were never so earnest before. What is it? Are you developing new traits?"

Of course I laughed at this, and yet it seemed to me also as if something were changed. I didn't quite know what Daddy meant, because it is sometimes difficult to know whether he is jesting or in earnest. He once told me that this was a rather good business asset.

"Well, Daddy," I finally said. "I am afraid you will have to take me away, or I shall be falling so much in love with Sweetapple Cove that I will never want to leave it again."

"We will leave to-morrow, if you want to," he said, in a rather abrupt way.

Do you know, Aunt Jennie, that when he said that I just gasped a little. It suddenly seemed so strange that we would have to go away soon, and that I might never see Sweetapple Cove again, and those dear Barnetts, and all the people, for the whole lot of them appear to have a way of stealing into one's heart.

"I don't really want to go at once, Daddy," I told him. "It will take a few days to get used to the idea, and to get everything ready. And Dr. Grant says that very soon you will be able to walk without a cane. Do let us put it off for another week."

Daddy smiled vaguely, and finally nodded his consent. He is always so good about trying to please me. So I went and got my knitting and sat down at the foot of the big chair.

"I'm afraid I'll never finish it before we leave," I said, "and I doubt whether I will ever quite solve the mystery of turning heels."

"That's too bad," said Daddy. "I expected to wear those things in Virginia this fall, after quail, or on the Chesapeake when the canvas-backs are flying."

"I am afraid you will have to buy some, Daddy," I answered.

So I sat beside him, at his feet, and I think my mood had changed a little. Perhaps it was fatigue, which I didn't really feel. I suppose that people can have things the matter with them without knowing anything about it. Daddy's dear old hand rested for a moment on my head, and I had to stop knitting. I don't think I ever felt so queerly before, and I had to look over Sweetapple Cove and follow the flight of the gulls, until the shadows grew quite long and the clouds became tinted with rose, and Daddy asked me to get him a cigar, and I was glad he interrupted my silly thoughts. I must have been really very tired.

* * * * *

I could only write a little while, last night. We had some caribou steak which Daddy became quite enthusiastic over, but I didn't feel hungry, and I went to bed early, but somehow I slept poorly. It is funny that one can be tired for several days at a time. And to-day, Aunt Jennie, some queer things have happened, and the life that has so often felt like dreams has become very serious, and I have seen some of the inner working of events such as make one feel that existence has cruel sides to it.

All this morning I dawdled about the house. I had expected Dr. Grant to call and see Daddy, but he had been sent for, a short distance away, in the boat.

Rather late this afternoon he returned, and I strolled over towards the cove when I saw the tiny schooner come in. It is a poor enough little ship, but it is wonderful to think how it bears with it such comfort and help to so many suffering people.

I was within a few yards of him, and he was lifting his cap when a fisherman rushed up to him.

"Ye're wanted ter Atkins'," said the man. "They is a child there as is awful sick. They brung 'un over from Edward's Bay, this mornin', an' th' mother she be prayin' fer ye to come."

"All right," he answered. "Sammy, bring my bag up with you and I'll hurry up at once."

He only smiled at me, in his pleasant way, for he rushed by me, running up the rough path in great strides, and of course I could only go back to our house, where I sat with Daddy on the porch.

From where I sat I could see Atkins' house. It is only a little way from us, up the hill. There were a number of people assembled in front of it, because whenever any one is hurt or very ill they are apt to gather around, as people do sometimes in New York before a house where an ambulance has stopped. Then I saw the doctor sprinting out towards Sammy's house, whence he returned carrying another bag. Of course I have several times helped him a little, in the last month, when Mrs. Barnett didn't get in ahead of me, so I rose.

"I am going up to Atkins'," I told Dad. "I wonder what is the matter. I shall only be gone a few minutes."

So I ran away, bare-headed, and rushed to the place, but before I reached it Mrs. Barnett arrived there, all out of breath.

When I passed through the waiting people I heard Dr. Grant's voice, and he spoke very angrily. I had never thought before that he could get quite so mad. There was a swarm of women in the house, some of them with babies in their arms, and a few children, among whom was Frenchy's little boy, had also slipped in.

"Get out of here!" he was shouting, roughly. "All of you but the child's mother and Mrs. Atkins. Haven't I told you it is dangerous? Do you want to spread this thing about and kill off all your children? And you, Mrs. Barnett, must give the example. I won't have you running chances with those babies of yours. Do get out, like a dear woman, and chevy these other ones out with you."

He was bustling them all out like a lot of hens, in his effective, energetic way, and then he saw me.

"I want you to get out too, Miss Jelliffe," he ordered me. "This is a bad case of diphtheria. The child is choking and I must relieve it at once."

I took a few steps back, rather resentfully, because I had never been spoken to in that way before, and I thought it very rude of him, but I did not leave the place. The doctor was very busy with some instruments and perhaps had forgotten my presence.

He made the woman sit on a stool, with the little girl wrapped in a sheet and sitting on her lap. I saw him take up a shiny instrument, which he fastened in the baby's mouth, notwithstanding her struggles.

"Now hold her firmly," he ordered, "and you, Mrs. Atkins, get behind her and take her head. Hold it steady, just this way. Never mind her crying."

But the little one wrenched herself away from the woman's grasp. The breath entered its lungs with an awful long hoarse sound and the poor little lips were very blue.

"For God's sake, hold her better," he cried again.

"I'm all of a tremble," said Mrs. Atkins, weeping. "She's sure goin' ter die. I kin never hold her, she do be fightin' me so."

Of course there was only one thing to do. I ran out of the corner to which I had retreated and pushed the foolish woman away and seized the baby's head so that it could not move.

Dr. Grant stared at me, shaking his head, but I suppose I looked at him defiantly, for I was really angry with him.

"This is all wrong, Miss Jelliffe," he said. "You should not expose yourself to this infection."

He spoke so quietly that I became rather sorry I had been provoked at him, but he paid no more heed to me. Once he placed a hand on one of mine, to show me exactly how to hold the head, and then he took a long handle to which something was fastened at right angles. The child's mouth was widely opened by the gag he had inserted, and his left finger went swiftly down into the child's throat and the instrument, pushed by his right hand, followed, incredibly quick. There was just a rapid motion, I heard the release of a catch, and then, suddenly, there was a terrifying attack of violent coughing. But in a moment this ceased, the child lay back quietly in her mother's arms, the color began to return to her lips, and she was breathing quietly. Then we watched, in silence, and finally the little head turned to one side and the baby closed her eyes, while the poor woman's tears streamed down and even fell on the tiny face.

"She is all right for the time being," said Dr. Grant, in that quiet voice of his, which I have heard change so quickly. "If she can only resist until the antitoxine acts upon her we may pull her through. I am greatly obliged to you, Miss Jelliffe. I am afraid your father will scold us both for taking such chances with your health."

But by this time my eyes were full of tears also, I don't know why. I was unsteady on my feet and held on to the back of a chair.

"I never saw anything like this before," I said. "I didn't quite realize that it ever happened. The poor little thing was dying, and you did it all so quickly! That thing went in like a flash, and then she coughed so and I thought she was lost. And now she sleeps, and I am sure you have saved her, and she must get well. How dreadful it was, at first, and how wonderfully beautiful it is to be able to do such things! I am so glad!"

Wasn't it silly of me to get so excited, Aunt Jennie. But I suppose one can't understand such happenings until one has witnessed them. I know that I had taken the doctor's arm, without realizing what I was doing, and found myself patting it, stupidly, like a silly, hysterical thing.

His face was very serious, just then, and he looked at me as if he had been studying another patient. Then came that little smile of his, very kindly, which made me feel better.

"I think you had better go now, Miss Jelliffe," he advised. "I beg you not to expose yourself further. It is a duty you owe your good old father and any one who cares for you."

Then I was myself again. The excitement of those tense moments had passed away and I knew I had been a little foolish and that he spoke ever so gently.

"I will go since you wish me to," I answered. "But I am ever so glad that I was able to help you. You will come to supper, won't you?"

"I am afraid you will have to excuse me," he said. "I can hardly do so now, for I must remain here and watch this child for some time. You will please change all your clothing and have it hung out on the line, and you will gargle your throat with something I will send you. I'll call to-morrow and see your father, and give you the latest news of this little patient."

"I didn't know that you ever got so angry," I said, now prompted by some spirit of mischief. "You were in a dreadful temper when I came in."

"Of course I was," he readily admitted. "But do you realize that this is the continuation of an old story. This woman was in St. John's last week, with the child, and I suppose they may have brought the disease from there. Then the child became ill, the night before last, and she waits until this morning to bring it over to me. When she reaches here she finds me away, but of course every woman in the place strolls in, with children in arms, to look on and give advice. We may be in for a fine epidemic. I shall have to send to St. John's at once for a new supply of antitoxine. I have only a little, and it is not very fresh. Atkins is away with his schooner but he is expected to-morrow. I hope he turns up. Thank you ever so much, Miss Jelliffe. Now please run away and follow my directions."

So I left him and returned to the house and obeyed his orders. We soon had supper, but when I told Daddy all about it, it was his turn to be angry.

"That's all very well," he said, "but after all he could have found some one else to help him and you had no business to disobey. When the time comes for you to have babies of your own you can risk your life for them as much as you please, but you have no right to run into danger now. You are my only child, and I have no one else to love since your poor mother died. Please don't do such things again. Grant was perfectly right in trying to chase you away. He should have taken a stick to you."

Daddy's ruffled tempers are never proof against my method of smoothing the raging seas. My arm around his neck and a kiss will make him eat out of my hand, as Harry Lawrence puts it. Naturally he succumbed again and in a minute was just as nice as ever.

We had only just finished our supper when Frenchy came in, leading his little boy by the hand. He bore a letter which he gravely handed to Daddy who, as usual, had to look into three or four pockets before he found his glasses. Then he read, and his face became serious, as it always does when he takes sudden decisions.

"Yves," he said, "will you oblige me by going down to the cove at once and hailing the schooner. I want my captain to come over here."

Frenchy departed, after saluting as usual, his little fellow trotting beside him, and Daddy, without a word, handed the letter to me. I read as follows:

Dear Mr. Jelliffe:

I had intended to see you to-morrow morning, and expect to do so, but I believe it might be best for you to obtain my advice at once. Miss Jelliffe has doubtless told you how she helped me with a case of diphtheria, although I am sure she

omitted to say how brave and helpful she was. The danger to her is comparatively slight, I am sure, yet we must not forget that such a danger exists. If you were to start to-morrow morning you could be in St. John's before night. From there two days would find you in Halifax and two more in New York, so that you would be always near good care and advice.

With a little care and prudence in regard to your leg I am sure that you can reach home quite safely.

With kindest regards,
Very sincerely yours,
JOHN GRANT.

I stared at Daddy, hardly knowing what to say.

"That boy has a lot of good sound horse-sense!" he exclaimed. "I am just going to follow his advice. Bring me my check-book. I am going to make out something for that little parson. He needs a place to give the folks what he calls readings, and other things. He told me that two-fifty would give him unutterable joy. I'll make it five hundred so that he can shout. Now in regard to Dr. Grant...."

"Are we really going to-morrow, Daddy?" I interrupted.

"You bet we are going to-morrow, always providing that yacht of ours is ready. I gave orders yesterday to have something done and...."

But I didn't listen any more. I went to the window and drew aside the little curtain. Down below, in the cove, I could see the *Snowbird's* anchor light, gleaming brilliantly. The windows of some of the houses shed a sickly pale radiance, but beyond this everything was in darkness, with just the faintest suggestion of enormous masses representing the jagged cliffs. There was not a single star in the heavens, and all at once everything seemed to be plunged in desolation. It felt as when one awakes in the darkness from some beautiful dream. I knew then that I would be actually home-sick for Sweetapple Cove when I returned to New York.

Please don't laugh at me, Aunt Jennie dear, you know I have had no one but you to confide in since I have grown out of short skirts. Perhaps it was this thing I saw in Atkins' house that has upset me so, and I suppose that my life has always been too easy, and that I have not been prepared to meet some of the grim horrors it can reveal to one.

I could not think of leaving without saying good-by to Mrs. Barnett. My hand shook as I pushed a hatpin through my cap. Then I told Daddy where I was going and ran out into the darkness.

When I reached the poor little house they insist on calling the rectory the dear woman opened her arms to greet me, and I saw that her beautiful eyes were filled with tears.

"What is the matter, dear?" I asked.

"I was a coward to-day," she cried. "Such an awful coward! I had no business to leave when Dr. Grant told me to. I should have stayed and helped. But when he spoke of diphtheria I couldn't help it and thought of my little chaps. I have already seen that dreadful thing come and sweep little lives away, just in a day or two. It took the one we buried on the other side of the cove, and we saw it suffocating, helpless to aid. And that's why I ran out, terror-stricken. But I hear that you held the baby for him. You don't know what it is to have babies of your own, and were not afraid. It is dreadful, you know, that fear that comes in a mother's heart!"

She looked quite weak when she sat down, in a poor, worn, upholstered chair that was among the things they brought from England, and I sat on the arm of it, beside her.

"I have changed all my clothes," I told her, "and I don't think I'm dangerous. Now Daddy insists that we must leave to-morrow, and I'm just broken-hearted about it. Dr. Grant wrote him that it would be better for us to leave, but I don't want to go."

"Did the doctor write that?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, because there might be danger in my staying longer. Why can't I share it with all the others who will have to stay here? I shall never forgive him!"

I suppose that we were both rather excited, and I know I had to dab my eyes with my handkerchief. Then Mrs. Barnett forgot all about her own worries, for she was patting me on the arm, looking at me intently all the time, just as Daddy has been doing, in a queer way that I can't understand.

"I daresay it will be best for both of you," she said, in that sweetest voice of hers.

"Yes, I think Daddy wants to get back," I said, and she stared at me again, as I rose and bade her good-by.

"Don't say it yet, dear," she told me, "I will certainly come down to see you off in the morning. It has been so delightful to have had you here all these weeks, and I shall miss you dreadfully when you are gone. I can hardly bear to think of it."

So I kissed her and had to tear myself away. Like a pair of silly women we were on the verge of tears once more, and there was nothing left for me to do but to run.

It was perhaps some unusual effect of the night air, but I was quite husky when I spoke to Daddy again.

"You will be glad to get back, won't you. Daddy?" I asked him. "It will be so nice for you to go to the club again, and see all your old friends."

He looked at me, and only nodded in a noncommittal way.

"I will leave you now," I said. "There is a lot of packing to do, and that poor silly Susie is perfectly useless, since she heard we were going. She is sitting on a stool in the kitchen and weeping herself into a fit. Her nose is the reddest thing you ever saw. But you and I are old travelers, aren't we, and used to quick changes? You remember, in Europe, how we used to get to little towns and decide in a moment whether we would stay or not, when we were tired of all those old museums and cathedrals?"

But Daddy only patted my hand, and I have decided that he is a wonderfully clever man. I am sure he understood that I was just forcing myself to talk, and that he could say nothing that would make me feel better.

Then there was a knock at the door, and Stefansson came in with one of his long faces.

"Good evening," said Daddy. "Have a cigar? The box is there on the table. I have good news for you, since I know you don't enjoy this place much. Too far from Long Island Sound, isn't it? I want to sail to-morrow morning."

Our skipper's long Swedish face lengthened out a bit more, and he looked a very picture of distress.

"But you told me yesterday that you were going to stay at least another week, Mr. Jelliffe," he objected. "So to-day when the engineer he tells me about bearings needing new packing, and about a connecting rod being a bit loose, I told him to get busy."

"I'd like to know what you fellows were doing all the time in St. John's?" asked Daddy, angrily.

"Engines always need looking after, Mr. Jelliffe," replied the skipper in an injured tone that was not particularly convincing. "Of course I can make him work all night, and to-morrow, with his helper, so that maybe we can start day after to-morrow early. Everything is all apart now. If you say so we can start under sail, but I know you don't like bucking against contrary winds without a bit of steam to help, and this is a forsaken coast to be knocking about, Mr. Jelliffe, and I'll be glad to get away from it."

"Well, I suppose that a day or so won't make much difference," said Daddy. "How's your coal?"

"Plenty coal, sir."

"All right, get those fellows at work in the engine room, Stefansson. They haven't had much to do of late."

Our skipper departed and I was so happy that I wanted to dance. In the kitchen Susie was washing dishes and assisting her work by intoning the most doleful hymn. I turned up the lamp a little, and things seemed ever so much more cheerful.

So I suppose that I have been ever so foolish. Just now I can hear Daddy and Mr. Barnett saying good night, and I know that they have been fighting tooth and nail over that chess board. And I hear Mr. Barnett thanking Daddy, in a voice that is all choked up with emotion. I am so glad to think the dear little man is happy. Isn't it too bad, Aunt Jennie, that we can't all be happy all the time?

Your loving
HELEN.

CHAPTER XV

From John Grant's Diary

Here I am writing again, just for the purpose of trying to keep awake. A fellow in my profession, in such places as this, is much like a billiard ball that finds itself shot into all sorts of corners, without the slightest ordering from any consciousness of its own. I left that child at Atkins' doing fairly well, and have once more been compelled to make one of those rather harrowing choices I dread. I had either to abandon that child, though its mother is fairly intelligent and seems to understand my instructions, fortunately, or to refuse to answer this call, where another man with a large family is lying at the point of death.

It seems strange that I shall probably never see Miss Jelliffe again. The yacht has been delayed for several days, and they did not start as they expected to. But when I return I have no doubt that the *Snowbird* will be gone, and with it two charming people who will be but delightful memories. I had thought to show Dora how willing I was to do what she calls a man's work, and expected to accomplish it at the cost not only of hard toil, which is an easy enough thing to get through with, but also at the price of exile among dull people. I have had plenty of work, but for the last two months

there has not been a stupid moment. The girl's bright intelligence and fine womanliness, the old gentleman's kindly and practical ways, have made my visits to them ever so pleasant, and those journeys to the barrens and the river have been delightful.

And now the Barnetts will be left, pleasanter companions by far than I had any right to expect in this out-of-the-way corner of the island. And then I always hope that Dora will soon be coming home, as she calls it, and I will hasten away to her, and perhaps plead with her for the last time. I do hope she will approve of the man's work; perhaps also of the man!

I last saw Miss Helen the day before yesterday morning, just before the summons came for me to go to Edward's Bay, and she told me she hoped I would return before her departure. She said it so kindly that I am rather proud of having won the friendship of such a splendid girl.

Here I found a man with pneumonia, who has still a chance. His wife and children are sleeping on the floor, all around me. Once more I am seeking to preserve one life, that others may go on too, and I ordered the woman to take a rest, for she has been up two nights.

When I last went to the Jellifies', after changing all my clothes, and taking all possible precautions, I told her that the child was better, and that I was under the impression that the antitoxine was having a favorable effect. Also I informed her that I was going to start Atkins off to St. John's for another supply in case the malady should spread, for I only had about enough left for one bad case.

"I hope he makes good time," I said, "but of course one can never tell, though he's a first rate man and can make his way into the cove in weather of all kinds, barring an offshore gale. Fog doesn't bother him."

"You have had a sleepless night," she told me. "It must have been hard to keep awake after all the work you have done in the last few days."

I assured her that I had enjoyed some sleep, having dozed off several times on my chair. I had ordered Mrs. Atkins, under dire threats, to awaken me at least every half hour, and she had obeyed fairly well.

"You know that we may perhaps be able to leave to-morrow," she said.

"Yes, it is best that you should," I told her. "Your father is quite well able to stand the journey now. They can easily warp the schooner up to the little dock so that he may walk aboard without trouble. I hope this wind may change soon, for just now it looks rather threatening."

We were walking away from the house, in the direction of the cliff which forms one of the iron-bound limits of the cove and extends out into the open sea. Miss Jelliffe was very silent. It is easy to see that she regrets the idea of leaving, but now something seemed to be oppressing her.

"You don't know how greatly I shall miss all this," she told me, in a low voice. "It has been a simple existence full of a charm that has meant more than all the golf and autos and dancing. I have regretted none of the yachting or the Newport gayeties. None of those things compare at all with what one finds in poor old Sweetapple Cove, with all its smell of fish, or even its rains and fogs. These only blot out an outer world that seems of little interest now, and after a while the sun always comes out again."

I walked by her side, and after going for a short distance we sat upon a rock and looked out over the ocean, which extended afar, under a sky that was dark with mountainous masses of piled-up clouds. The great roll of the sea struck the foot of the cliffs rather slowly, as if performing some solemn function, and the swash of the returning water was like some strange dirge. The very waves had lost their blueness and were tinted with a leaden, muddy hue.

"It looks as if some awful storm were coming," said Miss Jelliffe.

"It may pass away," I answered, "but I don't generally shine as a weather prophet."

We sat there for some time, watching the ominous stirring of the clouds, that seemed like an invading army whose might would soon be unleashed and burst out with fierce violence. Then, in the distance, we saw a small boat. The tan-hued sails flapped idly and one could see that the men were rowing hard.

"They are pulling for their lives," I said. "I hope they get in soon. It looks as if they were coming from Edward's Bay. It is likely enough that it is another call for me. All the boats belonging to the Cove are in, as far as I can see. They all know very well what is coming."

"Then you will have to rush away again!" she exclaimed.

"It is all in the game," I answered. "One has to try to play it according to the rules."

"Yes, and you try very hard," she said. "Those journeys over rough waters, those nights of watching, the toil over hopeless cases, the meager reward when devoted care has saved. It is surely a wonderful game, and you play it well."

I have always been glad to see the enthusiasm of healthy and strong young womanhood. The girls of to-day like to see a man's game played, and they surely know how to help.

We continued to watch the small boat, which rose and fell to the swing of the long rollers. The wind was beginning to rise a little, striking the water with black squalls, and we saw the little sails grow rigid as the boat careened and sped towards us like an affrighted bird.

"They will make it all right, thank goodness," I said.

After this we strolled back, to find Susie sitting on the little porch as she mopped her face with her blue apron.

"Look at this silly girl," said Miss Jelliffe. "She has been weeping off and on like a Niobe, and makes me feel like crying too. Among us poor women tears are dreadfully contagious things, and I'm trying hard to escape the infection."

"I can't help it," said the girl, showing a red nose and swollen eyes. "Sweetapple Cove ain't a-goin' ter be the same place after you folks goes. 'Course I knows ye'd have no room fer a girl like me over ter yer place in Ameriky. 'Tain't my fault if we Newfoundlanders is said ter be that green th' devil has to put us in th' smoke-house ter dry afore we'll burn. Ye'd ought ter have hustled me hard an' said mean things ter me. Then I'd 'a' been glad when ye left. It's a sight better ter say good riddance ter bad rubbish than ter lose people one's fond of."

She was bravely trying to smile, and accused herself of being a silly fool. Miss Jelliffe put her hand on the girl's shoulder.

"You never said you would like to go with us, Susie," she said. "I'll be only too glad to take you if you want to come."

"Now don't be after foolin' me jest ter make me stop greetin' like a silly calf!" exclaimed Susie. "Yer sure don't mean it, does yer?"

"Now I am determined to take you if I have to tie you up and have you carried on board by the crew," laughed Miss Helen, whereupon a broad smile illumined the girl's face.

"If I doesn't allers do what yer tells me to," she declared, "ye kin take me by the scruff of me neck an' ship me back ter work on the flakes again. Oh, Lord! I got ter run off an' tell the folks. I'll jest be back in a minute."

She scampered up the path, scaring two goats and sending a hen flying over some palings into a cabbage patch, while we entered the house.

"I am afraid I have come to say good-by, Mr. Jelliffe," I said to Mr. Jelliffe. "I rather think that some one is coming for me to go to the Bay, and I shall probably not be back in time to see you off. Be very prudent about using your leg and have some one hold your arm when you move about the yacht."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Mr. Jelliffe. "First I want to thank you ever so much for the excellent care you have taken of me, and for your kindness to Helen. You have been exceedingly good and attentive to us both. And I want to say that I think you are doing fine work in this jumping-off place, and it seems a pity that a man like you should be wasted here. Now here's a bit of paper in this envelope, and you can spend it on codfish or codfishermen, just as you please. Thank you again for my spliced leg, it's a fine job."

He put out his hand, which I shook heartily. Indeed I felt very sorry over this separation. These people are friends such as I have never had yet, and the salt of the earth.

When I sought to open the door I was compelled to push hard against the force of the fierce wind that had arisen during our conversation. The rocky spurs which close in the cove were now a foaming mass over which mighty combers were hurling themselves, to the shrieking of the gale.

I found Miss Jelliffe on the porch, with locks of her hair flying about her pretty head.

"You are not going," she cried. "You can't possibly go off in such a storm."

"I can see that no boat could leave the cove now," I replied, "but if I should be badly wanted I might be able to make my way over there by land."

"Oh! I hope you won't go," she said. "It is a terrible storm."

Some men were coming towards us, their oilskins slatting in the wind that sought to tear them from their backs.

"'Tis a hard bit of a blow, sir," said one of them. "It's too bad, for they is Dicky Jones, as has seven young 'uns, and they says he is mortal sick. The woman o' he she were bawlin' terrible fer us to go an' fetch yer, an' we resked it, but now 'tain't no use, for there ain't no boat could ever get out o' th' cove an' live."

The other man was Sammy, who nodded gravely, in confirmation.

I looked at the raging seas that were now leaping over the little strait into our cove.

"I'll have to try and get there by land," I said.

"'Tis an awful long ways around," said Sammy. "Not as I says it can't be done."

"We's fair done with th' long pull we's had," said the messenger. "I mistrust us men couldn't do it."

"You will stay here and rest," I told him. "I think I will have to try it."

"You goin' now?" asked Sammy.

"I'll be off in a few minutes."

"Then I goes wid yer, in course," said the sturdy old fellow. "I might be hinderin' you a bit with th' walkin', 'count o' them long legs o' yourn, but I knows th' way an' ye'll be safer from gettin' strayed."

So I ran up to Atkins', to see once more how the child was getting on, finding everything satisfactory enough. I left some medicine and gave careful directions, after which I returned to the Jelliffes' house. Miss Helen was waiting, wrapped in a waterproof coat. Her head was bare, and she did not appear to mind the gusts of rain which came down upon it, driven under the porch by the gale.

"Good-by, oh! good-by!" she cried. "Thank you for everything and God be with you!"

She gave me a grip of the hand that was strong with a nervous force one would hardly have deemed her capable of, and I left her regretfully, I must say, for she had become such a comrade as a man seldom meets with. Then Sammy and I started on our long walk over the ridges and barrens, striking well inland. We had been gone but a few minutes before Sweetapple Cove was blotted from our sight by the pelting rain that spattered fiercely over our oilskins.

And now I am putting in another long night.

The storm still beats upon the roof and the wind is howling like some unmerciful beast unleashed. The *Snowbird* surely could not sail away to-day, for the dawning is showing its first gleams through the tiny window panes, and there is no sign of any change.

CHAPTER XVI

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Aunt Jennie:

Why does the world sometimes seem to turn the wrong way, so that everything becomes miserably topsy-turvy? I have often had to struggle to keep awake when writing you these long letters, which you say you are so glad to get. But now I am writing because I am so dreadfully awake that I don't feel as if I ever could sleep again.

It is now a week since Stefansson came up to the house, and the water dripping from him ran down and joined the baby rivers that were rushing down the little road before our house.

"I've come for orders, Mr. Jelliffe," he said.

"Orders! What orders?" asked Daddy, irascibly. "I'd like to know what orders I can give except to wait till this fiendish weather gets better. You don't expect to start in such a gale, do you?"

"We couldn't make it very well, sir, and that's a fact. I don't even think I could take her out of the cove. If we could only get her clear of the coast we'd be all right enough, but I wouldn't like to take chances."

"Who wants to take chances? Do you suppose I'm so anxious to go that I'm going to risk all our lives? Come back or send word as soon as you think it safe to start. That's all I want. I suppose everything is all right in the engine room now."

Our skipper confirmed this and left. All day the storm gathered greater fury, and has kept it up ever since. At times the rain stops, and the great black clouds race desperately across the sky while the world outside our little cove is a raging mass of spume that becomes wind-torn and flies like huge snow flakes high up in the air. And then the rain begins again, slanting and beating down wickedly, and I feel that no such thing can ever have existed as clear skies and balmy breezes.

A number of hours ago, I don't really know how many, I was sitting with Daddy, who looked very disconsolate. I am afraid that this long storm has got on his nerves, or perhaps the poor dear is worrying about me. I think he has been afraid that I might catch the disease from that sick child. And now I am sure that his worries have increased ever so much, but what can one do when it really becomes a matter of life and death to go out and help, to the best of one's poor abilities? How could any one stand on a river bank, with a rope, however frail, in one's hands, and obey even one's father if he forbade you to throw it to a drowning child?

I am afraid I have again wandered off, as I so often do when I write to you, Aunt Jennie. Well, we were there, and the lamp flickered, and the rain just pelted the house so that it looked as if it were trying to wash us down into the cove. But I heard a knock at the door, and listened, and it came again. So I went and opened it to find Yves, with his long black hair disheveled and his face a picture of awful anxiety. In the gesture of his hands there was pitiful begging, and his voice came hoarsely as he sought to explain his coming.

I interrupted him and bade him enter.

"Pardon," he said, "please pardon. Eet is de leetle bye. All day I wait. I tink heem docteur maybe come back. But heem no come. Maybe you know about leetle byes very seek. You help docteur once."

"I am afraid I know very little, my poor Yves," I cried, shaking my head.

"What is the matter with him, Frenchy?" asked Daddy.

"Me not know, monsieur," he answered. "Heem now cry out heem want *la belle dame*. Heem lofe de yong lady. Seek all day, de poor leetle bye, an' lie down and cry so moch! An' now heem terreeble red in ze face, an' so hot, an' speak fonny. An' heem don' want eat noding, noding at all. So I know mademoiselle she help fix heem leetle girl, de oder day, an' me tink maybe she tell me what I do. All de oder womans dey know noding at all, an' I hear Docteur say oder day zey all big fool. Please you come, mademoiselle."

"I have to go, Daddy," I cried, and caught up my woollen cap and wrapped myself up in my waterproof.

"I wish you wouldn't, daughter," said poor Daddy. "I am sure it must be something catching."

"I'm so sorry, Daddy, but I just have to go. I'll try to be back soon."

"But why doesn't he go for Mrs. Barnett?" asked Dad. "She knows all about sick babies."

"Oh! I don't want her to be sent for. She has those dear little ones of her own," I said.

Then I kissed him quickly and ran out into the darkness before he could object any further. The wind just tore at me, and I had to seize Frenchy's arm as we splashed through the puddles, with heads bent low, leaning against the storm.

And so we reached the poor little shack Yves calls his home. On the floor he had placed some pans that caught some of the drippings from the leaky roof, and a piece of sail-cloth was stretched upon a homemade pallet covered with an old caribou hide, upon which the poor little fellow was lying. Unable to bear any heat he had cast away all his coverings, in the fever that possessed him, and when I heard him moan and knelt beside him he stretched out his arms to me, and his pleading face grew sweet with hope.

"Heem too young to be widout moder ven seek," said Frenchy, apologetically. "Heem moder is dead."

I bathed the hot little head, and the touch of my hand made the poor wee thing more contented. After this I sent Frenchy to our house for some alcohol, with which I washed the boy, who finally fell into a restless sleep.

Frenchy had placed his only chair near the pallet for me, and after a while he drew up a big pail, on the bottom of which he sat, with his elbows upon his knees and his jaws in the palm of his hands, staring at the child. One could see that an immense fear was upon the man, but that my presence was of some comfort to him. It really looks as if men in trouble always seek help from women, and this poor fellow was now leaning upon me, just as I had leaned on his big arm when we had made our way through the storm. Something was tearing away at his heart-strings, and after a time the pain of it, I think, opened the fount of his memories, as if an irresistible desire had come upon him for the balm there is in pouring them out.

How can I tell you all that he said? It was in fragments, disconnected, and represented the great tragedy of a humble life. I remember that several times, while he told it to me, my hand rested in sympathy upon that great arm of his, that had now become very weak. It was at first just the simplest little tale of love somewhere on the coast of Brittany, and of vows exchanged before a Virgin that stretched out her arms towards the sea. And then Yves was taken away upon a warship, and there were tears and prayers for his return. He couldn't remember all the countries from which he had sent letters, but after many months answers ceased to come.

Then a new recruit had joined, who belonged to his town, and informed him that the family had moved away on the other side of the ocean, to St. Pierre-Miquelon. So Yves had written, but still no letters came. But one day it chanced that the cruiser was sent up there, to keep an eye on the fisheries, and he was in a fever of waiting until they should arrive. On the first day that he obtained shore leave he had wandered up and down the little streets, and looked at names over *cafes* and shops, and asked questions of all who would listen to him. No one knew anything of Jeanne-Marie Kermadec. At last one man remembered that a family of that name had remained less than a year and had gone back to France.

Then he had wandered off again, and from the cafes comrades of his called to him to join them, but he strolled on, and suddenly he had seen a hollow-eyed woman enter a drinking-shop, and on her arm she bore a baby. So of course he had followed her, feeling as if he had been very drunk. But he had not had a drop. She had gone to a bleary man who sat at a little table, with others, and tried to make him come out with her. But the man swore at her, and the woman left, crying, and Yves had followed her out into the street, and when he spoke she knew him, and cried harder. So he had gone as far as her house, and then she wept on his shoulder. Her people had gone away but she had remained, for her love had gone out to this man and the Virgin on the hill was very far away. At first she had been very happy, but now Yves could see what was happening, and the baby was very hungry, for there was no bread in the house.

Then Yves had emptied his pocket on the table and gone away, very unsteadily, and some of the men on his ship laughed at him. But perhaps he was looking dangerous, because after he had glared at them once they left him alone.

After this he had met Jeanne-Marie several times, but his ship soon left on a trip to some places in Canada. In one of these there was a great coal mine near the sea, and in another town perched queerly on a rock they had anchored in the *Saint Laurent*. Yes, perhaps it was Quebec; he knew the people spoke French there. Then after a time the cruiser had returned to St. Pierre. He thought it might be better not to go back to that house, but he found that he could not keep away.

It was some illness he did not know that killed her. Yes, he had been there when she died, and had paid money to a doctor and to the priest. Perhaps she just died of not having enough to eat, he didn't know. She had asked him to kiss her before she died, and it was the only time since he had left Brittany. Then Jeanne-Marie's husband had come into the house, and borrowed five francs from him and was very maudlin, and asked what the devil he was going to do with that brat, which cried all the time. But the little one was quiet when Yves took it in his arms, so poor Frenchy asked if he might take it, because he knew it would die if left there. The man had laughed, so he had taken it on his arm and wandered out in the street with it, and a quarter-master asked him what he was doing with a baby. He answered that he didn't know, for one can't take little ones away on warships. He had met a man from the French shore, who told him there was a schooner from Newfoundland which had lost two men in a blow, and needed a hand or two. Then he had gone and offered to ship for nothing, if they would let him take the baby. Yes, they had laughed at him, but the skipper was drunk and good-natured, and told him to come aboard. He had done so at night, when no one was looking, and had with him some milk that comes in cans. So they had sailed away for Newfoundland, and he supposed it was as good a place as any for a man who was now a deserter. Very likely they had looked for him a long time, and had been surprised, for he was accounted a good man. Anyway it was Jeanne-Marie's baby, and one could not leave it to be neglected and to die, because Jeanne-Marie had loved it very much.

Of course he would never see France again, unless the boy died. If this happened he would go and give himself up, because nothing would matter any more. So many of his shipmates had gone to lands of black and yellow people, and had never returned. They were dead, and some day he also would be dead, and it made no difference.

I really think, Auntie dear, that he had quite forgotten me as he spoke, low, haltingly, in mingled French and English words. He was just rehearsing to himself something that had been all of his life, because everything that had happened before, and the struggle for a living afterwards, were of no moment. Through the poor man's ignorance, through his wondrous folly, I could discern an immense love that had overpowered him and broken him forever. He was an exile from his beloved land of Brittany, and would never see its heather and gorse again, or the flaming foxgloves that redden some of its fields.

And all this because of a little child that was the only thing left that had belonged to the woman he had loved so greatly! He said that perhaps that Virgin on the hills might still be looking far out over the waters, and he knelt before a little crucifix which hung from a nail in the rough boards of the walls. I heard him repeating, in a low voice, in soft quick words, the prayers his faith led him to hope might be hearkened to by the Lady of Sorrows, as she watched from that little hill on the other side of the great sea.

The poor candle was guttering and the wind howled outside. I looked around and saw the few clothes hanging from pegs, the rusty cracked stove, the table made of rough boards, the bunk filled with dry moss and seaweed, and then my eye caught one flaring note of color. It was a gaudily hued print representing a woman holding aloft a tricolor flag, and labelled *La Republique Francaise!* And the poor cheap picture was all of the inheritance of this man, marooned and outlawed for the sake of a woman and her dying kiss, which had been the only reward of all his devotion.

So I sat there, awed by the greatness of it all. There were no tears in my eyes; indeed, it seemed too big a thing for tears, a revelation and an outlook upon life so vast that it held me spell-bound. I had never realized that love could be such a thing as that, feeding upon a mere sad memory, able to take this rough viking of a man and toss him, a plaything of its stupendous force, upon these barren rocks. Surely it was arrant folly, utter insanity, but it showed that men's lives are not regulated by clockwork, and that, however erring an ideal may be, the passions it may inspire can bring out the greatness of manhood or the ardent devotion of women.

It awed me to think that among the teeming millions of the earth there were thousands upon thousands bound to potential outbursts of a love that may slumber quietly until death or awake, great and inspiring in its might.

As the muttered prayers went on I watched the uneasy tossing of the child, until Susie Sweetapple came in, hurried and dripping.

"You's got ter come home," she said. "Yer father he's bawlin' as how he wants yer back. My, the poor mite of a young 'un! The face o' he looks dreadful bad! D'ye know it's most midnight? Come erlong now, ma'am."

I rose, feeling very trembly about the knees. There was nothing that I could do. I could not let poor Daddy worry any longer about me.

"Come for me, Yves," I told the man, "if he seems worse, or if there is anything I can do."

He came to me, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears as I put my hand out to him. He lifted it up to his lips with a sob.

So we two hurried back home. By this time the wind had abated a little, and the moon was shining through some great rifts in the clouds, the waters of the cove reflecting a shiny path. The road was no longer in darkness; I could see it dimly, rising to higher ground.

I will write again very soon,
Your loving
HELEN.

CHAPTER XVII

From Mr. Walter B. Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

My dear Jennie:

You know I'm no great hand at letter writing when I have no stenographer at hand. It may not be courteous of me to say I am writing to you because I am the loneliest old party you have seen in a half a century, but you have your dear sister's sweet disposition, and I know you will forgive me. I am all alone in this packing-box of a house, when I expected to be at sea and sailing for Newport to say how d'you do on my way to New York. I wanted to have the pleasure of seeing your kindly face and of having you take that niece of yours in hand for a time. The girl is getting beyond me, and when I want to bluster she looks at me just as her mother used to and I get so weak that you could knock me over with a feather. She looks so much like Dorothy that sometimes I have to pinch myself to make sure it is not her mother sitting at the other end of the table.

When a man is sixty, and begins to think he owns his fair share of the earth, or even a bit more, I daresay that it does him good to be humbled a little, but it's a hard thing to become used to. Hitherto when Helen wanted anything I always let her have it, for on the whole she has always been sensible in her desires and requests, or maybe I have been an old fool. Didn't some Frenchman say once that an old man is a fellow who thinks himself wise because he's been a fool longer than other people? Anyway, that's me! For the last few days I have been itching to scrap with her, and I find she minds me about as much as the man in the moon.

Of course, Jennie, it is a disgruntled old brother-in-law who writes this, and you will have to make allowances.

Would you believe that last night she went out and remained till after midnight in a sailor's house, watching a sick child, after I had objected to her doing so, as forcibly as I could? I had to send the queer female native who looks after us to that shanty to bring her back, and the child returned with swollen eyes and a drawn face that positively hurt me to see. She has derived so much benefit from her stay here, and was looking so splendidly just a few days ago, that I felt angry enough to have whipped her, if a silly old chap like me could ever chastise a daughter like Helen. At any rate I rushed her off to bed, and I know she never went there for a long time. I have no doubt that instead of sleeping she was probably scribbling to you.

This morning she was down before eight, and I will acknowledge that she looked better than I had expected. Yet there were great dark rings under her eyes, and I tried to look as disagreeable as possible. But you women are too smart for an old fellow like me. She simply cuddled up to me as I sat in the only armchair in Sweetapple Cove and put her arm around my neck, and I could only grumble a little like a decrepit idiot.

Then she looked out of doors and rushed back again, and put on that crazy woollen cap you crocheted for her, and opened the door to the kitchen, where Susie was singing some hoarse ditty of her own, and told her that she was going out again to see that child, and that she would be back in a few minutes. That Susie showed her sense, and I'm going to give her a big tip.

"Ye'll not be doin' no sich thing," shrieked our domestic. "They be plenty sickness already in th' Cove, an' Doctor not back yet. Ye'll jist take yer coffee as is waitin' fer ye, an' not be goin' ter see illness on a empty stummick. An' Captain he've been round ter say they is still quite a jobble of a sea outside but he can make it fine, and he've steam up. So it's good-by to th' Cove this fine marnin."

"Yes," I said hurriedly. "We're off just as soon as we've had breakfast and the men have moved everything down to the yacht. It is a corking fine day, and as we're all proof against sea-sickness we've got nothing to worry over. Of course you're all played out after that nursing all night, and are a foolish girl, but I suppose one can't keep women away from those jobs. Sit right down and have your breakfast."

"I'll have to see that child before we leave, Daddy," she said, "and---and---and then I will be all ready."

She spoke in such a queer way that I was positively alarmed. I am sure I have never seen her look like that.

"What's the matter?" I asked her. "You speak in such a weary, discouraged way that you must be getting ill. You have simply tired yourself to death over that boy of Frenchy's. By George! But I'll be glad when we get away from this place!"

And then the minx looked at me, just as sweetly as ever, and her voice had that little caressing tone of hers.

"Don't worry, dear Daddy, I'll have plenty of rest at sea," she told me.

So we had our breakfast, very pleasantly, and I was thanking my stars that all our troubles would be over in no time, little thinking that they were just beginning. So I rose, and took my stout cane, very proud of showing the population how nicely I could walk, and went out on the porch, ready to go on board the yacht. The men were coming up to get our baggage and the furniture we had taken from the *Snowbird*, and Susie was ready to boss them. Then Helen, who had run upstairs, came down and joined me.

"I'll help you down the road, Daddy," she said, "and after that I'll run back to Frenchy's. I hear that Mr. Barnett went off somewhere in the middle of the night, so as to return in time to see us off. He will be back soon, and an hour or so won't matter, will it? The *Snowbird* doesn't run on a schedule, Dad."

I looked at my watch, it was a quarter to nine.

"We're off by ten," I said. "First thing I know we won't get away till afternoon if I listen to you another minute."

We had gone but a very little way down the road, which is nothing but a deplorable sort of goat-path or gutter running down the side of the hill, when we saw Dr. Grant coming down from Sammy's house, and the old fisherman was remonstrating with him. My dear Jennie, it gave me the shock of my life! The young man was actually staggering, and I immediately decided that he was drunker than a whole batch of lords.

"Yer isn't fit ter be goin'," the old fellow was objecting. "Ye jist come back ter th' house an' git ter bed, where ye belongs. Ye'll get a mite o' sleep an' feel better. 'Tain't fair ter be goin' again right off. You can't hardly be a-holdin' of yerself up."

Of course all this made me positive that the doctor had been hitting a bottle pretty hard, and I was angry and sorry that Helen should see it too, because she's taken a huge liking to that chap, and hitherto I could hardly blame her. When I turned to her she was staring at him, and looked as if some one had hit her with a club.

"It is too bad, daughter," I said. "I would never have thought that he was that kind of a man."

Then the poor girl grabbed my arm with a clutch which actually hurt.

The doctor and the old man were coming very near. I saw the lad look up at us, and it was really pathetic to see how he tried to straighten himself up and steady his gait as he took his cap off, with a shaking hand.

"It's really too bad," I said again.

And then Helen just stared at me for an instant, shaking her head.

"I don't believe it," she cried. "I won't believe it."

She let go my arm and dashed away from me. I could see that the poor child was moved again by that instinct of helpfulness which you dear women have, and by the sense of loyalty to friends which girls like Helen always show.

"Oh! What is the matter?" she cried.

Then I saw the doctor move back, and hold up his hand as if seeking to repel her.

"Go back! Don't come near me," he said, hoarsely, and hurried on, unsteadily, while she stood there, dumbfounded, unable to understand. I saw her sense of helplessness grow into resentment and wounded pride. The poor little girl was hurt, Jennie, deeply hurt.

Our men had already invaded the house and were carrying the things away, and the population of Sweetapple Cove was gathering, for our departure was even a more wonderful event than our arrival. There was not a house in the Cove that Helen had not visited, and she has made friends with every last Tom, Dick and Harry in the place, and their wives and children. I know that the women have appreciated her friendly interest in their humble lives. Some little children were howling, possibly at the prospect of being henceforth deprived of the sweets she has distributed among them. All the fish-houses and the flakes were deserted, though it was a fine drying day. The men came towards us, with slightly embarrassed timidity, and I shook hands all around as they grinned at us and wished us a good journey. They actually wanted to carry me down to the yacht.

So I took Helen's arm again, after declining their kind offers, and began my slow descent to the cove.

My poor girl was walking very erect, and she often smiled at the people who surrounded us. But I could see that it took the greatest effort on her part. I'm sure she was impatient to be gone and wanted to shut herself up in her stateroom. It was so hard, Jennie, to see the dear child whose nature has ever been such a happy, cheery one, and who has never seemed to have a moment's suffering in her life, give such evidence of pain and sorrow.

It was at this moment, Jennie, that the suspicion entered my soul, that I had been wrong in letting her enjoy so much of the society of this young man, who is certainly a fine, attractive fellow when in his right mind. Isn't it wonderful how young people become attracted by one another, and their heads and hearts get filled while we old people can only worry, for whether they choose well or ill it always ends in our being left alone.

I noticed that Frenchy and Sammy were not among the people who crowded about us to say good-by. I looked for them in vain, and was a bit hurt that they should be absent, for we have become very fond of them. Helen was also searching the friendly faces, and I knew that she missed them.

Her head was held high up, and but for the little curling up of her lip, in which her teeth bit hard, she would have looked a picture of serene indifference. We were nearing Frenchy's shack, in front of which the path leads to the cove, and finally we were opposite the ramshackle place. It must be very dreadful to a girl, who has learned to admire a man, perhaps even to love him, to discover that her idol has feet of clay. She had allowed the best of her nature, I could see it now, to be drawn in admiration and regard towards a man she deemed unworthy. That odor of the fish-houses had always been bad enough before, but now it seemed to rise in her nostrils and sicken her. And now, Jennie, I can only repeat Puck's words, "What fools we mortals be!"

That man Frenchy rushed out of the door as we were going by. His face looked as if he had been suffering tortures.

"Please, please!" he cried. "Come, vite, heem Docteur hawful seek. Me no can stan' it no more! You so good in de las' night, mademoiselle, now please come in, for de lofe of *le bon Dieu!*"

And then the strain that had been on the heart of my poor girl seemed to give way, suddenly. The tension was released, like a powerful spring, and the hardness went out of her face. She dropped my arm and dashed past the man who sought her help, and entered the place, where I followed as fast as my leg would let me.

First she looked towards the child, which I suppose she expected to see under a sheet that would have just revealed the stark little form, but the little thing was smiling at her, weakly.

"*Je vous aime bien*" he said.

Then her eyes filled with tears, and she turned towards the man who, with a gesture of his hand, had swept her from his path. He had arisen on her entrance, and leaned hard on the back of the chair. To my surprise he spoke quite composedly, and I realized I had made an awful mistake.

"This is all wrong, Miss Jelliffe," he said. "I tried to prevent Yves from calling you. The child has diphtheria and you must leave at once."

The man's voice was frightfully hoarse, and he unconsciously put his hand up to his throat. She looked at him without answering. Then she went up to the little table and picked up a small vial she had noticed.

"Antitoxine, seven thousand units," she read. Then she took up a small glass syringe armed with a bright steel needle, and stared at it.

"You have given it to the child?" she asked.

"Yes, just a few minutes ago," he answered. "We only left Edward's Bay at sunrise. The man is getting well. I was told of this case and went up to Sammy's for the antitoxine."

"But it was the last you had!" she cried, "and Atkins has only been able to start this morning for more, and the wind is very bad for him. It may be days before he returns."

The man shrugged his shoulders, very slightly, and Helen went up to him, scrutinizing his face, silently. Then she put her fingers on the wrist that was supporting his hand on the back of the chair.

"I am not well," he said, "and I wish you would leave. I think I will have to let Mrs. Barnett into this mess. She's away at Goslett's house, where they expect a baby."

"How long have you known that you had diphtheria too?" asked Helen, and I could detect in her voice an intensity of reproof that was wonderful, for she was scolding the man, just as excited mothers sometimes scold a little one that has fallen down and hurt itself.

"I was beginning to feel it last night," he answered, "but please go away now, for it is dangerous."

Then he addressed me.

"Mr. Jelliffe, do take her away. I hear that she was here last night and remained for hours. You will take her away to St. John's at once, and have her given a preventive injection. Now please hurry off."

I could see that the poor chap's voice rasped his throat painfully. His two hands dropped to his side, with the palms turned forward, in a feeble gesture of entreaty.

"You knew this morning that you had it," said Helen again. "And you only had that vial and used it all for the boy."

He nodded, with another slight shrug of his shoulders.

"I see that you have been playing the game!" she said quietly.

Then she turned to me, seizing one of my arms.

"Hurry!" she cried. "You must hurry, Daddy. Why don't you go on? He has diphtheria, and perhaps half the people here will have it now. Perhaps he is going to die! Come, Daddy, you must hurry. The *Snowbird* will take you to St. John's and you must buy antitoxine, a lot of it, and come back with it at once. And you should get a doctor, and a nurse or two, and I will stay here, and please don't look at me that way! Do hurry, Daddy! Oh! I was forgetting your poor leg. Never mind, take your time, Daddy, but as soon as you are on board make them hurry. Susie will stay with me. A few days won't matter, Daddy!"

"Oh! Daughter. Please come," I implored her. "I promise that I will send the yacht back at once with a doctor and everything."

She looked at me in amazed surprise.

"But how can I leave now, Dad?" she asked. "Don't you understand that a lot of people may die if you don't get help at once, and of course I must stay. You will do your best, won't you? Come, dear, and let me help you down the path. You can be gone in a few minutes."

"Leave you here!" I exclaimed, indignantly. "You are crazy, girl! I'll stay with you, of course. Here, some of you fellows, run down to the cove and tell my skipper to come here at once."

So I stood there, just outside the door, watching a man scramble down the road, who finally returned with Stefansson. Helen stood perfectly still, except for the toe of one of her boots, which was tapping a tattoo on the boards.

"Get the *Snowbird* under weigh at once," I shouted. "Run up to St. John's and buy all the antitoxine you can get hold of, any amount, barrels of it, if it comes that way. And bring a doctor back with you. Promise him all the money he wants. And get a nurse, or a couple of them, or a dozen. Regular trained nurses, you understand. Yes, it's antitoxine I want. Write it down. It's the stuff they use for diphtheria. Then get back here at once. Carry all the sail she'll bear and all the steam she'll take. Look lively and don't waste a minute. Here, you Sammy! Go aboard too and help pilot her back if it's dark or foggy. Good luck to you and jump her for all she's worth!"

I suppose I spoke like a crazy man, but the two started down hill. Stefansson, who has long legs, only beat the old fellow by a skip and a jump. Then I saw the men casting off the hawsers, and the thin film of smoke became black, and the good old *Snowbird* shook herself. I was tickled to see how a crew of chaps used to count seconds in racing were handling her. She was moving, the smoke pouring thicker and thicker from her funnel, and the screw began to churn hard. Then her sharp bowsprit turned around a little, till it was aimed at that cleft between the rocks. She gathered speed and struck the billowing seas outside and turned a bit. Then the big sails began to rise, as did the jibs, and I saw a man run out to the end of the bowsprit as a thick white rope ran up to the fore topmast head and broke out into a fleecy white cloud of silk. Then, under the great balloon jib topsail my little ship flew off like a scared bird and disappeared behind the edges of the cliffs.

"Byes, did yer ever see the like o' that?" shouted an old fisherman, enthusiastically. "My, but Sammy's a lucky dog ter be gettin' sich a sail. I'd give a quintal fer the chance."

I must say that I was pleased with this expert appreciation, and began to feel better.

"But why didn't we send the doctor on her?" I suddenly asked. "He would have been attended to sooner. We could have taken him with us."

"He wouldn't have gone," said Helen, whose cheeks had now become red with excitement. "He would never leave until some one came to take his place. He thinks he can still help that child of Frenchy's."

So after a time we returned to the house we had thought we were seeing the last of, and it seemed very different, having been dismantled of many things which were now lying on the dock.

Helen sat down for a moment, putting her elbows on the table and resting her face on her hands. So of course I went to her, and stroked her head, and she looked at me with eyes that were full of tears.

"I'm ashamed," she said. "At first I thought just as you did. I was sure he had been drinking. And he seemed so awfully rude when he motioned me away. But he could hardly drag himself, the poor fellow, and he was trying to keep me away from him, because he was afraid for me."

She was utterly disconsolate, and I could only keep on stroking the child's head as I used to, when she came to seek consolation for babyish sorrows. Of course I was worried about her, and realized how helpless I was. She hadn't grown over night, naturally, yet something appeared to have been added to her stature. She was a woman now, full of the instincts of womanhood, and she was escaping from my influence. Her life was shaping itself independently of me. It is pretty tough, Jennie, to see one's ewe lamb slipping away. She loves me dearly, I know it, but she is now flowering into something that will never be entirely mine again, and the realization of it is cutting my heart.

After a moment she was restless again, and we went out on the porch. We could hear Susie Sweetapple messing about in her kitchen, whose destinies she again cheerfully controls, and presently some men came down the road, carrying a bed.

"Un says he've got ter have his bed at Frenchy's," one of them explained to me.

"Un's scared to give the diphtherias ter Sammy's young 'uns."

They started again, wiping their brows, for the late September day was growing warm, and soon after we saw a small boat entering the cove and Helen, who seems to know everything about this place, declared that it was not one of our boats, as she calls the fleet at Sweetapple Cove. It reached the dock and a man jumped out while the sails were still slatting.

Susie had stuck her head out of the window.

"Un's parson comin'," she announced.

Mr. Barnett hastened towards us as fast as his little legs would carry him. He passed Frenchy's house, not knowing that the doctor was there, and stopped in surprise when he saw us.

"I thought I was too late!" he exclaimed. "We saw the *Snowbird* flying, miles away, and I thought I should never see you again."

"The doctor is at Frenchy's!" cried Helen. "He is dreadfully ill. Please go and see what you can do for him."

"I'll go at once," he replied. "We intercepted the mail-boat and I have a letter for you, Mr. Jelliffe, and one for the doctor. I hear he saved that man's life, over to the Bay. Been up with him day and night. You can't understand what it means to us to have a man like him here, who permeates us all with his own brave confidence. The blessing of it! It was a terrible storm that he went through when he walked over to the Bay. It is an awful country, and his steps were surely

guided over pitfalls and rocks."

The little man is quite admirable in the sturdiness of his faith, in the power of his belief, that is the one supreme ideal always before him, and I shook hands with him.

"But I fear he is very ill now. A boy just told me they had to carry him from his boat, when he returned this morning."

"I'll go with you now to Frenchy's," said Helen.

"Are you not afraid?" asked the little parson.

"Are you?" she asked, just a little rudely, I fear.

"With me it is a matter of duty and love, you know," he replied.

"With me also," she said, with head bent down. Then she looked up again.

"I don't think you have any better right to expose yourself than I," she said, with spirit. "You have children of your own, and a wife to think of. Your life is a full one, rounded out and devoted to a work that is very great. Mine is only beginning; nothing has come from it yet; I have done nothing. It all lies before me and I won't stand aloof as if I were outside of laboring humanity, while there is sickness to be fought. I'm going with you."

She came to me.

"I hope you don't think I'm very bad, Daddy?" she said. "I'm sorry to give you so much trouble, but something tells me I must go. I just have to!"

I looked at her, as she walked rapidly away with the parson, and then sat down on the steamer chair that had been brought up again, and for the first time I felt that age was creeping up on me. It looks as if all of us, ill or hale, poor or rich, are but the playthings of nature, bits of flotsam on the ocean of human passions. Your poor dear sister, Jennie, died young, and I believe that her life with me was a happy one as long as she was spared. After a little while Helen began to fill some of the emptiness she had left, but now there come again to me memories of a sweet face, uplifted lovingly to my own, and I am overcome with a sense of loss indescribable. And yet this is mingled with some pride. My daughter is no doll-like creature, no romantic, unpractical fool destined to be nothing but a clog to the man who may join his life to hers. She will never lag behind and cry for help, and hers will be the power to walk side by side with him. She can never be a mere bauble, and will play her own part.

Oh! Jennie. The pluck of the child, the readiness with which she wants to give the best of herself because she thinks it right and just, and because she refuses to concede to others a monopoly of helpful love!

That young man, if he lives, will be a fit mate for any woman, but I swear to you that if it comes to that I will insist upon paying the salary of some man to take his place. I want my girl nearer to me than in Sweetapple Cove!

After a time I pulled out the letter Mr. Barnett had handed me. It was from that young rascal Harry Lawrence. He says he's heard from you about that caribou shooting, and wants to come up anyway and find out how I look after my tough summer in this neck of the woods, and he's never been to Newfoundland anyway, *etc., etc.*

Of course that boy cares as much for my looks as for those of the Egyptian Sphinx. At one time I really hoped that Helen and he, since she would have to leave me some day, might grow fond of one another. I know how devoted he is to my girl, but I'm afraid she has made her own choice. I must write to Harry that we shall be leaving before long and that it will be too late for him to come now,---as, indeed, it is. What puzzles me is that, on his own part, that doctor never has seemed to be anything but a good friend to Helen. I suppose I was an old fool, and never saw things that went on under my nose. Poor Harry, he's such a splendid lad, and his father was my dearest friend, as you know.

Helen has been gone for hours, and I'm going to send Susie after her. In the meanwhile I have sought to possess my soul in patience by writing to you.

Affectionately yours,
WALTER

CHAPTER XVIII

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Aunt Jennie:

It is very disturbing to think that one has, in some ways, been a very naughty bad girl, and yet to be utterly unable to see how one could have acted any differently.

It is my fault that we are still here, though we were all ready to start, and were on our way to the yacht when we discovered that Dr. Grant had just returned from one of the outports and was dreadfully ill. He has been so kind to us that it was utterly impossible for us to leave him at such a time and I just had to insist on delaying our departure, and of course I made poor Daddy very miserable. The *Snowbird* had to wing its flight away without us, hastening to seek help. We needed succor ever so badly, so very badly that if one of those strange vows of ancient days could have hastened her return by one little hour I would willingly have undertaken to drag myself on my knees along scores of miles of this rock-strewn shore. I begged Dad to send her, and he did, at once, for he was only too glad to do anything he could for the doctor, but he has been so dreadfully anxious on my account, and was so eager to take me away at once to some big place where I could be treated if I fell ill. You understand, of course, that I am not ill at all, and never was better in my life, and that there is no reason at all to be afraid for me.

Mr. Barnett and I left the house yesterday morning to go to the Frenchman's place, where the doctor has insisted on remaining. I was quite surprised to see a number of people around the poor little shack.

They all knew that Dr. Grant was very ill, and were gathered there with anxious faces. They simply looked worried to death. Isn't it wonderful, Aunt Jennie, how some people have the faculty of causing themselves to be loved by every one? Of course, his coming here has been such a great thing for these poor fishermen that they have learned to regard him as their best friend, one whose loss would be a frightful calamity. He certainly has never spared himself in their behalf.

Mr. Barnett stopped to shake hands with a few of them, and I heard little bits of their talk, which made me feel very unhappy.

"I jist seen Frenchy little whiles ago," one of them was saying, "and they wuz tears runnin' erlong the face o' he. Yes, man, he were cryin' like a young 'un, though some does say as his bye be better. Things must sure be awful bad with th' doctor."

The fisherman brandished his splitting knife as he spoke, and, with his torn oilskins dripping with blood and slime he was a terrible-looking figure, until his arms fell to his side and he stood there, an abject picture of dejection.

Then I heard a woman's voice. She is a poor thing whose husband and two sons were "ketched" last year, as they say, by these dreadful seas, and some think that her brain is a little affected.

"I mistrust as they is times when th' Lord 'Un's kept too busy ter be tendin' ter all as needs Him bad," she cried.

"Hush, woman!" an old man reproved her. "Ye'll be temptin' the wrath o' God on all of us wid sich talkin's."

The poor creature stopped, awed by the dread possibilities of bringing down further punishment upon the Cove, and began to weep in silence.

The men had removed their sou'westers and their caps when we came up to them. I believe that our arrival relieved them a little from their fears. They have such a touching faith in all who have been kind and friendly to them. It looked as if our coming was something material that they could lean upon, for, in their ignorance, they deem us capable of achieving wonderful things. I am certain that they firmly believe that their little parson is able to intercede with higher powers far more effectively than they possibly can, with their humble prayers. So a few of them returned to their fish-houses, and women and children hastened back to the flakes, since the sun was shining and the cod must be dried even if the heavens fall. I remember that when we entered the house I was very nervous and afraid. It is very natural, Aunt Jennie, for a girl to be frightened when she has never seen much sickness before, and one is lying helpless who has always been such a kind friend.

His little iron bed had been put up in a corner of the room, and the doctor was lying upon it, with his face very red. His breathing came very hard and rapidly, and it was horribly distressing to see a man brought to such a state, who, a few days ago, was so full of life and strength. Yet when he saw me he made an effort to rise to a sitting position, and his eyes brightened, but he looked anxiously at me.

"You haven't gone yet," he said, hoarsely. "And you, Barnett, have you no regard for your little chaps? You have no right to be here, and Frenchy is looking after me all right."

"You keep your breath to cool your porridge, boy," said the little parson. "I'm in charge now."

What a queer sort of freemasonry there must be among strong men, Aunt Jennie, which allows them to say gruff things to one another in friendly tones. The sick man seemed to recognize the little parson's authority and lay back, exhausted and conquered.

"I've done all I could," he said.

I was so sorry to hear the tone of discouragement in his voice. He is just a man, Aunt Jennie, with a man's weaknesses and a man's strength, and for the moment the latter had forsaken him. I suppose that some of his self-reliance had gone, for after a moment he smiled at us, and doubtless was glad to have friends with him and was comforted by their sympathy.

I could not help marvelling at the efficiency of the little parson, who, before they had a doctor here, was compelled to do the best he could to take care of sick people, assisted by his wife. He questioned the doctor, who wearily told him of some things that might be done for him, but without appearing to care. Mr. Barnett ran out of the house and up to Sammy's, returning with some bottles. He looked at labels ever so carefully and mixed some drugs with water, after

which he wound some cotton on a stick to make a sort of a brush.

"Now sit up a little and let me fix your throat," he said. "Yes, you've got to take some of your own medicine now, old fellow. Frenchy, you get behind him and hold him up. The light is poor here; better bring your candle. Miss Jelliffe, hold it just this way for me. That's good. Now open your mouth, my boy."

He swabbed the throat, in which there were ugly, white patches, so conscientiously that it brought on severe coughing, and after this he compelled the doctor to swallow some medicine.

"If keeping at it will do you any good, old man, you may depend on me. And now we'll have a look at that kiddie."

I looked around the room, where there was an awful penury of all sorts of things, so that I went up to our house and brought back some provisions. I am afraid that I established a corner in milk, for I took nearly all that the poor, lone, lean cow of Sweetapple Cove could provide.

When Mr. Barrett finally sat down I noticed that he looked quite weary and exhausted.

"Now you must go to our house," I told him, "and get Susie to give you something to eat. I am sure that you have had nothing since last night, and I won't have you falling ill too. I have arranged it all, so please don't say anything but just go, and don't hurry back. There is plenty of time and poor Daddy would be so glad to see you. I am sure it would do him a lot of good. I can watch both the patients perfectly well. And, Frenchy, you must go too and Susie will look after you. You look perfectly starved, and I'm sure you've forgotten to have any breakfast. Make him go with you, Mr. Barnett!"

They protested a little, but finally went out, reluctantly.

Of course I have always looked after Daddy's comfort a good deal, but when you have plenty of servants it is very easy to do, especially when one has also an Aunt Jennie to come around from time to time and put fear in their hearts, when they don't behave. But it seemed to me that this was really the first time that I had tried to take charge of things, although it didn't really amount to anything. I suppose it comes quite naturally to a woman to boss things a little in a household.

But now all I could do was to sit down by the bed, with my hands folded in my lap. I have seen so many women do this for hours at a time, Aunt Jennie, and I could never understand how they did it without an awful attack of the fidgets. But now I think I have found the solution. I am persuaded that these women just sit down quietly, and that the strength flows back into them in some mysterious way, and presently they become as strong as ever, just as happens with those storage batteries of the automobile, which are all the time having to be recharged. I don't exactly know what the folded hands have to do with it, but they are certainly an indispensable part of the process.

Dr. Grant rested quietly enough, and sometimes, when he opened his eyes, I saw that he looked at me, in a strange, sad way. But he was exhausted by the malady and the hard work of the previous days, and seemed too utterly weary to be suffering much pain. At times the little boy would moan, and I would go to him. It would only take a passing of my hand over the little forehead, or a drink of water, to quiet him again. The poor wee man loves me, I think, and I hope he will never know what a tragedy he is responsible for, but, indeed, I hope he will learn, some day, that this great, rough fisherman, Yves, has laid down all of his life for him. When the child was quiet I would return and sit again by the doctor.

After a short time Mr. Barnett and Yves returned, and were soon followed by Daddy and Susie, whose sturdy arm supported him. Poor Dad! He was looking aged and worried, and I felt ever so sorry for him.

Susie's way of speaking to people is invariably to address them as if they were rather deaf, and as if no one else could possibly hear.

"Yis, sor," she was saying, "it's jist as you says, a real crazy, foolish thing. But fur as I kin see them kind o' things is what makes up the most o' folk's lives. They is some gits ketched all by theirselves, and others gits ketched tryin' ter help others, and some niver gits ketched at all an' dies peaceful in the beds o' they. If there didn't no one take chances th' world wouldn't hardly be no fit place ter live in."

I suppose that Daddy could find no reply to such philosophy. He was doubtless very angry on my account, and I am sure he had been giving Susie a piece of his mind, all the way down. He entered the shack, ordering Susie to remain outside.

"Don't you dare come in," he said, quite exasperated. "I have no doubt at all that you will have to look after all the rest of us when we get ill. You can go back to your pots and pans or wait for me out of doors, just as you wish."

Then he came in, closing the door behind him, and looked around the room, profoundly disgusted. Mr. Barnett was again engaged in swabbing throats while Frenchy supported the patients and I held a bottle in whose neck a candle had been planted. No one could pay much attention to him just then. Poor old Dad! He thinks that because the first emigrant in our family dates back a couple of hundred years or so we are something rather special in the way of human beings, and I know very well that he thought it most degrading for a daughter of his to be in such a miserable place. Of course it is really very clean, Aunt Jennie, because Yves has been trained on a man o' war, where the men spend nearly all of their time scrubbing things. I have seen them so often at Newport, where they wash down the decks even when it is pouring cats and dogs. The poor dear was rather red in the face, by which I recognized the fact that he was holding himself in for fear of an explosion.

But you know that there never was a better man than Dad, and he got all over this in a moment. Of course he had come with the firm intention of explaining to the poor doctor what a fine mess he had made of things, but as soon as he saw that poor, pinched face on the pillow he changed entirely. Quite a look of alarm came over his countenance, and he was certainly awfully sorry. I have an idea that people who have never been very ill, and who have never seen many sick people possess a little egotism which it takes experience to drive out of them. He had surely never thought that poor Dr. Grant would look so ill, and his bit of temper melted away at once. He forced himself to take the hand that was nearest to him.

"I hope you are doing very well," he said, with a queer accent of timidity that was really very foreign to his nature.

"They are taking splendid care of me," answered Dr. Grant, with an effort that made him cough.

Daddy smiled at him, in a puzzled sort of way, and then turned to the child's couch, gazing at it curiously. Mr. Barnett stood at his side.

"He doesn't look as ill as..."

He whispered this as he pointed to the bed where the doctor was lying.

"The boy is getting well," answered the parson, in a low voice. "He had a large dose of antitoxine and it is beginning to show its effect."

"Ah? Just so," said Daddy, weakly.

Then he looked around the room again, quite helplessly.

"Is there anything that I could do?" he asked in a general way.

"Nothing, Daddy," I said. "Thank you ever so much for coming, but there is nothing you can do now. I would go home if I were you. I promise that I will return in time for supper."

Then Daddy looked around again, as if all his habitual splendid assurance and decisiveness of manner had forsaken him. After this he tiptoed his way to the door, outside of which Susie was waiting. I followed him, because I knew he would feel better if I just put my hand on his arm for a moment and assured him that I was feeling perfectly well.

The girl pointed out at sea.

"It's a-comin' on dreadful foggy," she said, gloomily.

Daddy and I looked at one another, and we stared at the dark pall that was sweeping in, raw and chilly. Of course we at once knew its significance. It must surely detain the *Snowbird* on its return journey.

Just then an old fisherman came up, touching his cap.

"Beggin' yer pardon, sor," he said. "Is yer after findin' th' doctor gettin' any better?"

"I can hardly tell you," answered Daddy, impatiently. "I know very little about such things, but he looks very badly to me."

"Oh! The pity of it!" exclaimed the man. "I tells yer, sor, it's a sad day, a real sad day fer Sweetapple Cove."

"Damn Sweetapple Cove!" Daddy shouted right in the poor fellow's face with such energy that he leaped back in alarm.

But Susie had taken hold of Daddy's arm.

"Now you come erlong o' me, sor," she said, soothingly, as if she had spoken to a child. "Don't yer be gettin' excited. Yer needs a good cup o' tea real bad, I'm a-thinkin', and a smoke. Yer ain't had a seegar to-day, and men folks is apt to get awful grumpy when they doesn't get ter smoke. Come erlong now, there's a good man."

Strange to say, Daddy went with her, willingly enough, after I had kissed him. He didn't resent Susie's manner at all. As I watched he stopped after going a few yards, and looked out at sea, beyond the entrance of the cove. Everything was disappearing in a dull greyness that was beginning to blot out the rocky cliffs, and he turned to the girl.

"My boat will never get back to-night," he said, "and I suppose that to-morrow will be worse. It always is. I wonder whether there is another such beastly country in the world?"

"I've heerd tell," remarked Susie, sagaciously, "as how they is some places as has been fixed so them as lives in 'em will sure know what a good place Heaven is when they gits to it."

CHAPTER XIX

Dr. Frank Johnson to Mrs. Charlotte Johnson

Dearest Mother:

I had expected to sail away from St. John's on the twentieth to return to you before resuming the hard search for something to keep together the body and soul which struggling young doctors without means have so hard a time to maintain in their proper relation. Since the old *Chandernagore* limped into St. John's with its bow stove in, after that terrible collision, and the underwriters decided that she was hopelessly damaged, my prospects have been those of a man living on a pittance and merely entitled to his passage home and a trifle of salary.

A ship-surgeon utterly stranded can hardly be a very merry soul, and the day before yesterday I was strolling rather disconsolately about the docks, when I saw a stunning yacht come in. She was a sight to feast one's eyes on, and until the last moment was under a cloud of sail while her funnel belched black smoke. For a few minutes I saw some of the smartest handling of canvas it has ever been given me to behold. As she came on the great, silken, light sails fluttered, shrank and disappeared as if by magic; her headway stopped and the screw ceased its throbbing. She was just like a grand, white bird folding its wings and going to sleep. But even before she had ceased to move a boat was overboard and four men were at the sweeps, pulling for shore. A few minutes later I was passing in front of Simpson & Co., the big ship-chandlers who were the *Chandernagore's* agents, when one of the clerks came out and ran towards me.

"Won't you come in?" he asked, excitedly. "There is the skipper of that white yacht that just came in who wants a doctor at once, and at any cost. We supplied that boat after she left dry-dock here, some weeks ago. She belongs to regular swells, awfully rich people."

"Is the man hurt or ill?" I asked.

"No, he's all right. There is sickness at a little outport, diphtheria, I hear, and they want a man at once. Money's no object."

It really seemed as if a bit of luck might be coming my way, at last. Indeed I wanted badly to see your dear face again, and that silver hair I think so beautiful, but here was a prospect of sailing away on that stunning little ship and of earning some badly needed money, so that I felt like whooping with joy. I leaped through the open door and saw a very gold-laced man who was talking very fast to the head of the firm.

"Here's just the man you want," said the latter. "He's a first-rate young chap who will go anywhere and do anything. His skipper of the *Chandernagore* swears by him. I can send for him, if you like."

"No time for that," interrupted the yacht's captain. "There is diphtheria at Sweetapple Cove, and a doctor there who is nearly dead with it, I believe. I've sent our mate for all the antitoxine he can buy, and he's driving around to all the druggists in the place. We also want a nurse, several nurses, all you can get. I'm keeping steam up and will start the minute you're ready."

"And the remuneration," suggested Mr. Simpson.

"Anything he wants to ask," said the captain, hurriedly, turning again to me; "just get a move on you, young man. Run off and get some nurses; promise any money they want to charge, and I won't wait over an hour."

He saw a cab passing in the street and ran out to hail it.

"Here," he said, "get into this thing and hunt for nurses."

In his excitement he actually pushed me out of the shop and I jumped in the cab, without the slightest idea of where I might find the desired nurses. At the nearest pharmacy, however, I obtained a couple of addresses. I 'phoned to the hospital but there was none there who could be spared. On following up my clues I found both nurses away on cases. More telephoning brought the information that several might be had in a day or two, and finally I called up Simpson & Co., who informed me that the skipper was tearing his hair at the delay.

"He says you're to return at once. You can kill the cab-horse if you want to. He'll pay for it."

These were the last words I heard. I dashed off to the little hotel where I stayed, for my trunk, and soon we were galloping along the peaceful streets, here and there encumbered by pony-carts laden with vast piles of codfish, and finally reached the chandlery.

"Well?" asked the captain, rushing out.

"Not a nurse to be had to-day," I announced. "To-morrow or next day several may be disengaged."

There was an ejaculation excusable under the circumstance and the skipper grabbed my arm.

"I won't wait a minute," he said. "I've got a doctor, that's the main thing, and all the antitoxine in the place. Come along."

We jumped in the cab, which drove off rapidly, and in a minute we reached the dock, where the yawl was waiting. Two of the men grabbed my trunk and put it on board and the skipper tossed a banknote to the driver, without waiting for change, and we were off.

The men pulled towards the yacht, and they must have been watching for us on board for I heard the clanking of the small donkey engine and the anchor-chain stiffened and began to draw in, fast. We scrambled on board, the trunk was tumbled in, and before the yawl was half way up to the davits we were steaming away.

"Come up on the bridge if you want to, Doctor," the captain called down to me, civilly.

I accepted his invitation and ran up the steps. At his side stood a grizzled old man with a seamed, kindly face and the wrinkled eyes of the men who spend their lives searching through fog and darkness.

"Good day, sor," he said to me. "You're a man as is real sore needed at Sweetapple Cove."

"I hope I may be of service," I answered.

"Ye will be, God willin'," he assured me.

By this time we had gathered full speed and were steaming fast between the narrow headlands. The pilot was dropped a little later, without slackening our way much. We had passed swiftly by the crowded flakes which clung to the steep, rocky shore, inextricably mixed with battered-looking fish-houses. As soon as we struck the swelling seas outside we saw many little smacks engaged in fishing. We bore no canvas, for the wind was against us on the return journey. Then I noticed that the skipper was looking anxiously ahead, where, at a distance, a low fog-pall was gathering.

"Yes, sor," said the old man, guessing at his thoughts, "it's a-comin' on real thick, but we's goin' ter pull her through."

I ran below and got my oilskins out of my trunk, which I discovered in a beautiful little state-room, prettily furnished and dainty-looking indeed to a surgeon of tramp steamers. I did not waste much time in inspecting it, however, as I was interested in our progress towards that ominous bank of fog. When I reached the bridge again I was conscious of the moist chill of northern mists, and saw that the vapor was closing down upon us fast. The land astern was disappearing in a grey haze, while ahead the thickness was becoming more and more impenetrable. The skipper kept walking from end to end of the bridge, restlessly, and I could sympathize with him. He was in a hurry, a deadly hurry, which he had shown plainly enough from the first moment my eyes had rested upon him, and now this mist was rendering all his haste futile, as far as I could see. Every moment now I expected to see him ring down to the engine room for reduced speed, but we kept on going, doggedly, blindly, until at last we were pitching over long, smooth swells that were covered by a blanket of murk.

"We'll have to slow down, Sammy!" he suddenly cried, impatiently, to the old man. "That fog's too much for us, and getting worse every minute."

"Keep on a bit yet," advised the latter. "'Tis all clear goin' fer a whiles, and we's too close inshore ter run into any big craft. They'll all be standin' out to sea."

I could see that the captain was torn between his keen desire to keep on speeding and his fear for the safety of his beautiful ship. He was utterly unable to keep still more than a minute at a time, but the old fisherman looked as cool and collected as if he had been puffing at his rank old pipe within the four walls of a house.

And those minutes seemed very long, then, as they always do when men are laden with the weight of constant suspense. Presently even the grey and blue waters our sharp bow was cleaving lost their color and the whole world was dismal, and grey, and dripping.

This went on for long hours, as it seemed to me, and finally the captain could stand it no longer.

"I'm going to ring for half speed," he shouted. "We can't keep this up, Sammy!"

"Let be, let be fer a whiles," the old man counselled again. "I knows jist where I be. I'll not be runnin' ye ashore, lad."

And the yacht kept on for a long, long time, cleaving the grey water and the fog, between which there was no difference now. It was really a spooky thing, even if a sporting one, to be dashing at fifteen knots through that wall of vapor. Our steam whistle was sounding constantly, and old Sammy listened with his grey head cocked to one side, in a tense attitude of constant attention.

"We's gettin' nigh," he said, quietly. "I knows the sound o' he."

Then, after a long, wailing blast, he suddenly lifted up his hand.

"Port a bit till I tells yer," he called. "That'll do. Keep her so."

The next sobbing cry of the siren brought a dull prolonged echo that reverberated in the air.

"I knowed we must be gettin' close to un," he said; "now we'll be havin' all open water again fer a whiles."

The captain was tremulous with the excitement he bravely sought to suppress, and my own heart was certainly in my throat. We were all straining our eyes at this moment, and all at once we dimly had revealed to us something like the

shadow of a great ghost-like mass that slipped by us, very fast, with a roar of the great swells bursting loudly at its foot.

"Thunder! you Sammy!" shrieked the skipper. "I won't have you taking such chances. I'm just as crazy to get there as you are but I'll be hanged if I'm going to smash my ship."

"We's all right now, Cap'en," answered the old man, quietly; "I sure knows all right what we is doin'."

The captain had taken the wheel, and he glared at his binnacle like a wild man. Now and then he gave a swift look around him, nervously, but the old man's assurance had some effect upon him. Yet once I heard him snarling:

"Any man who ever catches me cruising around this country again can have me locked up in an asylum. After I get shut of this job they can get some one else if they ever want to come back."

And still the fog seemed to deepen, and the moisture dripped from everything, and the very air seemed hard to breathe. The darkness began to come and all our lights were burning, while the siren continued to moan. Several times, in answer to it, we faintly heard mournful sounds of fishermen's horns, and once we blindly swerved just in time to avoid running down a tiny schooner.

"Beggin' yer pardon, sor," the old man said to me, "seem' as how ye ain't busy it might be yer wouldn't mind startin' a bit of prayer as how we don't smash up one o' them poor fellows. We jist got ter take some chances, fer I mistrust th' Lord he be wantin' ter save that doctor o' ours an' only needs be asked the right way."

We were now shooting through that fog like lost wild things, like the ducks and geese bewildered of a stormy night, which mangle themselves against the wire nettings of light houses. Now and then the land abeam would give forth response to the booming of our whistle. The old man Sammy had taken the wheel and his grim face was frozen into an expression of desperate energy, as his keen little grey eyes peered through the murk. By this time there was a heavy roll and our tall spars were slashing at the mist as if seeking to cut down an unseen enemy. Every man on board was under a nervous tension, conscious that a big thing was being done. For a time there had been something akin to fear in all our hearts, but after a while it left us, to make room for the delirium of blind, reckless speed.

And then, suddenly, like a flash, the captain grasped the old fellow's shoulder.

"Slow down, man," he shrieked. "I bet all I've got you don't know where you are, and I can hear waves breaking ashore."

But Sammy lifted up his hand, with an authority that seemed inspired, and gave another pull at the whistle cord. It brought forth a sound that was repeated, again and again, confusedly. For a frightfully long half minute we kept up our speed; then the bell jingled in the engine-room and we slowed down a little. Under the old fisherman's hands the wheel began to spin around while we breathlessly watched him aim the ship at the furious breakers inshore, at the foot of dark cliffs.

"For God's sake! What are you doing?" yelled the captain.

The bell rang in the engine room to slow down and suddenly, on both sides of us, appeared like devouring jaws great mass of rock upon which the huge rollers were crashing in a smother of spume. Between them the yacht slipped, gracefully, and this time the siren's shriek was like a victorious cry. The bell sounded again and the *Snowbird*, after her long swift flight, came to a stop between the hilly sides of Sweetapple Cove, where men's voices roared indistinctly at us, and their forms stood dimly revealed by twinkling lanterns.

And now, mother dear, I am writing at the bedside of a man lying in a poor little hut, whom I shall leave soon for a few hours of badly needed rest. I shall stop for the moment, but I have a great deal more to say.

CHAPTER XX

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Dearest Auntie:

It is again the little girl to whom you have been a mother for so many years who comes to you now, to lay her weary head upon your dear shoulder and seek from you the kindness and sympathy you have always so freely given me.

Last night I slept. Yes, slept like some dead thing that never cared whether it ever returned to life, but which would awaken, at times, stupidly, and toss until oblivion returned. I don't exactly know what it is that affects me so. It may be the long watching, I suppose, and the uneasiness of a heart that has lost its owner, and seeks and seeks again, turning for comfort like a poor lost dog to every face which may prove friendly. Just now things seem to be in such a dreadful tangle that I can not even find a thread of it that I can unravel.

Late in the evening, the day before yesterday, I was sitting by the bed where Dr. Grant was lying, and the conviction kept on growing upon me that he was becoming worse all the time. I could not help whispering my fears to Mr. Barnett, who gulped when he answered, as if he also knew what it is to have that dreadful lump in one's throat.

The long, weary hours dragged themselves along, and presently the doctor began to speak, and we bent forward to listen, because it was not very loud and he spoke fast. At first it was all a jumble of delirious words, but suddenly he looked at me and shook his head.

"My own poor darling," he said. "I am afraid that the sea has 'ketch'd' me, and that I shall never make that cove again."

Then he was still again, so very still that I was afraid, and the tears came and my head went down in my lap, between my hands, and the world became so full of bitterness that I did not feel as if I could stand it for another minute. The dear little parson put his hand on my shoulder, in that curiously gentle way of his.

"We must be strong," he told me, "and we must pray for power to endure."

He then rose, quietly, and moistened the doctor's lips and his brow while I looked on, feeling that I was the most desolate and helpless thing in the world, and as if I could weep for ever. And then all of a sudden, through the recurring booming voices of the waves breaking on the cliffs outside, burst out the shrill voice of the *Snowbird's* siren and I rushed to the door. Frenchy followed me, and I was so weak that I hung upon his big arm. In the sodden blur of everything I saw our boat coming in, like a great white ghost, and there were more blasts of her whistle. She knew what a welcome awaited her and how we had despaired of her arrival.

In the darkness I could see that people were rushing out of their houses, cheering, and I heard piercing cries of women.

"Th' white ship she've come back," some of them were screaming.

They were scrambling down towards the landing, just hoping that they might in some way be of service. The yacht had lost her headway but the propeller was still churning, and I could see that she was turning around to her mooring. Then I heard them putting the yawl overboard. Lights were breaking out of some of the fish-house windows, and lanterns

swung on the little dock, and at last I dimly saw the rowboat coming. I ran down also, with Frenchy, and met Stefansson.

"I got all of that stuff there was in St. John's," he said, "and this gentleman is the doctor. We hunted high and low for a nurse but couldn't get one right off."

But what cared I for nurses just then? Was I not ready to do all that a woman possibly could? Was there a nurse in the world as ready as I to lay down her very life for her patient?

I seized the doctor's hand. I had never been so glad in all my life to see any one. He looked just like a big boy, but he represented renewed hope, the possibility of the achievement of a longing so shrewd that it was a bitter pain to endure it.

"You are going to help us save him!" I cried.

"I will most gladly do all I possibly can," he answered, very simply and quietly.

These doctors are really very nice people, Aunt Jennie dear. They speak to you so hopefully, and there seems to be something in them that makes you feel that you want to lean upon them and trust them.

When I had a better look at this one he appeared to be really very young, and perhaps just a little gawky, and he wore the most appreciably store-clothes, and the funniest little black string of a neck-tie. Isn't it queer that silly things should enter one's head at such times? But he looked like a fine, strong, honest boy, and I liked him for coming, and when he smiled at me I really thought he had a very nice face, and one that gave one the impression that he knew things, too.

"Please hurry," I said. "Come with me quick. Dr. Grant is dying, you know. I am sure he is dying, but perhaps those things you have brought will make him well again."

"I hope so," answered that doctor boy, and together we ran up the path to that poor little hut that holds all the world for me, perhaps a dying world, like those I have been told are fading away in the heavens.

He wasn't a bit out of breath, though I was panting when we reached the shack. He cast a quick look about him, and just nodded briskly to Mr. Barnett, like a man who has no leisure for small talk. He first went up to the little boy's bed, and looked at the parson, enquiringly.

"He's getting better," said the latter.

At once the new doctor turned away and stood by John's bed. I must say John now, Auntie dear, just when you and I are talking together. Perhaps it will only be for a few hours, or a day or two, that he can be John to me, in my heart and soul, for after that he may be only a memory, a killing one, as I feel now.

For a moment he stood there, immobile, looking at John, noting that awful grey color, and the rapid, hard breathing that sometimes comes in little sobs. And then he felt the pulse, coolly, and counted the respirations, in so calm a way that I began to feel like shrieking to him to do something. But all this really took but a very short time. He went to the little table, on which a lamp was burning, rather dimly, and opened the package which contained all those vials they had brought from St. John's. Captain Sammy had just come in, and stood near the door, and he sought my eyes for some message of comfort, but I could only shake my head sadly.

"This lamp gives a very poor light," said Dr. Johnson.

At once the old man leaped out and sprinted towards the nearest neighbor's. There he dashed in, seized the lamp around which the family sat at their evening meal, and rushed out again, leaving them in total darkness. Of course it went out in the wind and had to be lighted again, and I noticed that the young doctor gave a calm, curious glance at me, and Frenchy, and that his eyes swiftly took in all of the poor, sordid, little place.

I stood in a corner, out of the way, for now it seemed to me that I was of very little moment. This man was going to do everything that really mattered, and I would only sit by the bed, afterwards, and watch, and try and do things to help.

Dr. Johnson filled a syringe with the antitoxine and injected the stuff in Dr. Grant's arm, which looked awfully white, and then he turned to me.

"You need not stay any longer, Miss Jelliffe," he said, civilly. "I shall watch him all night."

"You are not going to drive me away?" I cried.

Then he looked at me again, curiously, and there was a tiny little nod of his head, as if he had just understood something, after which he took the poor little chair and pushed it near the bed.

"Won't you sit down?" he said, so gently that my eyes filled with tears, and again everything was blurred as I blundered to the seat.

He did some other things, and mixed medicines that he took out of a black bag, and made John take some. After this he sat down on a wooden box, near me, and watched in silence, and I felt that he was a friend. Mr. Barnett left, promising to return soon, and we remained there, listening to the quick breathing, and dully hearing the long, low booming of the great waves outside, till I fancied they were saying things to me, which I could not understand.

After a time Susie came in.

"Yer father says won't you please come in an' have yer supper," she said. "I knows ye'd rather stay here, but there ain't no jobs folks kin do better starvin' than when they's had their grub. An' th' poor dear man wants yer that bad it makes me feel sorry fer him."

"You ought to go and have something to eat, and rest a little, Miss Jelliffe," said the doctor. "This young person appears to have some rather sensible ideas, and you can return whenever you want to."

So I rose, because it wasn't fair to poor old Dad to leave him alone all the time. Of course it was hurting me to leave, but it would also have hurt to think that he would be having his supper all alone, so sadly.

"You will let me know if..."

"Of course I will," interrupted the doctor boy. "You may depend on me. I'll send the big chap here over, if there is any change."

"You are very good," I said. "I think---I think you are a very nice doctor."

To my surprise he blushed just a little.

"Thank you," he said. "Thank you very much."

There was a smile on his face, and I think I managed to smile a little too, and then I went off with Susie.

"They is some o' th' old women as tells about love medicines as can make folks jist crazy fer one another," she said, as we walked away, rapidly. "Seems ter me 'twould be good enough if some o' them doctors found out some drug as worked t'other way. This bein' in love is harder'n the teethache, an' is enough ter make one feel like hopin' ter be an old maid."

"Perhaps it does, Susie," I assented.

"Come in," cried Dad, as I pushed the door open. "Glad to see you, Helen. I hope the poor chap's better. I just had Stefansson up here, and he says that old Sammy tried his best to drown them all and smash the yacht to kindling. But he admitted that the way the old fellow slapped her through was a marvel. But next year he's going back to racing boats; says he's had enough of cruising."

He looked at me, as I sank wearily in a chair, too tired to answer.

"What's the matter, daughter?" he asked. "You are not ill, are you?"

He rose and came towards me, his dear loving face full of concern, and I jumped up too and kissed him.

"That's my own dear little girl," he said, much comforted. "And---and Helen dear, I don't suppose you will want to sail to-morrow, will you, or in a day or two?"

There was something very pleading in his voice, it seemed to me.

"Perhaps in a day or two it won't---it won't matter much what I shall do, Daddy dear," I answered.

He took me and pressed me to his breast and I felt as if many years were passing away, and I was again the desolate little girl who used to come to him with her woes, when a kitten died or a doll was broken. He sat again in his armchair, and I rested on the arm.

"Let us talk as in the old days, girlie," he said. "Let us be the loving friends we've been all these years. I want to see you happy. Your happiness is the only thing in the world that really concerns me now. To obtain it for you I would spend my last cent and give the last drop of my blood. You believe me, don't you?"

"Indeed I do, Daddy dear," I answered. "I don't deserve such kindness. I'm afraid I am a very selfish girl."

"You haven't an atom of selfishness in you, Helen. You are a woman, a true, strong, loving woman. We shall remain here as long as you want to. Now that there is another doctor here I am not so much afraid for you. If Grant should---should not recover, your old Dad's love may comfort you. And if, as I earnestly hope, he does get well, then come to me and tell me what you want. It shall be yours, girlie, with all my love. That's what I wanted to say."

I slipped off the arm of the chair, and sat down at his feet, looking up at him, through the blur that was in my eyes.

"I---I hardly dare hope he will get well, Daddy," I said, "and---and I don't know yet whether he loves me or not. This evening, in his delirium, he called me his darling, but never before this has he ever said a word of love to me. He's just been a friend to me, Daddy, such a friend!"

"How can he help loving you?" said the dear old man.

But I did not answer, and for a time we remained in silence, watching the wood fire in the tiny chimney, until Susie came in.

"Th' kittle's biled," she announced. "Me cousin Hyatt he've brung some meat off'n the mash, an' I briled some."

"I'm not very hungry, Susie," I told her.

"Nor me neither, ma'am, with all them goin'-ons," she confided. "But what's th' use o' despisin' any of th' Lord's blessin's, specially when they gits kinder scarce?"

So Daddy and I had our supper together, very comfortably, and really I did manage to eat a little, because the thought struck me that a girl couldn't possibly be beyond all hope of comfort as long as she had such a Dad, and I did my best to be brave. But soon after we had finished I became very restless and nervous, and Dad looked at me and patted my hand.

"I expect you'd better run along, my dear," he told me. "But you must really try to have some rest to-night. If that doctor promised to sit up you might just as well have a little sleep. You mustn't be ill, you know, for we all need you too much for that."

So I kissed him and hurried back to the shack, overtaking Mr. Barnett, who was also going there. Frenchy met us at the door.

"Mebbe heem Docteur no die now, *hein!* Mebbe heem leeve now. I think heem no die. What you think?"

"We hope and pray he may get well, my good man," answered the parson.

We went in, and Dr. Johnson rose.

"I can see no change as yet," he said, "but then it is hardly possible that any should occur so soon. At any rate he is no worse."

So Mr. Barnett and I sat down by the bed, and Dr. Johnson went away for some supper; I am sure he must have been nearly starving.

"He's been muttering a good deal," said the doctor before leaving, "but that is of no very great moment. The important thing is to watch him to prevent his getting out of bed, if he should become excitable. We must have no undue strain on his weakened heart."

So the little parson and I sat quietly by the patient, who appeared to be sleeping, and for a long time there was no sound at all, and I think we dreaded to move lest the slightest noise might rouse him.

But after a time, so suddenly that it startled me, came the hoarse, low voice that was so painful to hear, and I bent further forward to listen. At first the words were disconnected, with queer interruptions, so that they possessed no meaning, but presently I was listening, breathlessly. He appeared to be giving orders.

"You, Sammy, cast away the lines! Look lively there! Time, time, time!" he muttered. Then he seemed to be waiting for something and began again.

"I told you to be ready! The years, do you hear me? You are wasting the years. She's good for sixty miles an hour and it will take forty million years to reach the nearest star, where Helen waits. Can't make it, you say? Don't I see her beckoning!"

Then he turned his head, slightly, as if he were addressing some one very near.

"One has to have patience," he said. "They don't understand, and their fingers are all thumbs, and the hawser is fouling my propeller, and Helen calls, and---and I can do nothing."

His head, that had been slightly uplifted, fell back again, and two great drops gathered in the dark, sunken eyes and slowly ran down the hollowed cheeks.

Mr. Barnett turned to me. In his eyes there was a strange look of apprehension, as when one awaits yet fears an answer. But there was nothing that I could say to him. My heart was beating as though ready to burst. I cared nothing then for the little man who stared at me, and sank on my knees beside my poor unconscious John, lifting his limp hand to my lips.

CHAPTER XXI

From Miss Helen Jelliffe to Miss Jane Van Zandt

Aunt Jennie, darling:

Isn't the world just the most wonderful place? No one knows it at all until after it has played battledore and shuttlecock with them, and they have been tossed to and fro for a long time. Weren't those old Persians wonderful people? Of course they had no means of knowing the real truth but it surely was the next thing to it to worship the dear sun. It goes away and leaves things dark and dismal, and there may be hail and sleet and rain, and the outlook is all dark, but presently the clouds move and the fog blows away and the path of light twinkles over the big ocean and the very grasses of the hillsides perk up and the birds try to split their little throats with song. They are all sun-worshippers.

Of course you want to know at once how it all came about. I am still shaky and uncertain, as if I had just been awakened. Sometimes I hardly believe that it is the real truth that I behold, but merely some vision that must pass away like the gold and the crimson of the fading day.

John is getting well! I feel that I want to shout it farther than the voice of man ever carried before. I wish that wonderful Marconi could set all these little waves he makes in the air to vibrating at once and carry over the whole world the tidings that my John is going to live! Of course there were a few very dreadful days, and some nights that were agony, and that nice little doctor lost his red cheeks and looked pale and wan, and of course I was very, very tired. That dear Mrs. Barnett or her husband were always with me, and no one could ever make Frenchy leave the place for a minute, and old Sammy hovered around constantly. The people walked about the tiny village as if it had been a town smitten by a great pestilence, as used to happen in those old dark ages. There have been no more cases, because the doctor has injected some of that stuff in the arms of all who had been in the slightest degree exposed, and it doesn't hurt very much, Aunt Jennie.

But the amazing day was the one upon which I arose, before dawn, because they had just forced me to go to bed the night before, and I hurried down to Frenchy's, in the keen cold air, and met Dr. Johnson who was quietly pacing the road and smoking his pipe, which must have been very bad for him so early in the morning. But then I think we have all lost count of hours. When he heard my steps he turned quickly, and his cheeks looked quite pink again, perhaps owing to the cold, and his eyes were just as bright as bright could be, and he just ran towards me. I think my hands began to shake,

for I had lost all memory of what a happy face looked like, I think, and the sight of his was like something that strikes one full in the chest and takes one's breath away.

He just grabbed both my hands, because he is such a nice friendly boy.

"Do you mean to tell me...." I began, but he interrupted me.

"Indeed I certainly do," he answered, speaking ever so quickly. "You had not been gone for more than a couple of hours when he opened his eyes and looked at me, very much puzzled, and made a little effort to rise, which of course I checked at once, though his pulse and temperature had gone down, and he looked a lot better.

"You just keep still, old man,' I told him. 'Now is just the time to look out for sudden heart failure, so you must keep still, and have a good swig of this stuff, and try and have a nap. You've given us a proper scare, I can tell you, but now you're right side up.'

"And would you believe it, Miss Jelliffe, that big Frenchman jumped off his bunk and stared at him, and then he grabbed me and kissed me on both cheeks as if I'd been another blessed frog-eater, and I wanted to punch his nose but compromised by shaking hands instead. I could just have danced a hornpipe. And by this time Dr. Grant has taken a whole lot of nourishment, and got a good deal of real sleep during the night, and now he's behaving first-rate. I left Frenchy sitting near him, a short time ago, and came out to smoke the pipe of peace with all the world."

"You have saved him!" I cried.

"Well, we've all helped," he said. "It really looks now as if he were quite out of danger, because there is an immense change for the better, and that's a whole lot. I'll just take a peep in now to see if he's awake, because we mustn't disturb him if he isn't."

He left me standing in front of the poor little building, within whose walls we all had spent such terrible hours, and went in on tiptoe. Frenchy came out in his stocking-feet, the most disheveled man you ever saw, and suddenly I felt as if I were about to fall, in spite of the joy his eyes betrayed, and I grasped his big, hairy arm. But I felt better in a moment. The immense newborn sun was rising out of the waters, a huge, great, blood-hued thing, and the sky was aflame at last---after the awful, somber days, and seemed to burst out with tidings of great joy, like that wondrous star in the East.

And then the little parson came trotting down the road, for he is the most active little man you ever saw, and when he looked into our faces he stretched out his hands, and we grasped them happily.

"Oh! Mr. Barnett," I told him. "Indeed, it seems too good to be true."

"Dear young lady," he said, "nothing is ever too good to be true."

He was looking far away at the flaming sky, as if beyond it he had been able to discern some wonderful vision. He surely believes in infinite goodness, Aunt Jennie. His whole life is based upon his trust in it, and it is very beautiful. His words carried with them a world of hope, and suddenly I felt as if some great blessing were perhaps hovering above, like the big, circling sea-birds, and might descend to me.

Then Dr. Johnson came out and greeted the little parson, who has taken a great liking to him. Despite the great, dark circles around his eyes, strained as they had been by so many weary hours of watching, the young man's face was merry and boyish, for all that it gives promise of splendid manliness, and it was good to see. As he came to us his steps showed

no signs of the fatigue he must have felt.

"He's awake," he announced. "He must have a great deal of rest and quiet just now, but I am sure your presence would give him pleasure, Miss Jelliffe. You won't let him talk very much, will you?"

"No," I promised, and could find no other words.

I moved towards the door, slowly, expecting the others to follow me, but they never stirred. It was as if by some common consent they had acknowledged some right of mine to enter alone. Suddenly my limbs began to drag under me, as if I had been a tottering, old woman. I wondered what his first look would say to me, what the first word from his lips would portend? It seemed as if I were going in there like one who sought some hidden treasure, knowing which door it lay behind but stricken with fear lest some unseen Cerberus might be crouching in wait for the rash seeker after happiness. Oh! Aunt Jennie! The tenseness of that moment! The feeling that, like the *Snowbird* a few days ago, I was moving through a fog-hidden world of peril!

My nails were dug into the palms of my hands as I entered the shack, and his head turned slowly as I came in, and in his eyes I saw the confession his babbling had revealed to me. But then an expression of pain came also, that made me involuntarily look at Frenchy's little crucifix on the wall.

So I just kneeled down by him, and once more took that poor thin hand within my own. I spoke very low, and in such a shaky voice, but very quick, for fear I might not be able to continue.

"Don't give up hope," I said. "We despaired for so many long days, and now you are getting well again, and the dear sun is rising from the mists, and the world is very beautiful, and I long to make it more beautiful for you."

I saw two big tears gathering in the corners of the poor sunken eyes, and the long white hand pressed mine, weakly, and that mark of the pangs of the crucified passed away.

"You must lie very still," I continued, "and let us make you well and strong again, for you've made dear Sweetapple Cove now, after being nearly 'ketched' by those dreadful seas, and I know that our little ship is coming safely to port."

For a moment he could only close his eyes, as if the poor, little, dawning light that was beginning to come through the windows had been too bright for him, but his hand pressed mine again. Then he looked at me once more, eagerly, as if he longed for other words of mine.

"No," I said. "One mustn't talk too much to people who have been so dreadfully ill, and really I can say nothing more now. Indeed I have said all I could, because a woman can't let her happiness fly away on account of--of people who are too proud to speak, but--but you can whisper a word or two."

There were three of them that came from his lips, those three thrilling words I had despaired of ever hearing from him.

"And I also love you, John, with all my heart and soul," I answered.

Then we were very still for some time, and presently some one coughed rather hard outside, and fumbled with the door, and the nice doctor boy came in.

"I mustn't allow you people to talk too long," he said. "It is time he had a good drink of milk, and after that he must have some more sleep, and we'll have him topside up in no time."

Then Mr. Barnett came in too, but he never said a word. There was just a glance, a pressure of hands, and that was all, but it seemed to mean ever so much to them.

So after a short time I went away, and the bright sun was streaming down upon our poor, little, smelly Sweetapple Cove, that was really like a corner of Paradise.

And now, Aunt Jennie, several more days have gone by, and John is getting stronger and stronger every hour.

Yesterday, for the first time, he sat up in a long deck chair that had been brought up from the *Snowbird*, and I sat beside him, with my knitting, which was only a pretence, for it lay on my lap, idly. It seemed to me that I had a million things to talk about, but when I spoke he answered in brief little weary words, so that I became afraid I might tire him. There is no porch to the little house, so he sat indoors in front of the widely opened door, whence he could see the cove, glittering in the sunshine, and the flakes covered with the silver-grey fish that were drying.

We remained in silence for a long time, and my hand rested on his, that was stretched out on the arm of the chair. Then he turned to me.

"Dearest," he said, "I am but sorry company for you, after all these days of devoted attention on your part."

"You are my own dear John," I answered. "I wish---I wish I knew that you were as happy as I."

"Listen, Helen," he said. "There is something that you must know."

And then, slowly, he told me a tale that began with his boyhood. There was a little girl, and he was very fond of her, and many times he told her she must be his little wife. And always she assented, so that gradually, as the years went by, it had become a habit of his mind to think of the days to come, when they would be married. Then he had gone away to a little college. When he returned for the holidays he always saw her again, but when he spoke of marrying her she blushed, and was timid, for she was passing away from childhood. In later days he saw less of her, but he always wrote long letters to his little comrade. After a few years he went abroad to study, but they corresponded often, telling of their plans and ambitions. One day he heard that she was going to New York to become a trained nurse, and he had finished his work abroad, so he took a steamer and went there too. On the days when she was at liberty for a few hours he met her, and those ideas of his boyhood became stronger than ever, and he asked her to marry him. Her reply was that they were too young yet and that they must wait, for she had no idea of becoming married for the present, because there were many things she wanted to do, and while she was ever so fond of him as a friend she did not think she loved him, though some day she might. But he had always thought it would be just a matter of time, for he had considered it a settled thing. Then he had come to Sweetapple Cove, and written to her often, for he expected her to return to Newfoundland soon. Her letters came rather seldom, for she was working very hard.

"And now, when she comes," he continued, "I shall have to tell her it was all a ghastly mistake on my part. I shall have to tell her the truth, brutally, frankly. I will have to say that I really never loved her; that it was a boy's idea that continued into a man's thoughts, until one day he realized that he loved another woman."

"But she really never loved you, John," I exclaimed. "If she had she never would have allowed you to go away."

"I hope to God she never did!" he exclaimed. "But in those old days I asked her to be my wife, and I told her I would wait for her. And she has always been very fond of me, at least as a good friend, and---and---who knows? I hate the idea that I must perhaps inflict pain upon her, some day."

But I shook my head, obstinately.

"No, she never loved you," I insisted. "I know now how people love. It is a desire to cling to one, to be ever with him, to share with him toil, and pain, and hunger, joyfully, happily, for all the days and days to come. And when you have to leave me I shall be restless and nervous, like that poor dear Mrs. Barnett, until you come back and I can be glad again. Oh! John! That girl never loved you!"

Just then the little parson's wife came up, smilingly as ever.

"Are you two having lover's quarrels already?" she asked.

"No," I answered, "I was explaining to him that no other woman ever could---or---or ever would...."

"Oh! My dear," she interrupted, "the explanation of obvious things is one of the most delightful privileges of the engaged state, and I won't interrupt you any more. I'm going to see the new Burton baby, and, by the way, here is a lot of stuff for Dr. Grant, that has been accumulating. I suppose he may be allowed to show a faint interest in his mail, at least after his nurse leaves him. Good-by, you dear children."

She put a large bundle of papers and letters in John's lap, and went away, waving her hand cheerily. John didn't pay the slightest attention to his correspondence at first, for we began to discuss some plans we were making for a little house, but after a few moments he idly turned over the medical papers, and the pamphlets and circulars, and suddenly his eyes fell on a letter, that was addressed in big bold characters.

I knew at once that it was from that girl, and a little shudder came over me. I rose and walked away towards Frenchy's child, who was now well and playing with a long-suffering woolly pup, and began to talk to him. But all the time I was watching and listening. I suppose one can't help doing such things. Then I heard him calling me, and I hurried back.

He held the letter out to me.

"Read it, Helen?" he asked me.

"Please," I said, "just tell me about it. It is her own letter, John, and meant for you only."

"She tells me I have been the best friend a girl ever had, and that if she gives me pain it will not be without a pang on her own part. She says that the object of her being on earth is now revealed to her."

"Yes," I answered, "and then...."

"Then she announces her coming marriage with Dr. Farquhar, the man who has been in charge of the medical work of the Settlement."

"You must write and tell her how happy you are to hear the good news, John, and you must tell her our plans. And I want to talk very seriously to you, John."

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"Well," I said, "I want to say that you have been very bad, because you didn't believe me, or you only believed a little bit, when I told you she didn't love you. Now I expect you to have a great deal of respect for my opinions, in future."

He promised, and said I was perfectly wonderful, and that he was the happiest man in the world. And then, Aunt Jennie, we sat again ever so long without saying more than a few words. And the stillness was like bars of a wonderful music whose notes one can't remember but which leaves in one's heart an impression of glorious melody. One can't write of such things, for I am sure that ink never flowed from a pen able really to describe that which lies in the hearts of men and women at such times.

And then Daddy came, smiling all over, for he spoke the truth indeed when he said my happiness was his only concern. He's the dearest Daddy in all the world.

CHAPTER XXII

Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Charlotte Johnson

Dearest Mother:

You will rejoice to know that your son is now a happy man. At one time the wrecking of the old *Chandernagore* bade fair to make me despair of ever being able to justify the sacrifices you underwent to help me with my education. And now things look so bright and splendid that I can scarcely believe the marvelous luck that has befallen me.

Dr. Grant is strong and well again. He is a fine fellow who has been doing great work in this place, and I have actually been chosen to continue it during his absence of a few months. Mr. Jelliffe and he sent for me, a few days ago, after I returned from a trip to a near outport to see a sick woman, and asked me if I were willing to undertake it. They also said that they were about to build a small hospital here, and that there would doubtless be work enough for two men during most of the year. They offered me a steady compensation sufficient to mean surcease from worry and an opportunity to take a little care of you at last. And the best part of it all lies in the character of the work, which is a fine one, and in the delightful people I shall be associated with. Mrs. Barnett is a woman whom you would dearly love, and her husband is of the pick of men. Dr. Grant will spend the greater part of the year here, and Sweetapple Cove is bustling with the changes that are taking place. A big schooner-load of lumber has just arrived, with a few workmen, to begin at once rearing the new hospital and the house the Grants are to build for themselves.

I am alone now, for the beautiful *Snowbird* has gone away, followed by fervent wishes for her safe journey home.

Very early yesterday little two-masted smacks began to arrive from neighboring outports, and the tiny harbor was crowded with them. They fluttered out all their poor little bits of bunting, gaily, and the visitors wore their best clothes. I doubt if so great a holiday ever took place before in this part of the island. The *Snowbird*, from bowsprit to topmasts, and down again to the end of the long main-boom, was bright with waving signals and pennants.

The people were crowding on the little road, to see the bride come forth on the arm of her father. Visions had come to me of her all in white, as all brides were clad whom I have ever seen before. But she appeared in her garments of every day, as if she needed no finery to make her more beautiful in the eyes of all. You should have seen her, little mother! A wonderful woman indeed, straight and fairly tall, with frank, friendly eyes that always look straight at one. Her voice has also notes that can be of exquisite tenderness, as I heard them in that poor little hut of Frenchy's. Her hair is a great, fine, chestnut mass in which are blended the most perfect hues of auburns and rich browns. And withal she is exquisitely simple in her manner, utterly unaffected, and her laughter carries joy with it into the hearts of others. The people here simply adore her, from the youngest child to the most tottering old dame. And I am sure they love her not only for herself but also in gratitude for the happiness she is bestowing upon a man who has long ago made his way into their hearts.

She had insisted upon being married in this humble village, among the fishermen who had learnt to cherish her and her husband-to-be, and when we reached the little church it was already full to overflowing. People stood on tiptoe at the open windows, and crowded at the door. We all stood when she arrived with Mr. Jelliffe, and she walked to the little altar with smiles and friendly nods to all.

And then the service began, and Mr. Barnett was manifestly pale with emotion. At first his voice was just the least bit husky, but soon it cleared as the majestic words fell from his lips.

I sat near Mrs. Barnett, who wept a little. I could understand this, mother, for there was something that moved one's heart in the beholding of that man and that woman, who had never given others aught but the best of themselves, preparing to continue hand in hand to make the world more beautiful for others.

It was over very soon and the two walked down the aisle. Old Sammy rushed out and waved his arms frantically towards the cove, whereupon the little brass gun boomed and the flag saluted, as if the *Snowbird* also thrilled with the general rejoicing.

Dr. Grant and his wife stepped out into the road, which passes by the door of the little church. The wedding reception was held there, for the Cove has no walls capable of holding all their friends. Mrs. Barnett, who had come out upon my arm, was the first to kiss the bride, but other women were thus favored, even poor decrepit old things in whose houses she had carried the sunshine of her presence.

Susie Sweetapple, worthy descendant of the earliest settler, stood modestly to one side, with a very red nose, for she had been weeping copiously.

"Are you not going to kiss me also, Susie?" asked her mistress.

The little servant came forth, with shining red eyes showing utmost delight, and was kissed affectionately. When she retired, to make room for others, I heard her speaking to her old mother.

"Belike I'll not be washin' me face fer a month now. I'll not be wantin' ter scrub that kiss away."

Then I noticed that the bride was searching the crowd, and appeared to be disappointed because some one was missing! Finally she discovered that Frenchman Yves, who watched so endlessly and devotedly for days and days, and beckoned to him.

He came forward, timidly, and the glorious young woman stretched out her hands to him. His own trembled as he took them.

"*La Sainte Vierge vous benisse*" he said.

She thanked him, sweetly, as she does all things, and lifted his little boy up in her arms, and kissed him, tenderly.

"*Je vous aime*" declared the little chap.

"What's th' laddie sayin'?" a man asked me.

"He says he loves her," I answered.

"We all does that," he cried. "We all loves every hair o' th' heads o' they."

Finally the crowd moved down towards the cove. The flakes that had been deserted, that morning, became tenanted again by an eager crowd, and on the sharply slanted roofs of the little fish-houses some boys secured precarious perches.

The yacht had been warped to the little dock, and there was a gangplank over which our three dear friends went on board. There was a good deal more of fervent handshaking, and the plank was withdrawn. The siren shrieked its farewell as the ship began to move, and the little gun saluted the Cove.

She moved out, slowly increasing her speed, and her great white wings began to unfold since, once outside, the breeze alone would carry them. On the rocks at the entrance stood men with heavy sealing guns, whose crashing detonations thundered a farewell. The bits of bunting ran up and down the masts of the little schooners at anchor, and everywhere gaily colored handkerchiefs were fluttering.

And so she headed out into the open sea, growing dimmer in the haze of the glorious day, until she passed out of our vision, bearing away the love and blessings of Sweetapple Cove.

THE END