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Author: Mary E. Waller

Illustrator: Arthur Ignatius Keller

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"What a wilderness was this Seigniory of Lamoral! and yet—I liked it." FRONTISPIECE. *See Page 92.*

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A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS

BY

MARY E. WALLER

Author of "The Wood-carver of 'Lympus," "Flamsted Quarries," "A Year Out of Life," etc.

WITH FRONTISPIECE IN COLOR BY
ARTHUR I. KELLER

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BOOK ONE

THE JUGGERNAUT

A Cry in the Wilderness

I

"You Juggernaut!"

That's exactly what I said, and said aloud too.

I was leaning from the window in my attic room in the old district of New York known as "Chelsea"; both hands were stemmed on the ledge.

"You Juggernaut of a city!" I said again, and found considerable satisfaction in repeating that word. I leaned out still farther into the sickening September heat and defiantly shook my fist, as it were into the face of the monster commercial metropolis of the New World.

I felt the blood rush into my cheeks—thin and white enough, so my glass told me. Then I straightened myself, drew back and into the room. The quick sharp clang of the ambulance gong, the clatter of running hoofs sounded below me in the street.

"And they keep going under—so," I said beneath my breath; and added, but between my teeth:

"But *I* won't—I *won't*!"

Turning from the window, I took my seat at the table on which was a pile of newspapers I kept for reference, and searched through them until I found an advertisement I remembered to have seen a week before. I had marked it with a blue pencil. I cut it out. Then I put on my hat and went down into the city that lay swooning in the intense, sultry heat of mid-September.

The sun, dimmed and blood red in vapor, was setting behind the Jersey shore. The heated air quivered above the housetops. Wherever there was a stretch of asphalt pavement, innumerable hoof-dents witnessed to the power of the sun's rays. The shrivelled foliage in the parks was gray with dust.

I knew well enough that on the upper avenues for blocks and blocks the houses were tightly boarded as if hermetically sealed to light and air; but I was going southward, and below and seaward every door and window yawned wide. To the rivers, to the Battery, to the Bridge, the piers, and the parks, the sluggish, vitiated life of the city's tenement districts was crawling listless. The tide was out; and I knew that beneath the piers—who should know better than I who for six years had taken half of my recreation on them?—the fetid air lay heavy on the scum gathered about the slime-covered piles.

The advertisement was a Canadian "want", and in reading it an overpowering longing came upon me to see something of the spaciousness of that other country, to breathe its air that blows over the northern snow-fields. I had acted on an impulse in deciding to answer it, but that impulse was only the precipitation of long-unuttered and unfilled desires. I was realizing this as I made my way eastward into one of the former Trinity tenement districts.

I found the flag-paved court upon which the shadows were already falling. It was not an easily discoverable spot, and I was a little in doubt as to entering and inquiring further; I didn't like its look. I took out the advertisement; yes, this was the place: "No. 8 V—— Court."

"Don't back down now," I said to myself by way of encouragement and, entering, rang the bell of an old-fashioned house with low stoop and faded green blinds close shut in sharp contrast to the gaping ones adjoining. The openly neglected aspect of its neighbors was wanting, as was, in fact, any indication of its character. Ordinarily I would have shunned such a locality.

The door was opened by a woman apparently fifty. Her strong deeply-lined face I trusted at once.

"What do you want?" The voice was business-like, neither repellent nor inviting.

"I 've come in answer to this," I said, holding out the clipping. The woman took it.

"You come in a minute, till I get my glasses."

She led the way through a long, unlighted hall into a back room where the windows were open.

"You set right down there," she said, pushing me gently into a rocking-chair and pressing a palm-leaf fan into my hand, "for you look 'bout ready to drop."

She spoke the truth; I was. The sickening breathlessness of the air, nine hours of indoor work, and little eaten all day for lack of appetite, suddenly took what strength I had when I started out.

As the woman stood by the window reading the slip in the fading light, my eyes never left her face. It seemed to me—and strangely, too, for I have always felt my independence of others' personal help—that my life itself was about to depend on her answer.

"Yes, this is the place to apply; but now the first thing I want to know is how you come to think you 'd fit this place? You don't look strong."

"Oh, yes, I am;" I spoke hurriedly, as if a heavy pressure that was gradually making itself felt on my chest were forcing out the words; "but I haven't been out of the hospital very long—"

"What hospital?"

"St. Luke's."

"What was the matter with you?"

"Typhoid pneumonia with pleurisy."

"How long was you there?"

"Ten weeks, to the first of July; I've been at work since—but I want to get away from here where I can breathe; if I don't I shall die."

There was a queer flutter in my voice. I could hear it. The woman noticed it.

"Ain't you well?"

"Oh, yes, I am, and want work—but away from here."

There must have been some passionate energy left in my voice at least, for the woman lifted her thick eyebrows over the rim of her spectacles.

"H'm—let's talk things over." She drew up a chair in front of me. "I won't light up yet, it's so hot. I guess we 'll get a tempest 'fore long."

She sat down, placing her hands on her knees and leaning forward to look more closely at my face. I seemed to see her through a fog, and passed my hand across my eyes to wipe it away.

"There 's no use beating 'round the bush when it comes to business," she said bluntly but kindly; "I 've got to ask you some pretty plain questions; the parties in this case are awful particular."

"Yes." I answered with effort. The fog was still before my eyes.

"You see what it says." She began to read the advertisement slowly: "'Wanted: A young girl of good parentage, strong, and country raised, for companion and assistant to an elderly Scotchwoman on a farm in Canada, Province of Quebec. Must have had a common school education. Apply at No. 8 V—— Court, New York City.' You say you 've been in St. Luke's?"

"Yes."

"Did you know the one they call Doctor Rugvie there? He 's the great surgeon."

"No, I don't know him; but I 've heard so much of him. He was pointed out to me once when I was getting better."

"Well, by good rights you ought to be applying for this place to him."

"To him?" I asked in surprise. I could n't make this fact rhyme in connection with this woman and Canada.

"Yes, to him; I'm only a go-between he trusts. He 's in Europe now and is n't coming home till late this year, so he left this with me," she indicated the advertisement, "and told me not to put it in till a week ago. I ain't had many applications. Folks in this city don't take to going off to a farm in Canada, and those I 've had would n't have suited. But, anyway, Doctor Rugvie is reference for this place that's advertised, and I guess he 's good enough for anybody. I thought I 'd tell you this to relieve your mind. 'T ain't every girl would come down here to this hole looking for a place.—Where was you born?"

"Here in New York, but I have lived most of my life in the country, northern New England, just this side of the Canada line. I 've been here seven years, five in the Public Library; that's my reference."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-six next December—the third."

"I would n't have thought it. Mother living?"

"No; she died when I was born."

"Any father?"

"I—I don't know whether my father is living or not."

I began to wish I had n't come here to be questioned like this; yet I knew the woman was asking only what was necessary in the circumstances. I feared my answers would seal my fate as an applicant.

"What was your father's name?"

"I don't know." Again I caught the sound of that strange flutter in my voice. "I never knew my father."

"Humph! Then your mother wasn't married, I take it."

The statement would have sounded heartless to me except that the woman's voice was wholly businesslike, just as if she had asked that question a hundred times already of other girls.

"Oh, yes—yes, she was."

"Before you was born?"

"Yes."

"What was her husband's name then?"

"Jackson."

"Christian name?"

"George."

"Jackson—Jackson—George Jackson." The woman repeated the name, dwelling upon it as if some memory were stirred in the repetition. "And you say you don't know who your father was?"

"No—". I could n't help it—that word broke in a half hysterical sob. I kept saying to myself: "Oh, why did I come—why did I come?"

"Now, look here, my dear," and it seemed as if a flood of tenderness drowned all those business tones in her voice, "you stop right where you are. There ain't no use my putting you into torment this way, place or no place—Doctor Rugvie wouldn't like it; 't ain't human. If you can tell me all you know, and want to, just you take your own time,"—she laid a hand on my shoulder,—"and if you don't, just set here a while till the tempest that's coming up is over, and I 'll see you safe home afterwards. You ain't fit to be out alone if you are twenty-six. You don't look a day over twenty. There 's nothing to you."

She leaned nearer, her elbows on her knees, her chin resting in her palms. I tried to see her face, but the fog before my eyes was growing thicker, the room closer; her voice sounded far away.

"See here—will it make it any easier if I tell you I 've got a girl consider'ble older than you as has never known her father's name either? And that there ain't no girl in New York as has a lovinger mother, nor a woman as has a lovinger daughter for all that?"

I could not answer.

A flash of red lightning filled the darkening room. It was followed by a crash of thunder, a rush of wind and a downpour as from a cloud-burst. I saw the woman rise and shut both windows; then for me there was a blank for two or three minutes.

She told me afterwards that when she turned from the window, where she stood watching the rain falling in sheets, she saw me lying prone beside her chair. I know that I heard her talking, but I could not speak to tell her I could.

"My gracious!" she ejaculated as she bent over me, "if this don't beat all! Jane," she called, but it sounded far away, "come here quick. Here, help me lift this girl on to the cot. Bring me that camphor bottle from the shelf; I 'll loosen her clothes.—Rub her hands.—She fell without my hearing her, there was such an awful crash.—Light the lamp too...

"There now, she's beginning to come to; guess 't was nothing but the heat after all, or mebbe she 's faint to her stomach; you never can tell when this kind 's had any food. Just run down and make a cup of cocoa, but light the lamp first—I want to see what she 's like."

I heard all this as through a thick blanket wrapped about my head, but I could n't open my eyes or speak. The woman's voice came at first from a great distance; gradually it grew louder, clearer.

"Now we 'll see," she said.

She must have let the lamplight fall full on my face, for through my closed and weighted lids I saw red and yellow. I felt her bend over me; her breath was on my cheek. Still I could not speak.

"She 's the living image," I heard her say quite distinctly; "I guess I 've had one turn I shan't get over in a hurry."

I found myself wondering what she meant and trying to lift my eyelids. She took my hand; I knew she must be looking at the nails.

"She 's coming round all right—the blood 's turning in her nails." She took both my hands to rub them.

I opened my eyes then, and heard her say: "Eyes different."

Then she lifted my head on her arm and fed me the cocoa spoonful by spoonful.

"Thank you, I 'm better now," I said; my voice sounded natural to myself, and I made an effort to sit up. "I 'm so sorry I 've made you all this trouble—"

"Don't talk about trouble, child; you lay back against those pillows and rest you. I 'll be back in a little while." She left the room.

II

When she returned, shortly after, I had regained my strength. She found me with my hat on and sitting in the rocking-chair. The woman drew up her own, and began in a matter-of-fact voice:

"Now we 'll proceed to business. I 've been thinking like chain lightning ever since that clap of thunder, and I can tell you the storm 's cleared up more 'n the air. I ain't the kind to dodge round much when there 's business on hand. Straight to the point is the best every time; so I may as well tell you that this place,"—she held out the advertisement,—"is made for you and you for the place, even if you ain't quite so strong as you might be."

I felt the tension in my face lessen. I was about to speak, but the woman put out her hand, saying:

"Now, don't say a word—not yet; let me do the talking; you can have your say afterwards, and I 'll be only too glad to hear it. But it's laid on me like the Lord's hand itself to tell you what I 'm going to. It 'll take long in the telling, but if you go out to this place, you ought to know something why there is such a place to go to, and to explain that, I 've got to begin to tell you what I 'm going to. You 're different from the others, and it's your due to know. I should judge life had n't been all roses for you so far, and if you should have a few later on, there 'll be plenty of thorns—there always is. So just you stand what I 'm going to tell you. This was n't in the bargain when I told Doctor Rugvie I 'd see all the applicants and try to get the right one,—but I can make it all right with him. It's a longer story than I wish 't was, but I 've got to begin at the beginning.

"And begin with myself, too, for I was country raised. Father and mother both died when I was young, and I brought myself up, you might say. I come down here when I was nineteen years old, and it wasn't more 'n a year 'fore I found myself numbered with the outcasts on this earth—all my own fault too. I 've always shouldered the blame, for a woman as has common sense knows better, say what you 've a mind to; but the knowledge of that only makes green apples sourer, I can tell you.

"I mind the night in December, thirty years ago, when I found myself in the street, too proud to beg, too good to steal. There was n't nothing left—nothing but the river; there 's always enough of that and to spare. So I took a bee line for one of the piers, and crouched down by a mooring-post. I 'd made up my mind to end it all; it did n't cost me much neither. I only remember growing dizzy looking down at the foam whirling and heaving under me, and kinder letting go a rope I 'd somehow got hold of...

"The next thing I knew I was hearing a woman say:

"'You leave her to me; she'll be as quiet as a lamb now.' She put her arms around me. 'You poor child,' she said, 'you come along with me.' And I went.

"Well, that woman mothered me. She took in washing and ironing in two rooms on Tenth Avenue. She never left me night or day for a week running till my baby come. And all she 'd say to me, when I got sort of wild and out of my head, was:

"'You ain't going to be the grave of your child, be you?' And that always brought me to myself. I was so afraid of murdering the child that was coming. That's what she kept saying:

"'You ain't going to be so mean as not to give that innercent baby a chance to live! Just you wait till it comes and you 'll see what life 's for. 'T ain't so bad as you think, and some folks make out; and that child has a right to this world. You give it the right, and then die if you think it's best.' So she kept at me till my baby come, and then—why, I got just fierce to live for its sweet little sake.

"'Bout six months after that I got religion—never mind how I got it; I got it, that's the point, and I 've held on to it ever since. And when I 'd got it, the first thing I did was to take my baby in my arms and go down to that pier, clear out to the mooring-post, and kneel right down there in the dark and vow a vow to the living God that I 'd give my life to saving of them of His poor children who 'd missed their footing, and trying to help 'em on to their feet again.

"And I 've kept it; brought my girl right up to it too. She 's been my mainstay through it all these last ten years. I took in washing and ironing in the basement of this very house,—my saving angel helped me to work,—and when it was done, late at night between eleven and twelve, I 'd go down to the rivers, sometimes one, sometimes t' other, and watch and wait, ready to do what come in my way.

"At first the police got on to my track thinking something was wrong; but it took 'bout two words to set 'em right, as it did every other man that come near me; and soon I went and come and no questions asked.

"One night I 'd been down to one of the North River piers. It was in December, and a howling northeaster had set in just before sundown. It was sleeting and snowing and blowing a little harder than even I could stand. I had just crossed the street from the pier and was thanking God, as I covered my head closer with my shawl, that, so far as I knew, no one of His children was tired of living, when something—I did n't see what for I was bending over against the wind—went by me with a rush, and I thought I heard a groan. I turned as quick as a flash, and see something dark running, swaying, stumbling across the street, headed for the pier. That was enough for me.

"I caught up my skirt and give chase. How the woman, for it was one, could get over the ground so fast was a mystery, except that she was running with the wind. She was on to the pier in no time. I cried 'Stop!' and 'Watch!' I don't think she heard me. Once she nearly fell, and I thought I had her I was so close to her; but she was up and off again before I could lay hand on her. Then I shouted; and the Lord must have lent me Gabriel's trump, for the woman turned once, and when she see me she threw out her hands and fairly flew.

"The Sound steamer had n't gone out, the night was so thick and bad, and the cabin lights alongside shone out bright enough for me to mark her as she dodged this way and that trying to get to the end of the pier.

"She knew I was after her, and I was n't going to give up. But when I see the make-fast, and all around it the yeasting white on water as black as ink, and she standing there with her arms up ready to jump, my knees knocked together. Somehow I managed to get hold of her dress—but she did n't move; and all of a sudden, before I could get my arms around her, she dropped in a heap, groaning: 'My child—my child—'

"I 've always thought 't was then her heart broke.

"A deck-hand on the steamer heard me screech, and together we got her on the floor of the lower deck. We did what we could for her, and when she 'd come to, they got me a hack and I

took her home, laid her on my bed, and sent the hackman for Doctor Rugvie. He 's been my right-hand man all these years. He stayed with her till daylight. He told me she 'd never come through alive; the heart action was all wrong.

"After he 'd gone, she spoke for the first time and asked for some paper and a pencil. I propped her up on the pillows, and all that day between her pains she was writing, writing and tearing up. Towards night she grew worse. I asked her name then, and if she had any friends. She looked at me with a look that made my heart sink; but she give me no answer. About six, she handed me a slip of paper—'A telegram,' she said, and asked me if I would send it right off. I could n't leave her, but when the Doctor come about eight, I slipped out and sent it. The name on it was the one you say was your mother's husband's and the message said:

"'I am dying and alone among strangers. Will you come to me for the sake of my child,' and she give me the address.

"Come here, my dear," said the woman suddenly to me. I was staring at her, not knowing whether I drew breath or not; "come here to me."

I rose mechanically. The woman drew me down upon her knee and put her two strong arms about me. I knew I was in the presence of revelation.

"At midnight her child, a girl, was born—the third of December just twenty-six years ago. Doctor Rugvie fought for her life, but he could n't save her. At one she died—of a broken heart and no mistake, so the Doctor said. She refused to give him her name and he left her in peace—that's his way. But before she died she give him an envelope which she filled with some things she 'd been writing in the afternoon, and said:

"'Keep them—for my daughter. I trust you.'

"Oh, my dear, my dear, the sorrow in this God's earth! I ain't got used to it yet and never shall. That dying face was like an angel's. Doctor Rugvie said he 'd never seen the like before. She spoke only once to him in all her agony, then she said: 'The little life that is coming is worth all this—all—all.'

"The next morning there come a telegram from somewhere in New England—I forget where—'Will be with you at two.'

"And sure enough, a little after two, a young feller come to the door. He did n't look more 'n twenty, but it seemed from his face as if those twenty years had done something to him 't would generally take a man's lifetime to do, and said he 'd come to claim her who was his wife. That's just what he said, no more, no less: 'I've come to claim her who was my wife. Where is she?' And he give me the telegram.

"It was 'bout the hardest thing I 've ever had to do, but I had to tell him just as things was. I thought for a minute he was going to fall he shook so; but he laid hold of the door-jamb and, straightening himself, looked me square in the eye just as composed as Doctor Rugvie himself, and says:

"'In that case I have come to claim the body of her who was my wife.'

"Those are his very words. I took him into the back room and left 'em alone together. I did n't dare to say a word for his face scairt me.

"When he come out he said he would relieve me of all further responsibility, which I took pains to inform him included a day-old baby, thinking that would fetch some explanation from him. But he did n't seem to lay any weight on *that* part of it. He made all the arrangements himself, and I took a back seat. I see I was n't any more necessary to him than if I had n't been there. He went out for an hour and come back with a nurse; and at six that afternoon he drove away in a hack with her and the baby, an express cart with the body following on behind.

"I told him the last thing 'fore he went that his wife had given an envelope with some papers to Doctor Rugvie, and that they were for his child. He turned and give me a look that was beyond me. I never could fathom that look! It said more 'n any living human being's look that I ever see—if only I could have read it! But he never spoke a word, not even a word of thanks—not that I was expecting or wanted any after seeing his face as he stood hanging on to the door-jamb. I knew then he did n't really see me nor anything else except the body of his wife somewhere in that basement. He did everything as if he 'd been a machine instead of a human being; and when I see him drive off I did n't know much more 'n I did when I took the woman in, except that she was married."

She was silent. I drew a long breath.

"Is that all you know?" I felt I could not be left so, suspended as it were over the abyss of the unknown in my life.

She sighed. "My dear, this great city is full of just such mysteries that no human being can fathom. I, for one, don't try to. I can only lend a helping hand, and ask no questions; 't ain't best.

Well, I 've been talking a blue streak for a half an hour, but I 've had to. When you laid there on the cot, you was the living image of that other, only thinner, smaller like. You told me you was born in this city twenty-six years ago come the third of next December; that you did n't know who your father was, but that your mother was married. Her husband's name was the same as the one on the telegram. I 've put two and two together, and perhaps I 've made five out of it. Anyway it's your right to know. I 'm sure Doctor Rugvie will back me up in this."

For a moment I made no answer. Then I spoke:

"Are you sure there is no more? You can't recall anything that Doctor Rugvie said about that paper in the envelope?"

"Well, yes, I can; a little more. After all, it's what will help you most—and yet I ain't sure—"

"Tell me, do—do." My hands clasped each other nervously.

"Why, it's just this: Doctor Rugvie was called away out of the city on a case as soon as he 'd got through here, and meantime the young feller had come and gone. When the Doctor come back I told him what had been going on while he was away, and I give him the envelope. He told me he found her marriage certificate in it—but not to the man whose name was on the telegram. I never could make head nor tail of it."

"Married—my mother married—" I repeated. I drew away from the woman's restraining arms and slipping to my knees beside her, buried my face in her lap and began to sob. I could not help it. I was broken for the time both physically and mentally by the force of my unpent emotion.

The woman laid her hand protectingly, tenderly on my quivering shoulders, and waited. She must have seen spring freshets before, many a one during the past thirty years, and have known both their benefit and injury to the human soul. Gradually I regained my control.

"Oh, you don't know what this means to me!" I exclaimed, lifting my face swollen with weeping to the kindly one that looked down into mine. "You don't know what this means to me—it has lifted so much, so much—has let in so much light just at a time when I needed it so—when everything looked so black. Sometime I will tell you; but now I want to know when, where, how I can get hold of that marriage certificate. It belongs to me—to me."

I rose with an energy that surprised the woman and, stooping, took her face between my hands and kissed her. I smiled down into that face. She sat speechless. I smiled again. She passed her hand over her eyes as if trying to clear her mind of confusing ideas. I spoke again to her:

"The tempest is over; why should n't we look for a bright to-morrow?" I could hear the vibrant note of a new hope in my voice. The woman heard it too. She continued to stare at me. I drew up my chair to hers and, laying my hand on her knee, said persuasively:

"Now, let's talk; and let me ask some questions."

"To be sure; to be sure," the woman replied. I know she was wondering what would be the next move on the part of her applicant.

"Don't you want to know my name?" I said. "That's rather an important matter when you take a new position; and you said the place was mine, didn't you?"

The woman smiled indulgently. "To be sure it's yours; and what is your name?" she asked, frankly curious at last.

"Marcia Farrell, but I took my great-grandmother's maiden name. There are none of the family left; I 'm the last."

"What was you christened?"

"I never was christened. And what is your name?"

"Delia Beaseley."

"And your daughter's?"

"Jane."

"And when does Doctor Rugvie return?"

"The last of November. You want that certificate?"

"I must have it; it is mine by right." I spoke with decision.

"Well, you 'll get it just as soon as the Doctor can find it; like enough it's locked up in some Safe Deposit with his papers; you mustn't forget it's been nearly twenty-six years since he's had it.—I can't for the life of me think of that name."

"Never mind that now; tell me about the place. Where is it? Who are the people? Or is there only one—it said 'an elderly Scotchwoman'. Do you know her?"

"No, my dear, I don't know any one of them, and Doctor Rugvie does n't mean I should; that's where he trusts me. I can tell you where the place is: Lamoral, Province of Quebec; more 'n that I don't know."

"But," I spoke half in protest, "does n't Doctor Rugvie think that any one taking the position ought to know beforehand where she is going and whom she 's going to live with?"

"He might tell you if he was here himself, and then again he mightn't. You see it's this way: he trusts me to use my common sense in accepting an applicant, and he expects the applicant to trust his name for reference to go to the end of the world if he sends her there, without asking questions."

"Oh, the old tyrant!" I laughed a little. "What does he pay?" was my next question.

"Doctor Rugvie! You think *he* pays? Good gracious, child, you *are* on the wrong track."

"Then put me on the right one, please." I laid my hand on the hard roughened one.

"I s'pose I might as well; I don't believe the Doctor would mind."

"Of course he would n't." I spoke with a fine, assumed assurance. Delia Beaseley smiled.

"You know I told you that young feller who come here went away without saying so much as 'Thank you'?"

I merely nodded in reply. That question suddenly quenched all the new hope of a new life in me.

"Along the first of the New Year, that was twenty-five years ago, I got a draft by mail from a national bank in this city; the draft was on that bank; it was for five hundred dollars. And ever since, in December, I have had a check for one hundred in the same way. I always get Doctor Rugvie to cash them for me, and he says no questions are answered; after the first year he did n't ask any. The Doctor 's in the same boat. He 's got a draft on that same bank for five hundred dollars every year for the last twenty-five years. He says it's conscience money; and he feels just as I do, that it comes either from the man who claimed to be the woman's husband, or from that other she was married to according to the certificate.—I can't think of that name!

"He don't care much, I guess, seeing the use he 's going to put the money to. He 's hired a farm for a term of years, up in the Province of Quebec, somewhere near the St. Lawrence, with some good buildings on it; and when he knows of somebody that needs just such a home to pick up in he is going to send 'em up there. And the conscience money is going to help out. This is the place where you 're to help the Scotchwoman, as I understand it. Now that's all I can tell you, except the wages is twenty-five dollars a month besides room and keep. I s'pose you 'll go for that?"

"Go! I can't wait to get away; I 'd like to go to-morrow, but I must stay two or three weeks longer in the library. But, I don't understand—how am I to accept the place without notification? And you don't know even the name of the Scotch-woman?"

"I 'll tend to that. My girl writes all the letters for me, and the letters to this place go in the care of the 'Seigniory of Lamoral', whatever that may mean. They get there all right. You come round here within a week, and I 'm pretty sure that the directions will be here with the passage money."

I felt my face flush from my chin to the roots of my hair; and I knew, moreover, that Delia Beaseley was reading that sign with keen accustomed eyes; she knew there was sore need for just that help.

III

Do you who are reading these life-lines know what it is to be alone in a world none too mindful of anyone, even if he be somebody? Never to experience after the day's work the rest and joy of home-coming to one's own?

Do you know what it is to acknowledge no tie of blood that binds one life to another and makes for a common interest in joy or sorrow? To ask yourself: Do I belong here? To wonder, perhaps, why, in fact, you are here? To feel your isolation in a crowded thoroughfare, your remoteness in the midst of an alien family life? To feel, in truth, a stranger on this earth?

If you have known this, if you have experienced this, or, even if, at times, you have been only dimly conscious of this for another, then you will understand these my life-lines, and it may be they will interpret something of yourself to yourself.

Delia Beaseley walked with me as far as the Bowery. There I insisted on her leaving me. I assured her I was used to the streets of New York in the evening. However, she waited with me for the car.

When I said good night to the woman, who twenty-six years ago saved another woman, "one who had missed her footing",—those words seem to ring constantly in my ears,—in order that I, Marcia Farrell, that stranger's child, might become the living fact I am, I began to realize that during the last hour I had been acting a part, and acting it well; that, without sacrificing the truth at any stage of the evening's developments, I had been able to obtain all this information, which pointed to a crisis in my life, yet had given but little return in kind. I felt justified in withholding it.

Now, as soon as I had left her and entered the car, there was a reaction from the intensity of my emotion. I felt a strange elation of spirit, a rising courage to face the new conditions in that other country, and a consequent physical recuperation. The lassitude that had burdened me since my long illness seemed to have left me. My mind was alert. I felt I had been able to take advantage of a promising circumstance and, in so doing, the mental inertia from which I had been suffering for three months was overcome.

Without being able to find any special reason for it, my life began to assume importance in my thoughts. I suppose this is the normal condition of youth; only, I never felt that I had had much youth. With the thought of this new future, unknown, untried as it was, opening before me, I experienced an unaccountable security, an unwonted serenity of existence. All these thoughts and feelings crowded upon me as I rode up through the noisy Bowery.

All my life hitherto had been undefined to me on the side of expansion; only its limitations impressed me as being ever present, sharply outlined, hedging me in with memories that gave no scope for anticipation. Sometimes it seemed to me as if I had always been old; the seven years in New York, my daily encounter with metropolitan life and its problem of "keep" had intensified this feeling.

When I came down to the city to look for work I was nearly twenty. I had left what to me was a makeshift for a home—and I regretted nothing. I had done my whole duty there in caring for my grandfather, imbecile for years, and my aunt, the last of my family, until they died. Then I was free.

After paying all the debts, I found I had just thirty dollars of my own. With these I started for the city. On my arrival this amount was diminished by nine.

At twenty I was facing life for the first time alone, unfriended, in new conditions; poor, too, but that I had always been. I knew that money must be had somehow, must be forthcoming in a few days at most. But at that time my spirit was indomitable, my courage high. I was my own mistress; and my only feeling, as I sat in the Grand Central Station on that morning of my arrival, reading through the various columns of "wants" in the early newspapers, was that I had escaped, at last, from all associations that were hateful to me.

I was thinking of all this as the car passed with frequent haltings along the noisy Bowery, and of that first experience of this city: its need-driven herds of human beings, the thoroughfares crowded with traffic, its nightmare crossings, the clank and deafening roar of the overhead railroad, when, suddenly, mingled with the steam rising from the pavements, that were cooling rapidly after the recent shower, I smelt the acrid heaviness of fresh printer's ink. That smell visualized for me the column of leaded "Wants," the dismal waiting-room, the uncompromising daylight that spared no wrinkle, no paint, no moth-spot on the indifferent faces about me. That was nearly seven years ago—and now—

I found I was at Union Square, and got out; walked a block to Broadway and waited on the corner for an uptown car. During that minute of waiting, a woman spoke to me:

"If I take a car here can I get up to West Sixty-first street?"

"Yes." My answer was short and sharp. I had heard the kind of question put in that oily voice too many times to pay any further heed to it. I stepped out into the street to take the car.

"If you 're going up that way I might as well go 'long too. I like comp'ny," said the woman, keeping abreast of me and nudging me with an elbow.

The car was nearly full, and the crowd waiting for it made a running assault upon the few vacancies. Just before it stopped I saw some one leave the seat behind the motor-man; I made a rush to secure the place. As I sat down the woman mounted the step.

"You don't get rid of me so easy, duckie," she said with a leer.

I turned squarely to her, looking beneath the wide brim of the tawdry bedraggled hat to find her eyes; her gin-laden breath was hot on my cheek.

"You go your way and I 'll go mine," I said in a low hard voice.

With a curse the woman swung off the step just as the two signal bells rang.

I took off my hat. The night was cooling rapidly after the tempest. The motion of the car created a movement of air against my face. It was grateful to me. I drew a long breath of relief; these evening rides in the open cars were one of my few recreations.

As the car sped along the broad thoroughfare, now so long familiar to me, so wonderful and alluring to my country eyes in those early years, so drearily artificial and depressing in the later ones, I found myself dwelling again on that first experience in this city; I recalled the first time I was accosted by a woman pander. It was when I was reading the wants that morning of my arrival. I looked up to find her taking a seat beside me—a woman who tried by every dives' art of which she was possessed to entice me to go with her on leaving the station. Oh, she was awful, that woman! I never knew there were such till then.

The searchlight of memory struck full upon my thought at that time: And they said my mother was like this!

That thought, horrible as it was to me, was my safeguard then and has been ever since. Such as they said my mother was, I would never be. Nor am I aware that any moral factor was the lever in this decision. Rather it was my pride that had been scourged for many years by a girl's half knowledge of her mother's career, my sensitiveness that was ever ready at the least outside touch to make me close in upon myself, the horror of thinking it might be possible that my name could be used as I had heard my mother's, that had panoplied my nature and warped it until that nature had narrowed to its armor. I was proud, sensitive, cold, or thought I was—and I was glad of it.

It had come to a point, at last, now when I was nearly twenty-six, that in what I termed my strength, lay my weakness. But of this I was, as yet, unaware.

I shut my eyes as the car sped onwards that I might not see the swift succession of glaring lights—the many flashing, changing, nerve-tormenting electric signs and advertisements, the brilliant globes, stars, and whirligigs of all kinds. How they tired me now! And the summer theatre throngs streaming in under the entrance arches picked out in glowing red and white, the saloons flashing a well-known signal to customers—I knew it all and was glad to close my eyes to it all. Now and then I caught a strain of music from the orchestra of some roof-garden.

At Seventy-second Street I changed for Amsterdam Avenue. I wanted to get away to the heights. The air was becoming fresher and I needed more of it. Another twenty minutes and the car stopped near the brow of the hill. I left it and walked a cross block till I came to Morningside Heights, the small, irregular, but beautiful promenade behind St. Luke's.

I leaned on the massive stone coping that crowns the wall of the escarpment; below me the hill sloped sharply to the flats of the Harlem. I looked off over the city.

East, and north-east in the direction of the Sound, great cloud masses, the wrack of the tempest, were piled high towards the zenith; but beneath them there was a clear zone near the city's level. A moon nearly two thirds to the full, was heralding its appearance above them by lighted rifts, bright-rimmed haloes, and the marvellous play of direct shaft light that struck downwards behind the clouds into the clear space above the city and shot white radiance upon its roofs. The sky, also, while yet the moon was invisible, was radiant, but with starlight.

Against this background, I watched the glow-worm lights of the elevated trains winding along the high invisible trestle-work. Beneath me lay Morningside Park, the foliage and its shadows blackened in masses beneath the glaring white of the arc-lights; and beyond, in seemingly interminable perspective, the long converging lines of parallel street lights led my gaze across the city to some large, unknown, uncertain flarings somewhere near the East River shore.

And from all this wide-stretching housing-place of a vast population, there rose into my ears a continuous, dull, peculiar sound, as of the magnified stertorous breathing of a hived and stifled humanity.

I had come here many times in the last four years, at all seasons, at all times. I drew strength and inspiration from this view in all its aspects, until my almost fatal illness in the late spring. After that there came upon me a powerful longing for change. I wanted to get away from this city, its sights and sounds; to escape from the conditions that were sapping my life. And the way was, at last, opened. How I exulted in this thought!

There were others on the promenade, and I was withdrawn from thought of myself by hearing voices, a man's and a woman's, below me on the winding walk that leads down the slope past the poplars to the level of the Harlem streets. The woman's was pleading, strident from excitement; it broke at last in a dry hard sob. The man's was hateful; the tones and accents like a vicious snarl.

I turned away sickened, indignant.

"It's always so in this city!" I said to myself while I walked rapidly towards the hospital. "If I get a chance for a breath of fresh air, or if I take a walk in the park, or have an outlook that, for a moment, is free from all suggestions of crime and horror—then beware! For then I have to shut my ears not to hear the fatal sounds of human brutishness; or I hear a shot in the park, and a life goes out in some thick-foliaged path; or I have to turn away my eyes from a sight in the gutter that offends three of my senses—and so my day is ruined. It's merciless, merciless—and I loathe it!" I cried within myself as I passed the hospital.

I lifted my eyes to the massive purity of noble St. Luke's, the windows rising tier upon tier above me. A light showed here and there. At the sight my mood softened.

"Oh, I know it is merciful too—it is merciful," I murmured; then I stopped short and turned back to the entrance. I entered the main vestibule, mounted the marble steps that lead to the chapel, opened the noiseless heavily-padded doors, and sat down near the entrance.

The air was close and hot after the outer freshness; the lights few. The stained-glass window behind the altar was a meaningless confused mass of leaded opacity. I knew that the daylight was needed to ensoul it, to give to the dead unmeaning material its spiritual symbolism. And because I knew this, I realized, as I sat there, what a long distance in a certain direction I had travelled since that morning in the Grand Central Station, seven years ago.

But the air was very close. I felt depressed, disappointed, that the time and the place yielded me nothing. I was faint, too; I had taken nothing but the cocoa since noon. Without realizing it, another reaction from that strange elation of spirit was setting in. I knew I ought to be in the attic room in Chelsea rather than where I was. It was already nine, and an hour's ride before me on the surface car.

I went out to Amsterdam Avenue. No car was in sight. I walked on down the hill, knowing that one would soon overtake me.

A man and woman were just behind me talking—at least, the woman was. I recognized her voice as one of those I had heard on the winding path by the poplars. A moment after, they passed me in a noticeably peculiar fashion: the man sauntering by on my right, the woman hurrying past on my left. At the same moment I heard the car coming down the hill. I turned at once, but only to see the man, who had passed me, running swiftly along the pavement and up the hill to meet it; the woman was running after him.

I saw that the car was over full. The platform and steps were black with human beings clinging to the guard rails like swarming bees alight. I saw the man struggle madly to catch the guards and gain a footing on the lower step, the woman still running beside him and holding him by the coat. Then I was aware of a sudden sweeping movement of the man's free arm, the roar of the car as it sped down the incline, and of the woman lying, hatless from the force of the man's blow, on the pavement beside the track. He had freed himself so!

Before I could reach her the woman was up and off again, running hatless after the quickly receding car. Only one cry, no scream, escaped her.

I shivered. There was nothing to be done with such as these, no rescue possible. A sudden thought half paralyzed me; I stood motionless: Had my own mother ever been cast off like this? Had such treatment been the cause of her seeking the river? Had I, Marcia Farrell, been fathered by such a brute?

For the second time in my life, I felt my hardness of heart towards the mother I had never known soften with pity; a sob rose in my throat. I shook my shoulders as if freeing them from some nightmare clutch, and hurried to the next corner to meet the car that was following the other closely.

IV

I unlocked my attic room in the fourth storey of the old Chelsea house and lighted the lamp. In contrast to what both ear and eye had been witness during the evening: Delia Beaseley's account of my mother's rescue and death, and that scene of life's brutality on Columbia Heights, the sight of the small plain interior gave me, for the first time in all the seven years, a home-sense, a feeling of welcome and refuge.

I looked at the cretonne-covered cot, the packing boxes curtained with the same, the white painted hanging box-shelves, the one chair—a flour barrel, cut to the required form, well padded and upholstered; all these were the work of my hands in free hours. And I was about to exchange the known for the unknown! This thought added to my depression.

I put out the lamp and sat down by the one window. The night air was refreshingly cool. The many lights on the river gleamed clear; the roar in the streets was subdued. Gradually, my antagonism to the physical features of the metropolis, to its heedless crowds, its overpowering mechanism, its thoroughfares teeming with human beings who passed me daily, knowing little of their own existence and nothing of mine, its racial divergencies, grew less intense; in fact, the whole life of this city, in its aspect of mere Juggernaut, was being unconsciously modified for me as I realized I was about to go forth into a strange country.

I was recalling those ten weeks of mortal weakness and suffering at St. Luke's, the kindness of nurses and physicians. No matter if I had paid my way; theirs was a ready helpfulness, a steady administration of the tonic of human kindness that never could be bought and paid for in the Republic's money. I thought of Delia Beaseley and her noble work among those "who had missed their footing". I relived in imagination that rescue of my own mother, with all of the horror and all of the merciful pity it entailed. I found myself wondering if Doctor Rugvie would be able to lay his hand on those papers immediately after his arrival. I dwelt upon the many kindly advances from my co-workers in the Library; few of these women I had met, for I felt strangely old, apart from them, and the struggle to live and at the same time accomplish my purpose had been so hard. My landlady, too, came in for a share of my softening mood; exacting, but scrupulously honest, she had lodged under this same roof a generation of theological students, yet her best dress remained a rusty alpaca. I thought of the various types of students for the ministry—

I smiled at that thought, a smile that proved the latent youth in me was sufficiently appreciative, at least of that phase of life.

I left the window and, after closing the lower half of the inside shutters, partly undressed and relighted the lamp. Then I took two paper-covered blank books from my trunk. I sat down in my one easy chair of home manufacture and, resting my feet on the cot, began to read.

These two books were my journal, my confidante, my most intimate companion for seven years. I had written in them intermittently only, and, as I turned a page here and there, my eye dwelt longest, not on the few high lights, as it were, in my uneventful life of work and struggle, but on the many shadows they deepened and emphasized.

Nov. 4, 1902. My first day in New York. I took a hack from the station to this house in the old "Chelsea district" they call it. My first hack-ride; it was pretty grand for me, but I was afraid to try the street cars after a horrid woman had tried her best to get me to go with her after I left the station—oh, it was awful! I never knew there could be such women before—not that kind. I shall look for work to-morrow.

Nov. 5. I have to pay a dollar and a half for this room in the attic. There isn't any heat, and there is no gas in it. I have to furnish it myself. My landlady is a queer little old woman, Mrs. Turtelot, who has kept lodgers here for thirty years. She has her house filled with the students from the Theological Seminary near by. It's lucky I have this place to come to. I wondered to-day how girls ever get on in this city, without having someone to go to they know is all right. She seems like a Frenchwoman, perhaps a French Canadian. I think she must be, for her mother used to work at Seth White's tavern up home; it was through his neighbors I got her address. She says the students have to furnish their own bed clothes and towels. I 'm glad I brought mine with me. It's awfully cold here to-night, but Mrs. Turtelot has given me a lamp, till I can get one, and that warms up some. Anyway, I feel safe here from that other kind. I 'll soon earn enough to fix up a little.

Nov. 6. I 've been tramping about all day answering advertisements. Mrs. Turtelot told me not to go into any strange place, like up stairs, and not to go over a door sill. I have n't found that so easy.

I 've been afraid all day of getting lost, but she told me to-night to ask every time for West Twenty-third Street and follow it to the river; then I could always find my way here.

I slept in her room on the sofa the first night; she says I can sleep with her for a few nights till I can get a cot. A student is leaving here in a few days and he will sell his second hand. But I don't want to sleep with her, and I asked her as a favor to let me have two pillows. She didn't have any extra ones, but let me have hers; so I have a good bed on the floor. Could n't find work.

Nov. 8. Mrs. T. told me to-day that it is a bad time of year to find work. It is late in the season and help is being turned off, and, besides, it is going to be a hard winter, so everybody says. What do the turned-off ones do, then, for a living?— No job yet! But I won't go out to service in a private family unless I have to. I 've had enough of that in the past.

Nov. 9. Since I came here I have answered fifty-two advertisements. I get the same answer every time: "You have n't been trained and you have n't had any experience." How am I to get training and experience if I don't have the chance? That's what I want to know.

Nov. 10. I 've bought the cot and the mattress. I paid four dollars for them. There is a small stove hole in the chimney on one side of my room; when I get to earning, I 'm going to have a

little stove here and do my own cooking. Thank fortune, I can cook as well as chop wood if I have to! So far I 've heated my things on Mrs. T.'s stove. She lives, that is, cooks, eats, sleeps, and washes in her back basement; the front one she rents to a barber. He makes his living from the students round here and the professors at the Seminary. She says the students cook most of their meals in their rooms on their gas stoves. I wish I had one.

Nov. 13. A bad lot of a date! No work yet, and I 've tramped all day in the slush and snow. I dried my things down in Mrs. T.'s room. I did n't dare to spend any more in car fares, for I must have a stove.

I know to a cent just what I 've spent since I came, but I 'm going to put it down so I can see the figures; it will make me more cautious about spending. The car fare is more than I meant it should be, but, to save it, I walked the first three days from Eighty-sixth Street and Fourth Avenue—a bakery that advertised for a woman to sell the early morning bread in the shop; three hours of work only, at twenty cents an hour—down as far as the Washington Market where they wanted a girl to sell flowers in a sidewalk booth, for two weeks before Christmas. I found then that the soles of my boots were beginning to wear and that it saves something to ride.

Car fare	$ .75
Bread	.25
Cheese	.10
1 tin pail	.15
6 eggs	.20
1 can baked beans	.17
2 pints soup	.26
Oil	.13
Tin lamp	.50
Cot and mattress	4.00
Room rent, two weeks in advance	3.00
Total	$9.51

And I have ten dollars and ninety-three cents left. I can hold the fort another two weeks on this.

Nov. 15. No work yet. I 'm going to keep a stiff upper lip and find work, or starve in doing it. This city *sha'n't* beat *me*, not if I can use my two arms and hands and legs, two eyes, one tongue and a brain! No!

Nov. 17. I scrubbed down the three flights of stairs for Mrs. T. to-day. She has the rheumatism in her wrists, and I was glad to do it for her to help pay for her loan of the pillows and for letting me heat my things on her stove. I must buy my own to-morrow. I feel ashamed to ask favors of her any longer, for I have put off the buying of it till I could get work.

Friday. Now I have just four dollars left; for I bought it to-day and set it up myself. A little second hand one with one hole on top—and no coals to put in it! I don't dare use the last four dollars, for the rent is due soon and I have to pay in advance. I suppose it's all right to secure herself, but it's hard on me.

Nov. 30. I believe I 'm hungry, and I don't remember to have been hungry before in all my life, without having enough ready to fill my stomach. But I don't dare to spend another cent till I get work. It must come, *it must*—

I 've lived three days on a half a pound of walnuts, half a pound of cheese and a loaf of bread—and walked my feet sore looking for a place. I know I could have had two places, but I dared not engage to the women. That woman in the Grand Central Station haunts me; these two women had a look of her! One wanted me in private manicure rooms to learn the trade; she said I had the right kind of fingers after the rough had worn off. The other wanted me to show rooms to rent in a queer looking house. Mrs. T. told me to keep away from it and all like it.

Dec. 1. I 'm not only hungry, I 'm cold too. I bought two pails of coals, and paid high for them so Mrs. T. says. They say there is going to be a coal famine from the great strike. It makes me mad that it should all pile up on me in this way! Why can't I have work? Why, when I am willing, can't I find a place?

An awful feeling comes over me sometimes, when I am turned down at a place I 've applied for: I want to throttle the first well-dressed man or woman I meet and say, "Give me work or I 'll make it the worse for you!" Then I turn all dizzy and sick after that feeling, and hate myself for the thought; it's so unjust.

Dec. 10. I asked Mrs. T. if I might n't pay by the week and at the end of each week. I think she knew what the trouble was. She hesitated for a minute, and that was enough for me.

"Oh, I *can* pay you," I said, "only it's a little more convenient."

"Then I 'd like you to," she said in her queer dry voice.

I hated her at that moment. I went up stairs to my bare room and took off the knit woollen petticoat I made for myself at home, just before coming down; I took that and a set of gold beads, that were my grandmother's, and went out with them to a pawnbroker's just around the corner on the avenue. I got eight dollars for the two of them, and made the time in which to redeem them one month. Then I went back to the house and paid her. She looked surprised, but her skinny hand closed upon the money as if she, too, had no more for the morrow. I don't know that she has. The students come and go.

Dec. 14. I stood on Twentieth Street near Broadway to-day, watching the teamsters unload the heavy drays at the back of a department store. I found myself envying them—they had work.

Dec. 15. I am not up to date with my clothes, and I have no money to make myself so. I find it is for this reason I am "turned down" at so many places where I apply. I read it in men's eyes, in the women's hard stare.

Dec. 17. A man offered to clothe me for a position in a shop, if I would—

I know I looked at him; I think I saw him, or perhaps the beast that was in him. Then I saw queer lights before me, red and yellow—if I had been a man I would have taken him by the throat. When, at last, I could see again, the man was gone. Good riddance! There is such a thing as day nightmare.

Dec. 19. I am beginning to understand how it is done; how the fifteen dollar waists, the diamond rings, the theatre, and the suppers after, can be had without work.

Dec. 20. The strike is on. I should have to do without coals, strike or no strike, for I have nothing to buy them with. Mrs. Turtelot offered to let me heat my food on her stove—my food! I 've lived on one loaf of bread and a can of baked beans for seven days—and to-day I 've been down to the Washington Market just to smell the evergreens that, for all I have no home, give me a homesick longing for the country. But I will not go back; I 'll starve here first.

Afterwards I walked up to Twenty-third Street, and lost myself there in the holiday crowds. What throngs!—jostled, pushed, beset by vendors, loaded with bundles, yet so good natured! No one looked hungry. I stood on the kerb to watch the men selling toys and birds; to listen to the strange cries, the shrilling of the wooden canaries and the trill of the real ones; to peep into the rabbit hutch, and the basket of kittens; to stroke an armful of sleeping puppies; to smell the fragrance of roses and violets and carnations; to smile a little at the slow-moving turtles, the leaping frogs, the Jack-in-the-box, the mechanical toys of all kinds that performed on the sidewalk, each the centre of a small crowd. Then, at twilight, the flare from the chestnut vendor's stand, the little electric lights of the Punch and Judy sidewalk show, the electric torches that the children were carrying, the brilliant whirligigs for advertisements, gave to the whole scene a strange unreal appearance. Men, women, children, Christmas trees, dogs, birds, electric cars, rabbits, kittens, a goat, cabs, automobiles, express carts, surged into the flare and glare, first of one light then of another, till what was shadow and what was substance I failed to make out.

Dec. 21. At last, oh, at last, there is work for me,—for me, too, among all these millions! But it makes me sick to know there must be some who are trying and never find.

I have taken a place in a small writing-paper factory. It's down near Barclay Street, in the loft of a crazy old building, three wooden flights from the street. The loft is lighted at both ends by windows and in the top by skylights. It is heated by a large cylinder stove in the centre, and a small glue box-pot at one end. The air is close, but I don't care much, for it is so warm. I get four dollars a week.

I can manage to live, at least, on this. I can think about nothing else to-night.

Jan. 15, 1903. The coal strike is on. It is cold in the loft, for we have to be saving of fuel. It takes all I can save to buy three pailfuls of coal a week for my little stove. I kindle my fire at night, heat water, cook my cereal, or bean soup, and am comfortable till morning; the room is decently warm to dress in. I am off to work at seven. Fuel and rent and some necessary underclothes leave little for food. I cannot redeem my petticoat, and gold beads which my grandmother had from her mother, Marcia Farrell.

July 6. Hot, hotter, hottest in the old fire-trap of a loft. The sun beats down through the skylights till we get sick. Two of the girls fainted this afternoon.

Aug. 4. I discovered the Public Library to-day! It means so much to me that I simply can't write a word about it.

Nov. 4. Just a year ago to-day since I came here. I am able to draw a free breath for the first time, to look about me and plan a little for my future. I 've made up my mind to study for the examinations for a place in the Public Library. My district school was no bad training, after all, for this work. It taught me one lesson: to put my mind on what was given me to do—and I have not forgotten it.

The extra time for study at night will take more fuel and oil, but I can make that up by living a few more days every week on bean soup. I 've made living on four dollars a week an art this last

year. An art? Yes, rather than a science; and, like an art, it accomplishes surprisingly satisfactory results—results that science, with all its proven facts, from which it deduces laws of hygiene, fails to produce.

I honestly believe that I 'm better fed than half the theological students. They scrimp and save—for a theatre ticket! They're a queer lot! I 've asked half a dozen to tell me what they 're aiming at, and not one of the six could give me a sensible answer. If they had said right out—"It's an easy way to get a small living," I would have respect for them. We all have to earn our living in one way or another.

March, 1904. Desk assistant in a branch of the Library—at last!

October, 1906. When I came down here I made a vow to put everything behind me; forget what I had left in New England, the memories of those hard-worked years, and start afresh; cut loose from all the old associations. I have succeeded fairly well. This new life of books is a wonderful one. I like my work as desk assistant in the Library, and I get nine dollars a week. This is wealth for me; I am saving. I have so much besides: the river and the ferries for a change; one trip up the Hudson—a thing to live on for years until I get another. Sometime I mean to travel—sometime! Meanwhile, I go on saving in every possible way.

Jan. 8, 1907. What luck for me! I don't have to buy a book. The whole Library is mine for the asking. How I have read these last three years! As if I could never read enough; read while I 've been standing and eating; read before getting up and long after I have been in bed. It has been a hunger and thirst for this kind of food—and there has been enough of *this*! Enough!

Feb. 1908. I am studying French now daily, and beginning Latin by myself, for I want to take the higher examinations for the cataloguing department. That will mean more pay and the prospect of a vacation sometime.

March 16, 1908. How I gloat like a miser over my savings-bank book! Just one hundred and seventy-five dollars to my credit. I have visions of—oh, so much in ten years!

May, 1908. I was at the Metropolitan this morning. I feel rich when I realize that all this treasure-house is open to me—is mine for the entering. I am taking the whole museum, room by room. A year's work on Sundays.

August, 1908. I have not seen fit to change my method of expenditure since I entered the Library; I have continued to spend as I spent when I had four dollars a week, with the exception that I allow, necessarily, a little more for clothing.

For housing:—

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Room, $1.50 a week.
Fuel and oil in winter, $ 0.75
Oil in summer,             .26
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Now for my art:—

I have allowed for my food exactly one dollar a week and allow the same now. I go down to the Washington Market early in the morning. I revel in the sight of the fresh vegetables, of the flowers and fruits. The market-people know me now, and many a gift-flower I have brought back with me to my room, and several times a pot of herbs or spring bulbs; now and then a few sprays of parsley or thyme. These I look upon as my commission! Without leaving the market, I buy a loaf of bread for ten cents; a knuckle of veal, or a beef bone, a pound and a half of sausages, or a pound of salt pork, for fifteen cents; I vary my purchases from time to time that I may have variety. Ten cents for vegetables—I vary these, also, as much as possible; these, with a pound of rice, nine cents, a half a pound of butter, eighteen cents, and a quart of beans for another ten cents, give me satisfying combinations. When eggs are cheap I vary this diet with them, lettuce and bacon. I buy things that are cheapest in their season. In summer, I drop out all meat and substitute milk. I allow myself one pound of sugar a week; no tea, no coffee; the city water is the only thing of which I can have enough free. With what is left of my hundred cents,—for in my art it is the cents with which I reckon, not dollars,—I buy fruit in its season, a bit of cheese, sometimes even a Philadelphia squab! At times, they are cheaper than meat in the Market. In the season I can get one for ten cents.

I have an extra treat when I buy that last, for the old man at the poultry stall, who draws the chickens and various fowl, is a model from the old Italian masters. An Italian himself, he speaks little English, wears a skull cap and, to my delight, looks like one of Fra Angelico's saints. I learn all this from the Metropolitan Museum, and apply it in the Washington Market!

At times I haunt the fish stalls, select good sea food for a change, and am rewarded by the play of color on the zinc counters—the mottled green of live lobsters, the scarlet of boiled ones, the silver and rose of pompano, the pomegranate of salmon. I have stood by the half hour to watch the slow-moving turtles, the scuttling crabs in the tanks. I have good friends throughout the Market—men and women. They confide in me at times, like the cod-and-hake man, dealer in

dried fish, who told me he had "a girl once down on Cape Cod". He seemed relieved by this confession. He was serving me at the time, and his two hundred or more pounds, his red face and his cordiality were delightful. My butter-egg-and-cheese man also confides to me that he is a commuter; has purchased a home on the instalment plan; has three children, and his wife runs a private laundry.

What remains of the four dollars after the weekly bills are paid, I lay aside for clothes. I make my own shirt waists. It took me eleven months to earn a good skirt of brown Panama cloth; but it has lasted me four years.

I think I live well, *considering*; but, in living thus, there is no denying I cross the bridge of mere sustenance every day, and am obliged to burn my bridge behind me! I don't like it—but am thankful for work. I 'm not beneath adding to my reserve fund five cents at a time.

Dec. 18, 1908. They 're nice boys, the theological students—but queer, some of them. I 've watched different sets of them come and go during these six years. Two or three have attempted to make a little love to me; a few have adopted me—so they said—for their sister. I 'm forgotten with their graduation and their flitting! One or two are really friends; they 're younger than I, of course, and I can patronize and quiz them.

Johnny is my favorite. There is little theological nonsense about him, and there is an inquisitive disposition to see New York and make the most of his time here. He 's from the north part of the state; likes books, likes people, likes a good time, whenever he can get it, on his limited income to which he adds by helping the basement barber two days in the week, canvassing for books in the summer, and on Saturdays waiting on the patrons of a book stall in a corridor of one of the big hotels.

Taken altogether, Johnny is a man who has not as yet found his calling, although he is anchored for the present, through affection for his father, to "Chelsea" and a career that, at times, irks him. We 've had many a good talk about this matter. I tell him he 's not dragging anchor, but weighing it.

I like to see New York through Johnny's eyes—Adirondack eyes, keen, honest, and blue; they take in all the metropolitan sights, from the Hippodrome, to the Bowery vaudevilles and the Cathedral of St. John.

It's fun to "do" the city with him, with no expense except car fares.

Jan. 1909. Johnny and I stood outside the Metropolitan Opera House this evening, to see the hodge-podge of carriages and automobiles arrive with their contents: the women who toil not, neither do they spin anything except financial webs for men's undoing. It was a queer sight! Hundreds of women passed me. As I looked at them, I saw the same long, pointed, manicured nails, the same jewelled fingers, the incurving fronts, the distorted busts, the lined and rouged faces—like those I loathed so when I first came to this city. I asked myself, "What's the difference between the two kinds? Is it money alone that makes it?"

"But are there two kinds?" I was asking myself again, when Johnny, who has an eye for good clothes on man and woman, called my attention to a woman's opera cloak. It was worth a man's ransom. From a deep yoke of Russian sable depended the long cape of pale green satin covered with graduated flounces, from eight to fourteen inches deep, of Venetian point. And taking in all this, I saw—

Well, I don't know that I dare to set down in words, even for my own enlightenment, what I saw in that Vision. But, suddenly, all the rich robings, opera cloaks, clinging gowns of silk, velvet and chiffon, the diamond tiaras, the jewelled necklaces, the French lingerie even—all dropped from every one in that procession; and there, on a New York sidewalk, in the harsh glare of electric lights, amidst the hiss and cranking of their automobiles, the clank of silver-mounted harness and the champing of bits, the shouts and calls and myriad city noises, I saw them for what they really are:—women, like unto all other women; women made originally for the mates of men, for mothers, for burden-bearers, with prehensile hands to grasp, then lead and uplift, and so aid in the work of the world.

And what more I saw in the Vision I may scarcely write down; for, therein, I was shown for these same women both unfathomable depths and scarce attainable heights, both degradation and transfiguration, the human bestial and the humanly divine—the Vampire, the Angel.

And I was shown in that Vision the Calvaries of maternity common to all, whether the conception be immaculate, so-called if within the law, or maculate, so-called if without the law. I saw, also, the Gethsemanes of motherhood common to all. I saw, moreover, the three Dolorous Ways which their feet—and the feet of all women, because women—are treading, have ever trod, must ever tread, that the seed which shall propagate the Race may be trodden deep for germination.

Moreover, I saw in that Vision the women treading the seed in the Ways. One of the Ways was stony, and those therein walked with bleeding feet for their labor was in vain; the land was sterile. And the second was deeply rutted with sand, and those therein labored heavily with sweat and toil; the fruition was but for a day. And the third Way was heavy with deeply-furrowed fertile

soil, and those that trod it toiled long and late that the seed might not fail of abundant harvest.

Furthermore, I saw that every woman was treading one of these three Ways; and silk, and chiffon, or velvet gown, opera cloaks of sable and satin, diamond tiaras and jewelled necklaces could avail them naught. Trammelled by these or by rags—it matters not which—they must tread the Ways.

I pressed my hand over my eyes to clear them of this Vision; for, at last, I understood. I knew that I, too, being a woman, must tread one of the three Dolorous Ways even as my mother had trodden one before me. But which?

I could bear it no longer. "Come away, Johnny," I said abruptly.

April, 1909. I am beginning to be so tired of the confusion of the streets. The work at the Library has become irksome. I am tired of reading, too, and feel as if my last prop had been taken from under me, when I have no longer the desire to read.

I handle the books, place them, record dates, handle books again, place them, record dates, handle books again—the very smell of the booky atmosphere is sickening to me.

I suppose I need rest. But how can I rest when I have my daily living to earn? I won't touch those hundred and seventy-five dollars if I never have a vacation. I should lose all my courage if I had to spend a dollar of that money, except for the final end—nine years hence. Even the thought of stopping work makes me feel weary.

* * * * *

July 1. So the money is gone! I have been trying to face this fact the last hour. The long sickness of ten weeks has taken it all, for I was too proud to go to the hospital without paying my way. I let no one know how matters stood with me. I have come out of St. Luke's feeling so weak, so indifferent to life, to everything I thought made my own small life worth living.—And it is so hot here! So breathless! A great longing has come upon me to get away somewhere. Since I have been so sick things look different to me. The energy of life seems to have gone out of me, and I want to creep away into some place far, far away from this city, where I can live a more normal life.

But how can I make the break? Where can I go? How begin all over again in this awful struggle to get work, and succeed in anything? My courage has failed me.

I closed the books. I was wondering if I should destroy them and in this fashion burn all my bridges behind me.

"No," I spoke aloud; "I 'll save them, but I will never keep another journal."

I opened to a blank page, took pen and ink and wrote on it:

September 18th, 1909. I have decided to accept a place at service (at last!) on a farm in Canada, Province of Quebec, Seigniory of Lamoral (?). Wages twenty-five dollars a month, besides room and board.

And underneath:

12 midnight. My last word in this book. Within the past six hours I have experienced something of what I call "heaven and hell". I have travelled a long road since I came to this city on November 4, 1902.

V

A few evenings afterwards Delia Beaseley came up to see me. She brought the passage money and a note of instruction. It was directly to the point: I was to take a sleeping car on the Montreal express; then the day local boat down the St. Lawrence to Richelieu-en-Bas. At the landing I was to enquire for Mrs. Macleod, and someone would be there to meet me. A time-table was enclosed. The note was signed "Janet Macleod ".

"This must be the 'elderly Scotchwoman,' Delia," I said after reading the note twice.

"I'm thinking it's her—but then you never can tell."

"How did she send the passage money?"

"By post office order. It would n't have hurt her to send a bit of a welcome word, to my thinking." She spoke rather grimly.

"I 'm not going for the welcome, you know; it's work and a change I want—and right thankful I am to get the chance."

"Well you may be, my dear, in these times," she said, softening at once.

"I shall write you, Delia, all about everything; you know you want to hear all about things."

"Would I own to being a woman if I did n't?" She laughed her hearty laugh; then, with a little hesitancy: "And, my dear, I 'd think kindly of you for writing me, and I 'd like to know that all is going well with you, but you know there's Doctor Rugvie to reckon with, and he won't hold to much correspondence, I 'm thinking, between me and—what's the name of that place? I can't pronounce it—"

"Richelieu-en-Bas."

"Rich—I can't get the twist of it round my English tongue; say it again, and may be I 'll catch it."

I repeated it twice for her, but her results were not equal to her efforts. We both laughed.

"Never mind, Delia; and don't tell me Doctor Rugvie is going to say to whom I shall write or to whom I shan't—especially if it's my friend, Delia Beaseley."

"Well, I can't say, my dear; but I 'll speak to him about it when he gets home—"

"Now, no nonsense from a sensible woman, Delia Beaseley; I should think I was going into a land of mysteries to hear you talk."

She laughed again. "I don't say as it's a mystery, but I can't help thinking he wants to keep the matter quiet like, you see."

"But I don't see—and I don't intend to," I said obstinately.

Delia changed the subject. "It's well you 've got your passage money. It's quite dear travelling that way."

"Never was in a Pullman in my life, Delia, but you may believe I shall enjoy it."

She beamed on me. "That's right, my dear, take all the pleasure you can, and, of course, if Doctor Rugvie did n't mind—well, I must own up to it that I 'd like to hear from you, and what you make of it up there."

"So you shall, Delia; no secrets between you and me; there can't be; we 've known each other too long—ever since I was born into the world."

She looked a little mystified at my statement, but accepted it evidently with appreciation.

"Jane or me 'll be down to the station to see you off," she said as she bade me good night.

During the next two weeks and at odd times, I did a good bit of reference work on my own account in looking up the histories of the Canadian "Seigniories"; but at the end of that time I was ready to set out for that other country only a little wiser for my research.

A week later, Delia Beaseley was at the Grand Central to see me start on my journey northwards.

"I feel as if I were setting out on a real series of adventures, Delia!" I exclaimed when I met her. I took both her hands in mine. "If only I were a man I should take stick and knapsack and find my way on foot. I 'd camp on the shore of the Tappan Zee, wander through the Catskills, and stop over night at the old Dutch farmhouses, follow the shores of Lake Champlain and cross the border high of heart, even if footweary!"

Delia smiled indulgently upon me.

"Such fancies will help you out a good bit, my dear; it's well you have a word or two of French to get along with. I used to hear it when I was a girl in Cape Breton."

I caught the shadow of a memory settle in her eyes. We were at the gate. The train was made up.

"I must say goodby here, my dear; they won't let me in to the train."

I took both her hands again. "Goodby, Delia Beaseley," I began; then something choked me. I so wanted to thank her for all her goodness to me. "I wish I knew what to say—how to thank—"

"There, there, my dear, I 'm the one to be thankful. I 've been reaping a harvest just from one

little seed I sowed near twenty-six years ago—and I never thought to see so much as a blade of grass! That's all. I 'm wonderful grateful it's been given me to see such a harvest."

"Oh, Delia, if I only amounted to something, so that you could be proud of your little harvest —"

"Now, don't, my dear, don't; don't say nothing more, but just go straight forward with God's blessing, which is the same as mine this time, and—don't forget me if ever you need a friend."

My eyes filled with unaccustomed tears. A curious thought: New York, the Juggernaut, the fetich of millions, just when I was ridding myself of the horror of its awful presence, was about to bind me to it through this new-old friend!

I caught her rough toil-worn hand in both mine and pressed my lips to it; then I dropped it, and walked rapidly down the platform to the train. Not once did I look behind me.

For a little while after entering the luxurious sleeping car, I felt awkward, uncomfortable; I had never been in one before. But when I was settled in my ample, high-backed section, and the train began to move slowly out of the station and through the tunnel, I felt more at ease. After that, with every mile that the train, moving more and more swiftly, put between me and the city's sights and sounds, I felt a rising of spirits, an ease of mind and body I had never before experienced.

Within an hour all depression had vanished; hopes and anticipations for the new environment filled the foreground of my thoughts. Without adequate reason, I believed that the change I was making was for my good; that with new faces about me, with new and closer interests which, alone as I was in the world, I must substitute for a home, I was about to escape from all former associations and the memories they fostered.

Only one thought troubled me, that was the connection by Delia Beaseley of Doctor Rugvie's name with that of George Jackson—my mother's husband. I had hoped never to hear that name again.

For an hour I peered at the dark Hudson, the shadowed hills; the night fell, blotting out the landscape wholly and shutting me into the warm brilliantly lighted car with a sense of cosy security.

I looked at the few people I could see over the high sections. Three women were opposite to me, two of them young. I found myself calculating the cost of their dresses and accessories, their furs and hats. I reckoned the amount to be something like my wages on the farm for six years. How easily and unconsciously they wore their good clothes! One of the two younger held my attention. She was fair, slender, long-throated, and carried herself with noticeable erectness. I caught bits of their conversation carried on in low pleasing voices:

"It will be such a surprise to them."

"... the C. P. steamer—"

"Oh, fancy! They must have known—"

"... you know I am glad to be at home this winter..."

"Where is it? ..."

"Somewhere in Richelieu-en-Bas—"

I was all ears. Richelieu-en-Bas was my destination. Their voices were so low I could catch but little more.

"Just fancy! But you would never know from him—"

"When is Mr. Ewart coming over?"

"Bess!" The fair one held up a warning finger; "your voice carries so." She rose and reached for her furs from the hook. "Let's go into the forward car and see the Ellwicks."

The others rose too; shook themselves out a little; patted hair rolls, changed a hairpin, took down their furs and left the car—tall graceful women, all of them.

Since my illness I had squeezed out from my earnings enough for the passage money, fourteen dollars, and eight besides. I did n't want to begin by being indebted to any one in the Seigniory of Lamoral for that amount; and I did n't want it deducted from my first wages. I pleased myself with the fancy that, soon after my arrival, I should give the money into some one's hands with an appropriate word or two, to the effect that I had chosen to pay my own travelling expenses. That sounded better than passage money which was reminiscent of the steerage.

They should understand that if I were at service, I had a little moneyed independence of my own—the pitiful eight dollars with which to go out into the new country. Immigrants have come in with less than this—nor been deported. Well, I ran no risk of being deported from Canada.

I asked the porter to make my berth early. About nine I lay down, tired and worn out with the excitement of the past three weeks. I drew the curtains close to shut out the night, and lay there passively content, listening to the steadily accented *clankity-clank-clank* of the Montreal night express.

I liked the sound; it soothed me. This swift on-rush into the night towards Canada, the even motion, began to rest the long over-strained nerves. During these hours, at least, I was care free. I slept.

For the first time for months that sleep was long, unbroken, dreamless. I awoke refreshed, strengthened. Drawing the window curtains aside, I looked out upon a world newly bathed in the early morning lights.

At the sight, my enthusiasm, which I thought quenched forever in the overwhelming flood of adverse circumstance, was rekindled; my imagination stimulated. Dawn was breaking clear and golden behind the mountains across Lake Champlain. Green those mountains are in the October sunlight, green and yellow and frost-wrought crimson; but now they loomed dark against the horizon's deepening gold. A few small dawn clouds of pure rose and one, gigantic, high-piled, of smoke gray, hung motionless above the mist-veiled waters of the lake.

I watched the coming of this day with charmed eyes. The sun rose clear, undimmed over the shadowed mountains. The lake mists felt its beams; dispersed suddenly in silver flocculence; and the path across the blue waters was free for the morning glory that was advancing apace.

BOOK TWO

THE SEIGNIORY OF LAMORAL

I

"Richelieu—Richelieu-en-Bas."

The captain of the local freight and passenger boat, that had taken six hours to make its trip down the St. Lawrence from Montreal, pointed encouragingly to the low north bank of the river. I looked eagerly in that direction.

"Richelieu-en-Haut is back there," with a sweep of his hand northwards, "six miles back on the railroad."

The little steamer was running, at that moment, within twenty feet of the low bank which, I saw at once, had been converted into a meandering village street, built up only on one side. A double row of trees shaded both houses and highway. We were within confidential speaking distance of the few people I saw in the street, and apparently on intimate terms with the front rooms of the tiny houses. We sailed past the market-place square, past the long low inn with double verandas, past the post office, and drew to the landing-place which the steamer saluted.

This salute was the signal for the appearance of what appeared to me the entire population of the place. There were people under the lindens, people at the doors and open windows, people in boats rowing towards us; one man was poling a scow in which were a cow and two horses. There were men with handcarts, boys with baskets, old women and young girls, all talking, gesticulating freely.

The handcarts were drawn up to the landing-place; the steamer was made fast to an apology for a mooring-post; the gangway heaved up. Several sheep on the lower deck were run down it by a forced method of locomotion, their keepers hoisting their hind legs, and steering them wheelbarrow fashion into the street where some children attempted to ride them. All about me I heard the chatter of Canadian French, not a word of which I understood.

A ponderous antiquated private coach, into which were harnessed two fine shaggy-fetlocked horses,—I learned afterwards these were Percherons, with sires from Normandy,—stood in the street directly opposite the boat; a small boy was holding their heads. I wondered if that were my "Seigniory coach"!

My trunk was literally shovelled out down the gangway, and I followed. I stood on the landing-place and looked about me. I was, in truth, in that other country for, oh, the air! It was like nothing I had ever known! So strong, so free, so soft, as if it were blowing straight from the great Northland, over unending virgin plains, through primeval unending forests, that the dwellers on this great water highway might enjoy something of its primal purity and strength.

I was filling my lungs full of it and thinking of my instructions to ask for Mrs. Janet Macleod, when a tall man, loosely jointed but powerfully built, made his way to me through the crowd.

"I take it you 're the gal Mis' Macleod 's lookin' fer?"

It was simply the statement of a foregone conclusion, but the drawling nasal intonation, the accent and manner of speech, told me that it was native to my northern New England, where I have lived two-thirds of my life; it was the speech of my own people. I laughed; I could not have helped it. It was such a come-down from my high ideas of "Seigniory retainers" of foreign birth, with which romance I had been entertaining myself ever since I had fed my fancy on what the New York Public Library yielded me.

"Yes, I 'm the one, Marcia Farrell. Is this our coach?"

The man gave me a keen glance from under his bushy eyebrows; indeed, he looked sharply at me a second time. If he thought I was quizzing him he was much mistaken.

"Yes, that's our'n,"—I noticed he placed an emphasis on the possessive,—"and we 'd better be gettin' along 'fore dark; the steamer's late. You and the coach ain't just what you 'd call a perfect fit—nor I could n't say as you was a misfit," he added, as he opened the door for me to get in. "Guess Mis' Macleod was expectin' somebody with a little more heft to 'em; you don't look over tough?" The statement was put in the form of a question. "But your trunk 'll fill up some."

He hoisted it endwise with one hand on to the front seat; took his place beside it; gathered up the reins, and said to the boy:

"Let 'em go, Pete. You get up behind."

But the horses did not go. They snorted, threw up their heads, flourished their long tails, one of them showed his heels, and both cavorted to the wild delight of the assembled crowd.

Some emphatic words from the coachman, and judicious application of the whiplash, soon showed the young thoroughbreds what was wanted of them, and they trotted slowly, heavily, but steadily, down the road beside the river, Pete, who was behind on a curious tail extension, shouting to the small boys as he passed them.

After the horses had settled down to real work, my driver turned to me.

"Did you come through last night clear from New York?"

"Yes, and I 'm glad to get here; this air is wonderful."

"Thet 's what they all say when they strike Canady fer the fust time. I take it it's your fust time?"

"Yes, I 'm a stranger here."

"Speakin' 'bout air—I can't see much difference 'twixt good air most anywheres. Take it, now, up in New England, up north where I was raised, you can't get better nowheres. Thet comes drorrin' through the mountains and acrosst the Lake, an' it can't be beat."

I made no reply for I feared he would ask me if I knew "New England up north".

He turned to look at me, evidently surprised at my short silence. He saw that I was being jolted about on the broad back seat, owing to the uneven road.

"Sho! If I did n't have the trunk, I 'd put you here on the front seat 'longside of me to kinder steady you."

"How far is it to the Seigniory of Lamoral, Mr.—?" I ventured to ask, hoping for a flood of information about the Seigniory and its occupants.

"Call me Cale," he said shortly; "thet 's short fer Caleb, an' what all the Canucks know me by. Mis' Macleod, she ain't but jest come to it; she balked consider'ble at fust, but it rolls off'n her tongue now without any Scotch burr, I can tell you! You was askin' 'bout the Seigniory of Lamoral —I dunno jest what to say. The way we 're proceedin' now it's 'bout an hour from here, but with some hosses it might take a half, an' by boat you can make it as long as you 're a mind ter."

"It's a large place?"

"Thet depends on whether you 're talkin' 'bout the old manor or the Seigniory; one I can show you in ten minutes, t' other in about three days." He turned and looked at me again with his small

keen gray eyes.

"Where was *you* raised?" He spoke carelessly enough; but I knew my own. He was simulating indifference, and I put him off the track at once.

"I was born in New York City."

"Great place—New York."

He chirrupped to the colts, and we drove for the next fifteen minutes without further conversation.

The boat, owing to heavy freight, was an hour late in leaving Montreal, and two hours longer than its usual time, in discharging it at a dozen hamlets and villages along the St. Lawrence. In consequence, it was sunset when we left the landing-place, and the twilight was deepening to-night, as we turned away from the river road and drove a short distance inland. Once Caleb drew rein to light a lantern, and summon Pete from the back of the coach to sit beside him and hold it.

It grew rapidly dark. Leaning from the open upper half of the coach door, I could just see between the trees along the roadside, a sheet of water.

"Hola!" Cale shouted suddenly with the full power of his lungs. "Hola—hola!"

It was echoed by Pete's shrill prolonged "Ho—la-a-a-a-a!"

"Ho-la! Ho!" came the answer from somewhere across the water. Cale turned and looked over his shoulder.

"Thet 's the ferry. We ferry over a piece here; it's the back water of a crick thet makes in from the river 'long here, fer 'bout two mile." He turned into a narrow lane, dark under the trees, and drove to the water's edge.

By the flare of the lantern I could see a broad raft, rigged with a windlass, slowly moving towards us over the darkening waters. Another lantern of steady gleam lighted the face of the ferryman. It took but a few minutes to reach the bank; the horses went on to the boards with many a snort and much stamping of impatient hoofs. Pete took his place at their heads.

"*Marche!*"

We moved slowly away towards the other bank. There was no moon; the night air was crisp with coming frost; an owl hooted somewhere in the woods.

We were soon on the road again, as ever beneath trees. It seemed to me as if we were turning to the river again. I asked Cale about it.

"You 've hit it 'bout right, in the dark too. We foller back a quarter of a mile, an' then we 're there."

That quarter of a mile seemed long to me.

"Here we are," said Cale, at last.

I looked out. I could see the long low outlines of a house showing dimly white through the trees, for there were trees everywhere. A flaring light, as from a wood fire, illumined one window.

We drew up at a broad flight of low steps. A door into a lighted passageway was opened. I saw there were at least four people in it; one, a woman in a white cap, came out on the upper step.

"Have you brought Miss Farrell, Cale?" she said.

"Yes, Mis' Macleod, fetched her right along; but the boat was good three hours late.—Pete, open the door; I 'll hold the hosses."

I went up the steps, not knowing what to say, for the mere inflection of her voice, the gentle address, the prefix "Miss" to my name, told me intuitively that I was with gentle people, and my service with them was to be other than I fancied.

II

"I hope you will soon feel at home in the old manor." With these words I was made welcome.

Mrs. Macleod led the way into the house.

"Jamie," she said to a young man, or youth, I could not tell which, "this is Miss Farrell. My son," she added, turning to me.

"Call me Marcia," I said to her. She smiled as if pleased.

"You will be feeling very tired after your long journey—and I 'm thinking jolly hungry after coming up in the old boat; that was mother's doings."

"Now, Jamie—!" she spoke in smiling protest.

O Jamie, Jamie Macleod! Your thin bright eager face was in itself a welcome to the old manor of Lamoral.

"I 'm not tired, but I confess to having a good appetite; this Canada air would make an angel long for manna," I said laughing.

"Wouldn't it though—oh, it's great!" he responded joyfully. "Angélique, here, will help you out in that direction—she's our cook; Angélique, come here." He gave his command in French.

The short thickset French Canadian of the black-eyed-Susan type, came forward, with outstretched hand, from the back of the passageway; there was good friendship in her hearty grip.

"And Marie will take charge of you till supper time," said Mrs. Macleod, smiling; "Jamie is apt to run the house at times because he can speak with the servants in their own tongue."

"Now, mother!" It was Jamie's turn to protest.

Mrs. Macleod spoke to the little maid, who was beaming on me, in halting French.

"Do you speak French?" she asked me.

"No, I can read it, that 's all."

"Oh, well, with that you can soon understand and speak it; my Scotch tongue is too old to be learning new tricks; fortunately I understand it a little. Marie will take you to your room."

Marie looked on me with an encouraging smile, and led the way up stairs through a wide passageway, down three steps into another long corridor, and opened a door at the end. She lighted two candles and, after some pantomime concerning water, left me, closing the door behind her.

And this was my room. I looked around; it took immediate possession of me in spirit—a new experience for me and a wholly pleasing one.

There were two windows in one end; the walls were sloping. I concluded it must be in the gable end of some addition to the main building. The walls were whitewashed; the floor was neatly laid with a woven rag carpet of peculiar design and delicate coloring; the cottage bedroom set was painted dark green. There was a plain deal writing table with writing pad and inkstand, and a dressing table on which stood two white china candlesticks. Counterpane, chair cushions, and window hangings were of beautiful old chintz still gay with faded paroquets and vines, trees, trellises, roses and numerous humming-birds, on a background of faded crocus yellow.

There was a knock at the door. On my using one of the few words in French at my command, "Entrez," Marie burst in with delighted exclamations and a flood of unintelligible French. But I gathered she was explaining to me Pierre who followed her, cap in one hand, and in the other, the handle of my trunk which he was dragging behind him. This was evidently Pierre, father, in distinction from Pierre, son.

"Big Pete and little Pete," I translated for their benefit; whereupon Marie clapped her hands and Peter the Great came forward man fashion to shake hands before he placed my trunk. As the two spoke together I heard the name "Cale".

"What a household!" I said to myself after they had gone, and while I was doing over my hair. "I wonder if there are any other members? And what is my place in it going to be?"

It kept me guessing until I had made myself ready for supper.

Soon there was another knock. Marie's voice was heard; her tongue loosed in voluble expression of her evident desire to conduct me down stairs to the dining-room.

"Here are more of us!" was Jamie Macleod's exclamation, as I entered the long low room. Four fine dogs—he told me afterwards they were Gordon setters—rose slowly from the rug before the fireplace. "But they 're Scotch and need no introduction. Come here, comrades!"

The four leaped towards me; snuffed at me with evident curiosity; licked my hands and were

about to spring on me, but a word from their master sent them back to the rug.

He showed me my place at the long narrow table; drew out the chair for his mother and, when she was seated, spoke to the dogs who, with perfect decorum, sedately settled themselves on their haunches in twos, one on each side of Mrs. Macleod at the head of the table, one on each side of her son at her right. They looked for all the world like the Barye bronzes in the Metropolitan Museum! After all, I could not get rid of all the associations, nor did this one bring with it anything but pleasure, that the great city had yielded me this much of instruction.

I was looking at the dogs and about to speak, when I noticed that Mrs. Macleod had bent her head and folded her hands. I caught Jamie looking at me out of the corner of his eye. For the first time in my life I heard "grace" said at a table. I felt myself grow red; I was embarrassed. Jamie saw my confusion and began to chat in his own bright way.

"I asked mother if she had written definitely what we 'd asked you up here for into the wilds of Canada."

"Now, Jamie! You will be giving Miss—Marcia," she corrected herself, "to understand I asked her here under false pretence. To tell the truth, I did n't quite see how to explain myself at such a distance." She spoke with perfect sincerity. "Moreover, Doctor Rugvie told me that Mrs. Beaseley was absolutely trustworthy, and I relied on her—but you don't know Doctor Rugvie?"

"Of him, yes; I saw him once in the hospital."

"So you 've been in the hospital too?"

It was Jamie who put that question, and something of the eager light in his face faded as he asked it.

"Yes, last spring; I was there ten weeks."

"Then you know," he said quite simply, and looked at me with inquiring eyes.

Why or how I was enabled to read the significance of that simple statement, I cannot say; I know only in part. But I do know that my eyes must have answered his, for I saw in them a reflection of my own thought: We both, then, have known what it is, to draw near to the threshold of that door that opens only outward.

"You don't indeed look strong; I noticed that the first thing," said Mrs. Macleod.

"Oh, but I am," I assured her; "you will see when you have work for me. I can cook, and sew—and chop wood, and even saw a little, if necessary."

Mrs. Macleod looked at me in absolute amazement, and Jamie burst into a hearty laugh. It was good to hear, and, without in the slightest knowing why, I laughed too—at what I did not know, nor much care. It was good to laugh like that!

"And to think, mother, that you told me to come down heavy on the 'strong and country raised'! Oh, this is rich! I wrote that advertisement, Miss Far—"

"Please call me Marcia."

"May I?" He was again eager and boyish.

"Why not?" I said. He went on with his unfinished sentence.

"—And I pride myself that I rose to the occasion of mother's command to make it 'brief but explicit'."

"Poor girl, you 've had little chance to hear anything explicit from me as yet." Mrs. Macleod smiled, rather sadly I thought. "But you shall know before you go to bed. I could n't be so thoughtless as to keep you in suspense over night."

"Oh, I can wait," I said; "but what I want to know, Mr. Macleod—"

"Please call me Jamie," he said, imitating my voice and intonation.

"May I?" I replied, mimicking his own. Then we both fell to laughing like two children, and it seemed to me that I felt what it is to be young, for the first time in my life. The four dogs wagged their tails, threshing the floor with them like flails and keeping time to our hilarity; Mrs. Macleod smiled, almost happily, and Marie came in to see what it was all about.

"What do you want to know?" he said at last, mopping the tears from his eyes with his napkin.

"Why you advertised your mother as 'an elderly Scotchwoman'?"

"Because that sounded safe."

Again we laughed, it seemed at almost nothing. The dogs whined as if wanting to join in what

fun there was; the fire snapped merrily on the hearth, and the large coal-oil lamp, at the farther end of the long table, sent forth a cheerful light from under its white porcelain shade, and showed me the old room in all its simple beauty.

Overhead, the great beams and the ceiling were a rich mahogany color with age. The sides were panelled to the ceiling with the same wood. Between the two doors opening into the passageway, was a huge but beautifully proportioned marble chimney-piece that reached to the beams of the ceiling. The marble was of the highest polish, white, pale yellow, and brown in tone. Above the mantel, it formed the frame of a large canvas that showed a time-darkened landscape with mounted hunters. The whole piece was exquisitely carved with the wild grape vine—its leaves and fruit.

On each side were old iron sconces. Above the two doors were the antlers of stags. The room was lighted by four windows; these were hung with some faded chintz, identical in pattern and color with that in my bedroom; they were drawn. I wondered, as I looked at this beauty of simplicity, what the other rooms in the house would show. I noticed there was no sideboard, no dresser; only the table, and heavy chairs with wooden seats, furnished the room.

The food was wholesome and abundant. I found myself wondering that I could eat each mouthful without counting the cost.

"I 'll stay here with the dogs and smoke," Jamie said, as we left the table.

We crossed the passageway, which I noticed was laid with flagging and unheated, to the room opposite the dining-room.

Here again, there were the wood ceilings and panelled walls, the latter painted white. The great chimney-piece was like its fellow in the dining-room; only the carvings were different: intricate scrollwork and fine groovings. There was a canvas, also, in the marble frame, but it was in a good state of preservation; it showed a walled city on a height and a river far below. I wondered if it could be Quebec.

The room was larger than the other, but much cosier in every way. There were a few modern easy chairs, an ample old sofa—swans carved on the back and arms—a large library table of black oak with bevelled edges, also beautifully carved; and around the walls of the room, in every available space, were plain low bookshelves of pine stained to match the table. On the floor were the same woven rugs of rag carpet, unique of design and beautiful in coloring—dark brown, pale yellow, and white, with large squares marked off in narrow lines of rose. The furniture, except for the sofa which was upholstered in faded yellow wool damask, was covered with flowery chintz like that in the dining-room, and at the windows were the same faded yellow hangings. A large black bear skin rug lay before the hearth. There were no ornaments or pictures anywhere. On the mantel were two pots of flourishing English ivy. A stand of geraniums stood before one of the four windows.

There were sconces on each side of the chimney-piece, but of gilt bronze. Each was seven-branched, and it was evident that Marie had just lighted all fourteen candles.

Mrs. Macleod drew her chair to the hearth, and I took one near her.

III

"It is a good time to speak of some matters between ourselves; Jamie will not be coming in for an hour at least." She turned and looked at me steadily.

"I don't know how much or how little you know of this place, and perhaps it will be best to begin at the beginning. Mrs. Beaseley wrote me you were born in the city of New York."

"Yes; twenty-six years ago next December."

"So Mrs. Beaseley wrote, or rather her daughter did for her. She said you were an orphan."

"Yes." I answered so. How could I answer otherwise knowing what I did? But I felt the blood mount to my temples when I stated this half truth.

"You say you do not know Doctor Rugvie?"

"No; only of him."

"I wish you did." (How could she know that my wish to see him and know him must be far stronger than hers!)

"He will be coming out here later on in the winter—are you cold?" she asked quickly, for I had

shivered to cover an involuntary start.

"No, not at all; but I think it must be growing colder outside."

"It is. Cale said we might have heavy frost or snow before morning. You will find the changes in temperature very sudden and trying here in spring and autumn. About Doctor Rugvie; he is a good man, and a great one in his profession. We made his acquaintance many years ago in Scotland, in my own home, Crieff. He had lodgings with us for ten weeks, and since then he has made us proud to be counted among his friends."

She rose, stirred the fire and took a maple stick from a large wood-basket.

"Let me," I said, taking it from her.

"You really don't look strong enough."

"Oh, but I am; you 'll see."

"By the way, don't let my son do anything like this. He is often careless and over confident, and he must not strain himself—he is under strict orders." She was silent for a moment then went on:

"My son is not strong, as you must see." She looked at me appealingly, as if hoping I might dispute her statement; but I could say nothing.

"A year ago," she spoke slowly, as if with difficulty, "he was in the Edinboro' Hospital for five months; he inherits his father's constitution, and the hemorrhages were very severe. Doctor Rugvie came over to see him, and advised his coming out here to Canada to live as far as possible in the pine forests. He has been away all summer. He is to go away again next year with one of the old guides.

"I want you to remain with me as companion and assistant here in the house; the service is large and, as you will soon find," she added with a smile, "extremely personal. They are interested in us and our doings, and we are expected to reciprocate that interest. It will be a comfort to Jamie to know you are with me, and that I am not alone in this French environment." She interrupted herself to say:

"Did Mrs. Beaseley tell you anything about this place? You can speak with perfect freedom to me. We have no mysteries here." She smiled as if she read my thoughts.

"She told me she knew nothing of the place, except that Doctor Rugvie had hired a farm in Canada with some good buildings on it, and that he intended to use it for those who might need to be built up in health."

"She has stated it exactly. My son and I are the first beneficiaries—only, this is not the farm."

"Not the farm!" I exclaimed. She looked amused at my surprise. "What is it then? Do tell me."

"There is very little to tell. A friend of Doctor Rugvie's, an Englishman who was with him for a week in Scotland while he was with us, is owner of the Seigniory of Lamoral; it is his, I think, by inheritance, although I am not positive; and this is the old manor house. The estate is very large, but has been neglected; I have understood it is to be cultivated; some of it is to be reforested and the present forest conserved. He will be his own manager and will make his home here a great part of the year. Mean while, he has installed us here in his absence, through Doctor Rugvie, of course, and given over the charge of house and servants to Jamie and me."

"And what is the owner's title?"

"He has none that I know of. The real 'Seignior' and 'Seignioress' live in Richelieu-en-Bas in the new manor house—I say 'new', but that must be seventy-five years old. This is only a part of the original seigniory."

"I don't understand these seigniories, and I tried to read up about them before I came here."

"It is very perplexing—these seigniorial rights and rents and transferences. I don't make any pretence of understanding them."

"Are the farm buildings occupied now?"

"No; Doctor Rugvie wants to attend to those himself. It is his recreation to make plans for this farm, and he will be here himself to see that they are begun and carried out right. He tells me he has always loved Canada."

"And what am I to do for you? I want to begin to feel of a little use," I said half impatiently.

"You are doing for me now, my dear." (How easily Delia Beaseley's name for me came from the "elderly Scotchwoman's" lips!) "Your presence cheers Jamie; the young need the young, and belong to the young—"

"But," I protested, "I am not young; I am twenty-six."

"And Jamie is twenty-three. But when you laughed together to-night, you both might have been sixteen. It did me good to hear you; this old house needs just that—and I can't laugh easily now," she added. I heard a note of hopelessness in her voice.

How lovely she was as she sat by the fire in the soft radiance of candle light! "Elderly"!—She could not be a day over fifty-seven or eight. The fine white cap rested on heavy, smoothly parted hair; the figure was round to plumpness; the dress, not modernized, became her; her voice was still young if a little weary, and her brown eyes bright, the lids unwrinkled.

"Do you know Delia Beaseley well? Doctor Rugvie says she is a fine woman."

"She is noble," I said emphatically; "I feel that I know her well, although I have seen her only a few times."

"Is she a widow?"

The door opened before I could gather my wits to answer. I felt intuitively that I could not say to this Scotchwoman, that Delia Beaseley was neither widow nor wife. I welcomed the sudden inrush of all four dogs and Jamie behind them, with the smell of a fresh pipe about him.

"I positively must have my second short pipe here with you. I kept away in deference to the new member of the family." He flourished his pipe towards me. "I always smoke here, don't I, mother?"

"In that case, I will stay in my room after supper unless you continue to smoke your first, second, and third—"

"Only two; Doctor Rugvie won't allow me a third—"

"Doctor Rugvie is a tyrant, and I 've said the same thing before," I declared firmly.

"Now, look here, Marcia," he said solemnly, "we will call a halt right now and here." He settled his long length in the deep easy chair on the other side of the hearth, refilled and relighted his pipe. "Doctor Rugvie is my friend, my very special friend; whoever enters this house, enters it on the footing of friendship with all those who are my friends—"

"Hear, hear! Another tyrant," I said, turning to his mother who was enjoying our chaff.

"—Whose name is legion," he went on, ignoring my interruption. "I'll begin to enumerate them for your benefit. There are the four dogs, Gordon setters of the best breed—and Gordon's setters in fact." He made some pun at which his mother smiled, but it was lost on me. "They 're not mine, they 're my friend's, and that amounts to the same thing when he 's away."

"And who is this friend of dogs and of man?"

"He? Guy Mannering, hear her! Why there's only one 'he' for this place and that's—"

"Doctor Rugvie?"

"Doctor Rugvie!" he repeated, looking at me in unfeigned amazement; then to his mother:

"Have n't you told her yet, mother?"

"I doubt if I mentioned his name—I had so many other things to say and think of." She spoke half apologetically.

"The man who owns this house, Miss Farrell,"—he was speaking so earnestly and emphatically that he forgot our agreement,—"the man who owns these dogs, the lord of this manor, such as it is, and everything belonging to it, lord of a forest it will do your eyes and lungs and soul good to journey through, the man who is master in the best sense of Pete and little Pete, of Angélique and Marie, of old Mère Guillardeau, of a dozen farmers here on the old Seigniory of Lamoral, my friend, Doctor Rugvie's friend and friend of all Richelieu-en-Bas, is Mr. Ewart, Gordon Ewart—and you missed my pun! the first I've made to-day!—and I hope he will be yours!"

"Well, I 'll compromise. If he will just tolerate me here for your sakes, I 'll be his friend whether he is mine or not—for I want to stay."

I meant what I said; and I think both mother and son realized, that under the jesting words there was a deep current of feeling. Mrs. Macleod leaned over and laid her hand on mine.

"You shall stay, Marcia; it will not depend on Mr. Ewart, your remaining with us. When the farm is ready, Doctor Rugvie will place us there, and then I shall need your help all the time."

Again, as at the station with Delia Beaseley's blessing ringing in my ears, I felt the unaccustomed tears springing in my eyes. Jamie leaned forward and knocked the ashes from his pipe; he continued to stare into the fire.

"And who are the others?" I asked unsteadily; my lips trembled in spite of myself.

"The others? Oh—," he seemed to come back to us from afar, "there is André—"

"And who is André?"

"Just André—none such in the wide world; my guide's old father, old Mère Guillardeau's brother, old French voyageur and coureur de bois; it will take another evening to tell you of André.— Mother," he spoke abruptly, "it's time for porridge and Cale."

"Yes, I will speak to Marie." She rose and left the room by a door at the farther end.

"Remark those fourteen candles, will you?" said Jamie, between puffs.

"I have noticed them; I call that a downright extravagance."

"I pay for it," he said sententiously; then, with a slight flash of resentment; "you need n't think I sponge on Ewart to the extent of fourteen candles a night."

I laughed a little under my breath. I knew a little friction would do him no harm.

"And when those fourteen candles burn to within two inches of the socket, as at present, it is my invariable custom, being a Scotsman, to call for the porridge—and for Cale, because he is of our tongue, and needs to discourse with his own, at least once, before going to bed. I say a Scotsman without his nine o'clock porridge is a cad."

"Any more remarks are in order," I said to tease him.

"You really must know Cale—"

"I thought I made his acquaintance this afternoon."

He laughed again his hearty laugh. "I forgot; he drove you out. We did n't send Pete because we thought you might not understand his lingo. But you must n't fancy you know Cale because you 've seen him once—oh, no! You 'll have to see him daily and sometimes hourly; in fact, you will see so much of him that, sometimes, you will wish it a little less; for you are to understand that Cale is omnipresent, very nearly omnipotent here with us, and indispensable to *me*. You will accept him on my recommendation and afterwards make a friend of him for your own sake."

"Who is he?"

"Cale?—He 's just Cale too. His name is Caleb Marstin; 'hails', as he says, from northern New England. I have noticed he does n't care to name the locality, and I respect his reticence; it's none of my business. He says he has n't lived there for more than a quarter of a century and has no relations. He can tell you more about forests, lumber and forestry, in one hour than a whole Agricultural College. He has been for years lumbering in northern Minnesota and across the Canadian border. He 's here to help reforest and conserve the old forest to the estate; he 's—in a word, he 's my right hand man."

"Is Mr. Ewart lord of Cale too?"

At my question, Jamie's long body doubled up with mirth.

"Have n't seen each other yet and don't know each other. Gordon Ewart is n't apt to acknowledge any one as his master, especially in the matter of forestry, and Cale never does; result, fun for us when they do know each other."

"How did you happen to get him here?"

"Oh, a girl I know, who visits in Richelieu-en-Bas, said her father, who is a big lumber merchant on the States' border, knew of good men for the place. Ewart had told me that this was my first business, to get a man for the place; so I wrote to him, and he replied that Cale was coming east in the spring and he had given him my name. That's how."

Mrs. Macleod came in, followed by Marie with steaming porridge, bowls and spoons on a tray; Cale was behind her. Jamie looked up with a smile.

"Cale, this is Miss Farrell, the new member of our Canadian settlement. I take it you have spoken with her before."

There was no outstretched hand for me; nor did I extend mine to him. We were of one people, Cale and I: northern New Englanders, and rarely demonstrative to strangers. We are apt to wait for an advance in friendship and then retreat before it when it is made, for the simple reason that we fear to show how much we want it! But I smiled up at him as he took his stand by the mantel, leaning an elbow on it.

"Yes, Cale and I have made each other's acquaintance." I noticed that when I looked up at him and smiled, he gave an involuntary start. I wondered if Jamie saw it.

"Yes, we had some conversation, such as 'twas, on the way. 'T ain't every young gal would ride out inter what you might call the unbeknownst of a seigniory in Canady with an old feller like me."

A slow smile wrinkled his gaunt whiskered cheeks, and creased a little more deeply the crowsfeet around the small keen grey eyes that, I noticed, fixed themselves on me and were hardly withdrawn during the five minutes he stood by the mantel gulping his porridge.

After finishing it, he bade us an abrupt good night and left.

"What's struck Cale, mother?" Jamie asked as soon as he had left the room; "this is the first time I 've ever known his loquacity to be at a low ebb. It could n't be Marcia, could it?"

"I don't think Marcia's presence had anything to do with it; he is n't apt to be minding the presence of any one. I think he has something on his mind."

"Then he 'd better get it off; I don't like it," said Jamie brusquely; "here they come—"

In came Angélique and Marie, Pierre the Great, and Pierre the Small, to bid us good night; it was their custom; and after the many "bonne-nuits" and "dormez-biens", they trooped out. We took our lighted candlesticks from the library table where Marie had placed them; Jamie snuffed out the fourteen low-burning lights in the sconces, drew ashes over the embers, put a large screen before the fire, and we went to our rooms.

Mine greeted me with an extra degree of warmth. Marie had made more fire; the air was frosty. I drew apart the curtains and looked out. There was only the blackness of night beyond the panes. I drew them to again; unlocked my trunk to take out merely what was necessary for the night, undressed and went to bed.

I must have lain there hours with wide open eyes; there was no sleep in me. Hour after hour I listened for a sound from somewhere; there was absolute silence within the manor and without. I had opened my window for air, and, as I lay there wide awake, gradually, without reason, in that intense silence, the various nightly street sounds of the great city, five hundred miles to the southward, began to sound in my ears; at first far away, then nearer and nearer until I heard distinctly the roar of the elevated, the multiplied "honk-honk" of the automobiles, the rolling of cabs, the grating clamor of the surface cars, the clang of the ambulance, the terrific clatter of the horses' hoofs as they sped three abreast to the fire, the hoarse whistle of tug and ferry; and, above all, the voices of those crying in that wilderness.

Again I felt that awful burden, that blackness of oppression, which was with me for weeks in the hospital—the result of the intensified life of the huge metropolis and the giant machinery that sustains it—and, feeling it, I knew myself to be a stranger even in the white walled room in the old manor house of Lamoral.

It must have been long, long after midnight when I fell asleep.

IV

There was a soft white light on walls and ceiling when I awoke. I recognized it at once: the reflection from snow. I drew aside both curtains and looked out.

"Oh, how beautiful!" I exclaimed, drawing long deep breaths of the fine dry air.

It was the so-called "feather-snow" that had fallen during the night. It powdered the massive drooping hemlock boughs, the spraying underbrush, the stiff-branched spruce and cedars that crowded the tall pines, overstretching the steep gable above my windows.

Just below me, about twenty feet from the house, was the creek, a backwater of the St. Lawrence, lying clear, unruffled, dark, and mirroring the snow-frosted cedars, hemlocks, and spraying underbrush. Across its narrow width the woods came down to the water, glowing crimson, flaunting orange, shimmering yellow beneath the light snow fall. Straight through these woods, and directly opposite my windows, a broad lane had been cut, a long wide clearing that led my eyes northward, over some open country, to the soft blue line of the mountains. I took them to be the Laurentides.

From a distance, in the direction of the village, came the sudden muffled clash of bells; then peal followed peal. The sun was fully an hour high. As I listened, I heard the soft *drip*, *drip*, that sounded the vanishing of the "feather-snow".

I stood long at the window, for I knew this glory was transient and before another snowfall every crimson and yellow leaf would have fallen.

While dressing, I took myself to task for the mood of the night before. Such thoughts could not serve me in my service to others. I was a beneficiary—Mrs. Macleod's word—as well as Jamie and his mother, and I determined to make the most of my benefits which, in the morning sunshine, seemed many and great. Had I not health, a sheltering room, abundant food and good wages?

I could not help wondering whose was the money with which I was to be paid. Had it anything to do with Doctor Rugvie's "conscience fund"? Did Mrs. Macleod and Jamie bear the expense? Or was it Mr. Ewart's?

"Ewart—Ewart," I said to myself; "why it's the very same I heard in the train."

Then and there I made my decision: I would write to Delia Beaseley that, as Mrs. Macleod said Doctor Rugvie would be here sometime later on in the winter, I would wait until I should have seen him before asking him for my papers.

"I shall ask her never to mention my name to him in connection with what happened twenty-six years ago; I prefer to tell it myself," was my thought; "it is an affair of my own life, and it belongs to me, and to no other, to act as pioneer into this part of my experience—"

Marie's rap and entrance with hot water, her voluble surprise at finding me up and dressed, and our efforts to understand each other, diverted my thoughts. I made out that the family breakfasted an hour later, and that it was Marie's duty to make a fire for me every morning. I felt almost like apologizing to her for allowing her to do it for me, who am able-bodied and not accustomed to be waited on.

I took rain-coat and rubbers, and followed her down stairs. She unbolted the great front door and let me out into the early morning sunshine. I stood on the upper step to look around me, to take in every detail of my surroundings, only guessed at the night before.

Maples and birch mingled with evergreens, crowding close to the house, filled the foreground on each side. In front, an unkempt driveway curved across a large neglected lawn, set with lindens and pines, and lost itself in woods at the left. Between the tree trunks on the lawn, at a distance of perhaps five hundred feet, I saw the broad gleaming waters of the St. Lawrence broken by two long islands. Behind the farther one I saw the smoke of some large steamer.

I looked up at the house. It was a storey and a half, long, low, white. The three large windows on each side of the entrance were provided with ponderous wooden shutters banded with iron. There were four dormers in the gently sloping roof and two large central chimneys, besides two or three smaller ones in various parts of the roof. Such was the old manor of Lamoral.

A path partly overgrown with bushes led around the house; following it, I found that the main building was the least part of the whole structure. Two additions, varying in length and height, provided as many sharp gables, and gave it the inconsequent charm of the unexpected.

Beyond, in a tangle of cedars and hemlocks, were some low square out-buildings with black hip-roofs. Still following the path, that turned to the left away from the outbuildings, I found myself in the woods that from all sides encroached upon the house. It was a joy to be in them at that early hour. The air was filled with sunshine and crisp with the breath of vanishing snow. The sky was deep blue as seen between the interlocking branches, wet and darkened, of the crowding trees.

Before me I saw what looked to be another out-building, also white, and evidently the goal for this path through the woods. It proved to be a small chapel, half in ruins; the door was time-stained and barred with iron; the window glass was gone; only the delicate wooden traceries of the frame were intact. I mounted a pile of building stone beneath one of the windows, and by dint of standing on tiptoe I could look over the window ledge to the farther end of the chapel. To my amazement I saw that it had been, in part, a mortuary chapel. Several slabs were lying about as if they had been pried off, and the deep stone-lined graves were empty. The place fairly gave me the creeps; it was so unexpected to find this reminder in the hour of the day's resurrection.

What a wilderness was this Seigniory of Lamoral! And yet—I liked it. I liked its wildness, the untrammelled growth of its trees, underbrush and vines; the dignified simplicity of its old manor that matched the simple sincerity of its present inmates. I felt somehow akin to all of it, and I could say with truth, that I should be glad to remain a part of it. But I recalled what Mrs. Macleod said about our removal to the farm, and that remembrance forbade my indulging in any thoughts of permanency.

"Stranger I am in it, and stranger I must remain to it, and at no distant time 'move on,' I suppose." This was my thought.

A noise of soft runnings-to-and-fro in the underbrush startled me. I jumped down from the pile of stones and started for the house, but not before the dogs found me and announced the fact with continued and energetic yelpings. Jamie greeted me from the doorway.

"Good morning! You 've stolen a march on me; I wanted to show you the chapel in the woods. You will find this old place as good as a two volume novel."

"What a wilderness it is!"

"That's what Cale is here for. He is only waiting for Ewart to come to bring order out of this chaos. I hope you noticed that cut through the woods across the creek?"

"Yes, it's lovely; those are the Laurentians I see, are n't they?"

"You 're right. The cut is Cale's doing. He said the first thing necessary was to let in light and air, and provide drainage. But he won't do much more till Ewart comes—he does n't want to."

"When is Mr. Ewart coming?"

"We expect him sometime the last of November. He was in England when we last heard from him—here's Marie; breakfast is ready." He opened the door to the dining-room and Mrs. Macleod greeted me from the head of the table.

I loved the dining-room; the side windows looked into a thicket of spruce and hemlock, and from the front ones I could see under the great-branched lindens to the St. Lawrence.

After breakfast Mrs. Macleod showed me what she called the "offices", also the large winter kitchen at the end of the central passageway, and the method by which both are heated: a range of curious make is set into the wall in such a way that the iron back forms a portion of the wall of the passageway.

"We came out here early in the spring and found this arrangement perfect for heating the passageway. Angélique has moved in this morning from the summer kitchen; she says the first snowfall is her warning. I have yet to experience a Canadian winter."

She showed me all over the house. It was simple in arrangement and lacked many things to make it comfortable. Above, in the main house, there were four large bedrooms with dormer windows and wide shallow fireplaces. The walls were whitewashed and sloping as in my room. The furniture was sparse but old and substantial. There were no bed furnishings or hangings of any kind. All the rooms were laid with rag carpets of beautiful coloring and unique design.

"Jamie and I have rooms in the long corridor where yours is," said Mrs. Macleod; "it's much cosier there; we actually have curtains to our beds, which seems a bit like home."

I was looking out of one of the dormer windows as she spoke, and saw little Pete on the white Percheron, galloping clumsily up the driveway. He saw me and waved a yellow envelope. I knew that little yellow flag to be a telegram. A sudden heart-throb warned me that it might bring some word that would shorten my stay in this old manor, and banish all three to Doctor Rugvie's farm.

A few minutes afterwards, we heard Jamie's voice calling from the lower passageway:

"Mother, where are you?—Oh, you 're there, Marcia!" he said, as I leaned over the stair rail. "Here 's a telegram from Ewart, and news by letter—no end of it. Come on down."

"Come away," said Mrs. Macleod quickly. I saw her cheeks flush with excitement. On entering the living-room we found Jamie in high feather. He flourished the telegram joyously.

"Oh, I say, mother, it's great! Ewart telegraphs he will be here by the fifteenth of November and that Doctor Rugvie will come with him. And here 's a letter from him, written two weeks ago, and he says that by now all the cases of books should be in Montreal, plus two French coach horses at the Royal Stables. He says Cale is to go up for them. He tells me to open the cases, and gives you free hand to furbish up in any way you see fit, to make things comfortable for the winter."

"My dear boy, what an avalanche of responsibility! I don't know that I feel competent to carry out his wishes." She looked so hopelessly helpless that her son laughed outright.

"And when and where do I come in?" I asked merrily; "am I to continue to be the cipher I 've been since my arrival?"

"You forgot Marcia, now did n't you, mother?"

"I think I did, dear. Do you really think you can attempt all this?" she asked rather anxiously.

"Do it! Of course I can—every bit, if only you will let me."

"Hurrah for the States!" Jamie cried triumphantly; "Marcia, you're a trump," he added emphatically.

Mrs. Macleod turned to me, saying half in apology:

"I really have no initiative, my dear; and when so many demands are made upon me unexpectedly, I simply can do nothing—just turn on a pivot, Jamie says; and the very fact that I am a beneficiary here would be an obstacle in carrying out these plans. It is so different in my own home in Crieff."

I heard the note of homesickness in her voice, and it dawned upon me that there are others in the world who may feel themselves strangers in it. My heart went out to her for her loneliness in this far away land of French Canada.

"Well, so am I a beneficiary; so is Cale and the whole household; and if only you will let me, I 'll make Mr. Ewart himself feel he is a beneficiary in his own house," I retorted gayly. "And as for Doctor Rugvie, we 'll see whether his farm will have such attractions for him after he has been our guest."

Mrs. Macleod laid her hand on my shoulder and smiled, saying with a sigh of relief:

"If you will only take the generalship, Marcia, you will find in me a good aide-de-camp."

Jamie said nothing, but he gave me a look that was with me all that day and many following. It spurred me to do my best.

V

How I enjoyed the next three weeks! Jamie said the household activity had been "switched off" until the arrival of the letter and telegram from Mr. Ewart; these, he declared, made the connection and started a current. Its energy made itself pleasurably felt in every member of the household. Cale was twice in Montreal, on a personally conducted tour, for the coach horses. Big Pete was putting on double windows all over the house, stuffing the cracks with moss, piling cords of winter wood, hauling grain and, during the long evenings, enjoying himself by cutting up the Canadian grown tobacco, mixing it with a little molasses, and storing it for his winter solace. Angélique was making the kitchen to shine, and Marie was helping Mrs. Macleod.

For the first week Jamie and I lived, in part, on the road between Lamoral and Richelieu-en-Bas. With little Pete for driver, an old cart-horse and a long low-bodied wagon carried us, sometimes twice a day, to the village. We spent hours in the one "goods" shop of the place. It was a long, low, dark room stocked to the ceiling on both walls and on shelves down the middle, with all varieties of cotton, woolen and silk goods, some of modern manufacture but more of past decades. In the dim background, a broad flight of stairs, bisecting on a landing, led to the gallery where were piled higgledy-piggledy every Canadian want in the way of furnishings, from old-fashioned bellows and all wool blankets, to Englishware toilet sets that must have found storage there for a generation, and no customer till Jamie and I appeared to claim them. There, too, I unearthed a bolt of English chintz.

In a tiny front room of a tiny house on the marketplace, I found an old dealer in skins. He and his wife made some up for me into small foot-rugs for the bedrooms. Acting on Angélique's suggestion, I visited old Mère Guillardeau's daughter. I found her in her cabin at her rag carpet loom, and bought two rolls which she was just about to leave with the "goods" merchant to sell on commission. I wanted them to make the long passageways more comfortable.

I revelled in each day's work which was as good as play to me. I gloried in being able to spend the money for what was needed to make the house comfortable, without the burden of having to earn it; just as I rejoiced in the abundant wholesome food that now nourished me, without impoverishing my pocket. There were times when I found myself almost grateful for the discipline and denial of those years in the city; for, against that background, my present life seemed one of care-free luxury. I began to feel young; and it was a pleasure to know I was needed and helpful.

The shortening November days, the strengthening cold, that closed the creek and was beginning to bind the river, the gray unlifting skies, I welcomed as a foil to the cosy evenings in the dining-room where Mrs. Macleod and I sewed and stitched, and planned for the various rooms, Jamie smoked and jeered or encouraged, and the four dogs watched every movement on our part, with an ear cocked for little Pete who was cracking butternuts in the kitchen.

The life in the manor was so peaceful, so sheltered, so normal. Every member of the household was busy with work during the day, and the night brought with it well-earned rest, and a sense of comfort and security in the flame-lighted rooms.

Often after going up to my bedroom, which Marie kept acceptably warm for me, I used to sit before the open grate stove for an hour before going to bed, just to enjoy the white-walled peace around me, the night silence without, the restful quiet of the old manor within. At such times I found myself dreading the "foreign invasion", as I termed in jest the coming of the owner of Lamoral and Doctor Rugvie. To the first I gave little thought; the second was rarely absent from my consciousness. "How will it all end?" I asked myself time and time again while counting off the days before his arrival. What should I find out? What would the knowledge lead to?

"Who am I? Who—who?" I said to myself over and over again during those three weeks of

preparation. And at night, creeping into my bed—than which there could be none better, for it was in three layers: spring, feather bed and hair mattress—and drawing up the blankets and comforter preparatory for the sharp frost of the early morning, I cried out in revolt:

"I don't care a rap who I may prove to be! If only this peaceful sense of security will last, I want to remain Marcia Farrell to the end."

But I knew it could not last. I hinted as much to Jamie Macleod only three days before the fifteenth of November. We were making our last trip to the village for some extra supplies for Angélique. We were alone, and I was driving.

"Jamie," I said suddenly, after the old and trustworthy cart-horse, newly and sharply shod for the ice, had taken us safely over the frozen creek, "I wish this might last, don't you?"

He looked at me a little doubtfully.

"You mean the kind of life we 're living now? Yes,"—he hesitated,—"for some reasons I do; but there are others, and for those it is better that the change should come."

"What others?" I was at times boldly inquisitive of Jamie; I took liberties with his youth.

"You would n't understand them if I told you. Wait till the others come and you 'll see, in part, why."

"Do you know," I continued, my words following my thought, "that you 've never told me a thing about Doctor Rugvie and Mr. Ewart?"

"Not told you anything? Why, I thought I 'd said enough that first evening for you to know as much of them as you can without seeing them."

"No, you have n't; you 've been like a clam so far as telling me anything about their looks, or age, or—or anything—"

"Oh, own up, now; you mean you want to know if they 're married or single?" He was beginning to tease.

"Of course I do. This old manor has had a good many surprises for me already in these three weeks, you, for one—"

He threw back his head, laughing heartily.

"—And the 'elderly Scotchwoman', and Cale for a third; and if you would give me a hint as to the matrimonial standing of the two from over-seas, I should feel fortified against any future petticoat invasion of their wives, or children, or sweethearts."

Jamie laughed uproariously.

"Oh, Guy Mannering, hear her! I thought you said you saw Doctor Rugvie in the hospital."

"So I did; but it was only a glimpse, and a long way off, as he was passing through another ward."

He turned to me quickly. "It's Doctor Rugvie you want to know about then? Why about him, rather than Ewart?"

"Because,—('Be cautious,' I warned myself),—I happen to have known of him."

"Well, fire away, and I 'll answer to the best of my knowledge. I believe a woman lives, moves and has her being in details," he said a little scornfully.

"Have you just found that out?" I retorted. "Well, you have n't cut all your wisdom teeth yet. And now, as you seem to think it's Doctor Rugvie I 'm most interested in, we 'll begin with your Mr. Ewart." I changed my tactics, for I feared I had shown too much eagerness for information about Doctor Rugvie.

"My Mr. Ewart!" He smiled to himself in a way that exasperated me.

"Yes, your Mr. Ewart. How old is he? For all you 've told me he might be a grandfather."

"Ewart—a grandfather!" Again he laughed, provokingly as I thought. I kept silence.

"Honestly, Marcia, I don't know Ewart's age, and"—he was suddenly serious—"for all I know, he may be a grandfather."

"For all you know! What do you mean by that?"

"I mean I never seriously gave Gordon Ewart's age a thought. When I am with him he seems, somehow, as young as I—younger in one way, for he has such splendid health. But I suppose he really is old enough to be my father—forty-five or six, possibly; I don't know."

"Is he married?"

Jamie brought his hand down upon his knee with such a whack that the old cart-horse gave a queer hop-skip-and-jump. We both laughed at his antic.

"There you have me, Marcia. I 'm floored in your first round of questions. I don't know exactly —"

"Exactly! It seems to me that, marriage being an exact science, if a man is married why he is —and no ifs and buts."

"That's so." Jamie spoke seriously and nodded wisely. "I never heard it put in just those words, 'exact science', but come to think of it, you 're right."

"Well, is he?"

"Is he what?"

"Married. Are we to expect later on a Mrs. Ewart at Lamoral?"

"Great Scott, no!" said Jamie emphatically. "Look here, Marcia, I hate to tell tales that possibly, and probably, have no foundation—"

"Who wants you to tell tales?" I said indignantly. "I won't hear you now whatever you say. You think a woman has no honor in such things."

"Oh, well, you 'll have to hear it sometime, I suppose, in the village—"

"I won't—and I won't hear you either," I said, and closed my ears with my fingers; but in vain, for he fairly shouted at me:

"I say, I don't know whether he 's married or not—"

"And I say I don't care—"

"Well, you heard that anyway," he shouted again diabolically; "here 's another: they say—"

"Keep still; the whole village can hear you—"

"We 're not within a mile of the village; take your fingers out of your ears if you don't want me to shout."

"Not till you stop shouting." He lowered his voice then, and I unstopped my ears.

"I say, Marcia, I believe it's all a rotten lot of damned gossip—"

"Why, Jamie Macleod! I never heard you use so strong an expression."

"I don't care; it's my way of letting off steam. Mother is n't round."

We both laughed and grew good-humored again.

"I never thought a Scotsman, who takes porridge regularly at nine o'clock every evening, could swear—"

"Oh, did n't you! Where are *your* wisdom teeth? Live and learn, Marcia."

"Quits, Jamie." He chuckled.

"Honestly, Marcia, I could n't answer you in any other way. Ewart has never opened his lips to me about his intimate personal life; he has no need to—for, of course, there is a great difference in our ages even if he is such a companion. And then, you know, I only saw him that one week in Crieff when he was with us, and I was a little chap—it was just after father left us—and he was no end good to me. And the second time was this year in June when he stayed a week here and then took me up to André. He was with us a month in camp; that is where I came to know him so well. He 's an Oxford man, and that's what I was aiming at when—when my health funked. He seems to understand how hard it is to me to give it all up. I don't object to telling you it was Doctor Rugvie who was going to put me through."

"Oh, Jamie!" It was all I could say, for I had known during our few weeks of an intimacy, which circumstances warranted, that some great disappointment had been his—wholly apart from his being handicapped by his inheritance.

"About Ewart," he went on; "you know a village is a village, and a dish of gossip is meat and drink for all alike. It's only a rumor anyway, but it crops out at odd times and in the queerest places that he was married and divorced, and that he has a son living whom he is educating in Europe. I don't believe one bally word of it, and I don't want you to."

"Well, I won't to please you."

"Now, if you want to know about Doctor Rugvie, I can tell you. He lives, you might say, in the open. Ewart strikes me as the kind that takes to covert more. Doctor Rugvie is older too."

"He must be fifty if he 's a day."

"He 's fifty-four—and he is a widower, a straight out and out one."

"I know that."

"Oh, you do! Who told you?"

"Delia Beaseley."

"Is she a widow?" Jamie asked slyly.

"Now, no nonsense, Jamie Macleod." I spoke severely.

"Nonsense! I was only putting two and two together logically; you said the Doctor trusted her —"

"And well he may. No, she is n't a widow," I said shortly.

"That settles it; you need n't be so touchy about it."

"Has he any children?" I asked, ignoring the admonition.

"No; that's his other great sorrow. He lost both his son and daughter. Do you know, I can't help thinking he 's doing all this for them?"

"You mean the farm arrangement?"

"Yes, and us—he 's been such a friend to mother and me. Oh, he 's great!" He was lost suddenly in one of his silences. I had already learned never to permit myself the liberty of breaking them.

We drove into the village, and, while Jamie was with the grocer, "stoking ", as he put it for the coming week, I was wondering what to make of Delia Beaseley's theory about the "conscience money" and its connection with the farm. Was it to aid in carrying out the Doctor's plans for helpfulness? From what Jamie Macleod had told me, I came to the conclusion that neither he nor his mother knew anything of *that* financial source. How strange it seemed to know of this tangled skein of circumstance, the right thread of which I could not grasp!

While thinking of this, I became aware of the noise of a cheap graphophone carrying a melody with its raucous voice; the sounds came from a cabaret just below the steamboat landing-place. I listened closely to catch the words; the melody, even in this cheap reproduction, was a beautiful one.

"*O Canada, pays de mon amour*—"

I caught those words distinctly, and was amusing myself with this expression of patriotism when Jamie came out of the shop.

"What's up?" he asked, noticing my listening attitude.

"Hark!" He listened intently.

"Oh, that!" he said with a smile of recognition as he stepped into the wagon; "you should hear Ewart sing it. I 've heard him in camp and seen old André fairly weep at hearing it. I see you are discovering Richelieu-en-Bas; but you should make acquaintance with the apple-boat."

"What's that?"

"It's a month too late now for it; it moors just below the cabaret by the lowest level of the bank. It's a fine old sloop, and the hull is filled with the reddest, roundest, biggest apples that you 've ever seen. I come down here once a day regularly while she is here, just to get the fragrance into my nostrils, to walk the narrow plank to her deck, and touch—and taste to my satisfaction. We put in ten barrels at the manor."

I could see that picture in my mind's eye: the old apple-boat, the heaped up apples, the hull glowing with their color, the green river bank, the blue waters of the St. Lawrence, the islands for a background—and the October air spicy with the fragrance of Pomona's blessed gift!

We put the old cart-horse through his best paces in order to be at home before sunset. We had all the books to arrange in the next two days for we had left them until the last. Pete was opening the boxes when we came away.

VI

After supper we went over the house to see the various furnishings by firelight. Pete had built roaring fires in each bedroom to take off the chill, and was to keep them going till the rooms should be occupied on the night of the fifteenth; this was necessary against the increasing cold.

I confess I had worked to some purpose, and Mrs. Macleod and every member of the household seconded me with might and main. Now, in a body, the eight of us trooped from room to room, to enjoy the sight of the labor of our hands. Angélique was stolidly content. Marie was volubly enthusiastic. Cale, his hands in his pockets, took in all with keen appreciative eyes, and expressed his satisfaction in a few words:

"'T ain't every man can get a welcome home like this."

"You 're right, Cale," said Jamie, "and there are n't so many men it's worth doing all this for."

We stood together, admiring,—and I was happy. I had spent but eighty-seven dollars, "*pièces*", and the rooms did look so inviting! The windows and beds were hung with the English chintz, which was old fashioned, a mixture of red and white with a touch of gray. I had sent to Montreal for fine lamb's wool coverlets for every bed. The village furnished plain deal tables for writing. Jamie stained them dark oak, and I put on desk pads and writing utensils. Two easy chairs cushioned with the chintz were in each room. The old English-ware toilet sets of white and gold looked really stately on the old-fashioned stands. Mrs. Macleod sewed, with Marie's help, until she had provided every window with an inner set of white dimity curtains, every washstand, every bureau and table with a cover. She made sheets by the dozen which Angélique and Marie laundered. Pete had polished the fine old brass andirons, that furnished each fireplace, till they shone. My bedroom foot-rugs were pronounced a success, and graced the rag carpets beside each bed; they were of coarse gray and white fur. Marie had found in the garret some long-unused white china candlesticks of curious design, like those in my room; a pair stood on each bureau.

We were standing about in the Doctor's room, admiring. The firelight played on the white walls, deepened the red in the hangings to crimson, shone in the ball-topped andirons, and lighted the pleased satisfied faces about me. A sudden thought struck a chill to my heart:

"What a contrast between this room and that poor basement in V—— Court where, twenty-six years ago, the man who is going to enjoy this comfort fought for my mother's life, and succeeded in giving me mine!"

I left the room abruptly. Jamie called after me:

"Where are you going, Marcia?"

"Down stairs to begin with the books."

"Hold on till I come; you can't handle them alone. Cale, put the screens before the fires. Come on down, mother."

The passageway was stacked high with books along the walls. Cale had brought them in, and these were not the half. I was looking at them when the others came down.

"You took them out, Cale, how many do you think there are?"

"I cal'lated 'bout three hundred in a box. We 've opened five, and there 's two we ain't opened."

Jamie started to gather up an armful, but Cale took them from him. His tenderness and care of him were wonderful to see.

"No yer don't! If there 's to be any fetchin' and carryin', I 'm the one ter do it."

"And I 'm the one to place and classify. I want to prove that I did n't work five years in the New York Library for nothing." I stayed with Cale while he was gathering up the books.

"I cal'late you was paid a good price fer handlin' other folks' brains." Cale spoke tentatively, and I humored him; I like to give news of myself piece-meal.

"Of course, I did, Cale; I had nine dollars a week."

"Hm—pretty small wages fer a treadmill like thet!" He spoke almost scornfully.

"Oh, that was better than I had in the beginning. What would you say to four dollars a week, Cale?"

"With room and keep?"

"Not a bit of it; board and room and clothes had to come out of that."

"Hm—". He looked at me keenly, but made no reply. "You tend ter putting 'em on the shelves, an' I 'll take 'em all in. 'T ain't fit work fer women, all such liftin'; books has heft, if what's in 'em is pretty light weight sometimes."

"What would you say about the owner of all these books, Cale? Let's guess what he 's like," I said, laughing, as I lingered to hear what he would say. But he was non-committal.

"I could n't guess fer I ain't seen the insides. I 'm glad he 's coming, though; I want ter get down to some real work 'fore long. Wal, we 'll see what he 's like in two days now. Pete an' I have got to drive over ter Richelieu-en-Haut—durn me, if I can see why they don't call it Upper Richelieu!—an' meet the Quebec express."

"They won't get here till long after dark, then."

"No.—Here, jest put a couple more on each arm, will you?"

I accommodated him, and we went into the living-room. Jamie looked rather glum. Sometimes, I know, he feels as if he had no place in all this preparation.

"Now, Jamie, let me plan—" I began, but he interrupted me:

"Maîtresse femme," he muttered; then he smiled on me, but I paid no heed.

"You sit at the library table; Cale will bring in the books and pile them round it; you will sort them according to subject, and I will put them on the shelves."

"Go ahead, I 'm ready."

To help us, we pressed Angélique and Marie into service. In a little while we had five hundred books piled about the table. These were as many as Mrs. Macleod and I could handle for the evening, so we dismissed the others.

It was pleasant work, filling the empty shelves; moreover, I was in my element. It was good to see books about again; I owed so much to them.

"This is what the room needed," I said, placing the last of the historical works on a lower shelf.

"Yes; what a difference it makes, doesn't it? Oh, I say, mother, here 's one of your late favorites!"

"What is it?"

"Memoirs of Doctor Barnardo."

"I must read them again."

"Who was Doctor Barnardo?" I asked; I was curious.

"If you don't know of him and his London work, then you have a treat before you in this book." Mrs. Macleod spoke with unusual enthusiasm.

"And he was Ewart's friend too. I might have known I should find this among his books. It always seems to me as if it were 'books and the man'. Show me what books are a man's familiars, and I 'll tell you his characteristics."

"No, really, can you do that?" I asked, surprised at this dictum from such youthful lips.

"Yes, in a general way I can. Look at this for instance." He held out a volume. "The man who has this book for an inner possession, and also on his shelves, is a thinker, broad-minded, scholarly, human to an intense degree—"

"What is it?" I said, impatient to see.

"Something you don't know, I 'll wager; it is n't a woman's book."

"Now, Jamie Macleod, read your characteristics of men, if you can, by the books they read and love, but, please, please, keep within your masculine 'sphere of influence', and don't presume to say what is or what is n't a woman's book. I know a good deal more about those than you do—what is the book anyway?" I confess his overbearing ways about women provoke me at times. But he paid no heed to my little temper.

"It's dear old Murray's 'Rise of the Greek Epic'—it comes next to the Bible. It's an English book; you would n't be apt to read it."

"Oh, would n't I?" I exclaimed, and determined another forty-eight hours should not pass without my having made myself familiar with the rise of the Greek epic, and the fall of it, for that

matter. I swallowed my indignation, for the truth was I had not heard of it.

"And here 's another—American, this time, and right up to date. I 'll wager you never heard of this either. Would n't I know just by the title it would be Ewart's!"

"How would you know?"

"Oh, because any man of his calibre would have it."

And I was no wiser than before. I was beginning to realize that there was a whole world of experience of which I knew nothing; that, in my struggle to exist in the conditions of the city so far away, I had grown self-centered and, in consequence, narrow, not open to the world of others. Jamie Macleod, with his twenty-three years, was opening my inward eye. I can't say that what I saw of myself was pleasing.

"What is the book?" I asked, after a moment's silence in which Mrs. Macleod was busy with the "Memoirs", and Jamie was looking over titles.

"'The Anthracite Coal Industry'."

"Well, give it to me; I 'll classify it with 'Economics and Sociology'. There will be more of this kind, I 'm sure. Let's go on with the work or we shan't be through before midnight. Look up the 'Lives' and 'Letters', and 'Autobiographies' next. I want to put them on the upper shelf—"

"I know;" he nodded approvingly; "so they will be at your elbow when, of a winter's evening, you want to reach out your hand, without much trouble, and find a companion. Well, give me a little time to look them over."

I watched him for a few minutes, as he took up book after book, examined the title, sometimes turned the leaves rapidly, and again opened to some particular page and lost himself for a moment. Jamie was showing me another side than that to which I had grown accustomed in our daily intercourse. I sat down while I was waiting, for I was tired. Mrs. Macleod was reading.

"Are you ready now?" I asked, after waiting a quarter of an hour, and still no sound from behind the pile of books across the table.

"M-hm, in a minute."

His mother looked up, and we both saw that he was absorbed in something. Mrs. Macleod smiled indulgently.

"That's always his way with a book—lost to everything around him. He would n't hear a word we said if we were to talk here for an hour."

"I 'll make him hear." I spoke positively, and again Mrs. Macleod smiled.

"Jamie—I would like a few books, the 'Lives' and 'Letters'."

For answer he burst into a roar that roused the dogs under the table. He slapped his hand on his knee, threw his leg over the arm of the easy chair, and settled into an attitude that indicated, there would be no more work gotten out of him for the rest of the evening. Suddenly he shouted again.

"Here 's a man for you!" he said joyfully.

"Who?" I demanded, but might have spared myself the question. There was another interval of silence, followed by an uproarious outburst:

"Oh, I do love Stevenson's 'damns'! They 're great! Hear this—"

He read a portion of a letter which included a choicely selected expletive.

"Jamie!" It was a decided protest on his mother's part; but I laughed aloud, for I, too, knew what he meant. I, too, loved the varied and picturesque "damns" of those letters that had been so much to me in the past few years. As I looked at Jamie, another Scotsman, with the thin bright eager face, I knew at once that, without realizing it, I had connected his appearance with that of Robert Louis Stevenson, his countryman. And how like the two spirits were!

"I wonder," I said to myself, "I wonder if this same Jamie Macleod also has the inner impulse to write!" And, having said that in thought, I looked at Jamie Macleod through different glasses.

We let him mercifully alone; but I went on with my work, reading titles, classifying, placing, finding genuine pleasure in speculating on the "calibre" of the owner.

At nine, Marie entered with the porridge; Cale followed her.

"Here endeth the first chapter," I said to Cale. "We 'll try to get all the books on the shelves to-morrow; then we can have one day of rest before they come."

"You kinder speak as if two extra men in the fam'ly would make some difference," said Cale, smiling down at me from his place by the mantel.

"It will make a difference I shall not like, Cale. There 'll be no more cosy evening-ends with porridge, after the lord of the manor comes."

"What's that you say?" Jamie was roused at last. I thought I could do it.

"Nothing in particular; only Cale and I were saying how different it would be when Mr. Ewart comes."

"You bet it will!" said Jamie emphatically. "You won't know this house,"—he took up his porridge,—"and Ewart won't know it either since you 've had your hand on it, Marcia." This I perceived to be a sop.

"Thet's so," said Cale, with emphasis. "I never see what a difference all thet calico an' fixin's has made; an' my room looks as warm with them red blankets and foot-rugs! It beats me how a woman can take an old house like this, an' make it look as if it had been lived in always. I thank *you*," he said, looking hard at me, "fer all the comfort you 've worked inter my room."

"You have n't thanked me the way I want to be thanked, Cale," I said, smiling up at him.

"I done the best I could," he replied with such a crestfallen air that we laughed.

"The only way you can thank me is to call me 'Marcia'. I 've wanted to ask you to, ever since our first drive together up from the steamboat landing."

"Sho!—Have you?"

He looked at me intently for a minute; then he spoke slowly and we all knew with deep feeling: "You 're name 's all right; but you've made such a lot of happiness in this house since you come, I 'd like ter have my own name fer you—"

"What's that?" I said.

"I 'd like ter call you 'Happy', if you don't mind."

I know I turned white, but I controlled myself. Was it possible he knew! It could not be. I dared not assume that he knew and refuse him. I made an effort to answer in my usual voice:

"Of course I don't, Cale—only, I hardly deserve it; all I 've done is just in 'the day's work', you know."

"Not all," he said, putting down his emptied bowl and turning to the door; "no wages thet I ever heard of will buy good-will an' the happiness you 've put inter all this work."

"Oh, Cale, I don't deserve this—" But he was gone without the usual good night to any of us.

"You do too," said Jamie shortly, and, reaching for his pipe, went off into the dining-room.

Mrs. Macleod laid her hand on my shoulder. "They mean it, Marcia; good night, my dear."

For the first time she leaned over and kissed me. I ran up to my room without any good night on my part. I needed to be alone after what Cale had said. Did he know? *Could* he know? Or was it merely chance that he chose that name? Over and over again I asked myself these questions—and could find no answer.

Late at night I made ready for bed. I drew the curtains and looked out. The window ledge was piled two inches high with snow; against the panes I saw the soft white swirl and heard the hushed, intermittent brushing of the drifting storm.

VII

The snow fell lightly but steadily all night and the next day. Just after sunset the leaden skies cleared, and the starred firmamental blue of a Canadian winter night replaced them. Before six, Cale and Peter were off on their nine mile drive to Richelieu-en-Haut to meet the Quebec express. They drove in a low comfortable double "pung", lined with fur rugs and piled with robes; a skeleton truck trailed behind for luggage. The yoke of bells jangled cheerfully in the dry crisping air, for the Percherons were lively—the French coach horses were not ready for the northern snows—and freely tossed their heads as they played a little before plunging into the light drifts.

After supper I went to my room, making the excuse that I had a bit of work to finish. All my thoughts centered on Doctor Rugvie whose coming was so momentous to me. While I sewed, I made a dozen plans for approaching him on the subject of the papers, and rejected each in turn as not serving my purpose. Finally, my work being finished, I sat quiet, with a tensity of quietness that showed itself in my listening attitude and tightly clasped hands. It was nearly time for the sound of the returning bells. At last,—it was nearly nine,—I heard them close to the house and, hearing them, I knew intuitively that my life, hitherto so detached from others, was about to be linked through strange circumstance—the Doctor's coming—to some unknown personality in the past. I knew this; how I knew, I cannot say.

I heard Jamie calling to me from the lower passageway. I opened my door but did not cross the threshold. I stood listening.

Suddenly the dogs went mad with joy. I heard Jamie's voice in joyous greeting. I heard men's voices, Cale's loudest in giving some order to Peter; then Mrs. Macleod's. The confusion grew apace when Angélique and Marie joined their French welcome to the English one. Listening so, I felt shut out from it all; felt myself a stranger again in the environment to which I had so soon wonted myself. Then I heard Jamie's voice calling:

"Marcia, Marcia Farrell, where are you?"

He was at the foot of the stairs looking up at me as I came down, and scarcely waited for me to reach the last step before saying:

"Ewart, this is Miss Farrell; Marcia—my friend, the 'lord of the manor'." He spoke with such teasing emphasis that I could have boxed his ears.

I think the "lord of the manor" intended to shake hands with me; at least, his hand was promptly extended; but before I could take it, it dropped at his side, for Jamie was claiming me for the second introduction:

"Allow me to present to you the result of the advertisement, Doctor!"

"What?" The pleasant voice held a note of surprised interrogation. My hand was taken in a firm professional clasp, and I looked up into the face of the great surgeon who had troubled himself with me so far as to give me the chance to exist. For the life of me, I could not find the right word of welcome in these circumstances, and the only result of the instantaneous mental effort to find it was, that those words of Delia Beaseley's, which I heard as I was regaining consciousness in V—— Court: "She's the living image", flashed into my consciousness with the illuminating suddenness of a re-appearing electric signboard. And, seeing them, rather than hearing them, I looked up into the fine homely face and smiled my welcome. It was the only one I had at my command just then.

Something indefinable, intangible, perhaps best expressed as the visible diffused wave-current of consciousness' wireless telegraphy, showed in his face. Puzzled, concentrated thought was evident from the sudden contraction of the forehead. Nor did the look "clear up"; it remained as he greeted me—and I knew he had not the key to interpret the message, sent thus to him across an interval of twenty-six years.

"Well, Mrs. Macleod, it's surely a success," he said, releasing my hand.

"Success? Oh, no end!" Jamie interrupted him in his joyous excitement. "You 'll see!"

"Come, Boy, give your mother a chance," said the Doctor, laughing.

"We have practical witness that Marcia is all that Jamie claims she is." Mrs. Macleod spoke enthusiastically for her, and to cover my embarrassment I suggested that the Doctor should go at once to his room.

"Oh, she 's canny! She wants you to see the improvements," Jamie cried, as he rushed upstairs two steps at a time after Mr. Ewart who, attended by the dogs, was investigating the region of the bedrooms. I think he doubted their comfort. The Doctor followed, and soon I heard his voice praising everything, with Jamie's lending a running accompaniment of jesting comment. It occurred to me then, that I had not heard the "lord of the manor" utter a word. Cale and Peter came in with the trunks, chests, gun-cases, with bags of ice-hockey sticks, kits, snow-shoes and skis—indeed, all the sporting paraphernalia for a Canadian winter.

Within ten minutes, my clean passageway, laid with the brand-new rag carpet, was piled high with these masculine belongings, and the snow from eight masculine boots was melting and wetting the pretty strip into dismal sogginess! I began to understand why the passageways in the manor were laid with flagging, and I determined I would have the lower carpet taken up in the morning, that Jamie might not laugh at me.

As Cale set down the last chest, he must have taken note of my despair, for he spoke encouragingly:

"Makes a lot of difference in a house havin' so many men folks round."

"I should think so, Cale, look at that carpet!"

"Sho! It don't look more 'n fit for mop-rags, an' they in the house scurce ten minutes. Guess 't 'll have ter come up ter-morrer, an' I 'll see that 't is up."

"And it will stay up; but it did look so neat and cosy—and now see that!" I included in a glance the entire mass of luggage and sporting outfit.

"Good deal of truck for one man, but I guess he can handle it all; seems a likely enough sort of feller. I had to introduce myself, you might say, for he an' Pete was talkin' so fast in French that I could n't get in a word edgewise at furst. You 'd have thought the old manor barns was afire, and they was trying to get the hosses out. I managed to have my say, though, 'fore we struck the river road."

"I have n't had a good look at him—Jamie did n't give me the chance."

"Wal, I can't say as I have neither. He 's pretty quiet, but I noticed he hit the nail on the head every time he did speak. The one they call Doctor Rugvie is some different; he was like a schoolboy let loose when he got into the pung. Guess Mr. Ewart won't wait long 'fore he 'll have a sleigh, as is a sleigh, to match the French coach hosses, from what I heard. The Doctor had his little joke about a pung for a manor house. I 've got to go over again ter-morrer to get the rest of the truck."

"Oh, Cale, more!"

He nodded, and, with a significant upward motion of his thumb, made his exit at the kitchen end. I slipped into the dining-room to see that all was in readiness for the extra supper. I actually did not know what to do with myself, what was my place, or where I belonged in the household, now that the owner of Lamoral and his friend were here. I looked about: the flames from the pine cones were leaping in the fireplace, the curtains were drawn close, the room was filled with a resinous forest fragrance, for I had placed large branches of white pine in some antiquated milk jugs of glazed red clay, which I found in one of the unused dairy rooms, and set them on each end of the mantel.

When I heard Jamie and the Doctor on the stairs, I left by way of the kitchen and, passing through that and the bare offices between it and the living-room, slipped into the latter to inspect it. Here also the fire was blazing, the wax candles in the sconces were lighted. The yellow sofa was drawn in front of the fireplace, but good eight feet from it. At either end were the easy chairs, and at the right of the chimney, nearest the door into the kitchen offices, was a low ample tea table covered with a white linen cloth, set with plain white china, a nickel-plated tea-kettle and lamp. Behind the sofa, along the length of its straight long back, stood the library table furnished with writing pad and inkstand, a wooden bookrack filled with Jamie's favorites and mine, and a bowl of red geranium blossoms. I was satisfied with my work.

Around the room, even between the windows, the more than two thousand books in their cases formed a rich dado of finely blended colors—the deep royal blue and dark reds in morocco, the yellow-white imitation of parchment,—parchment itself in several instances,—the light faun and reddish brown of half calf; even shagreen was there, and the limp bronze-gilt leather of Chinese bindings. Jamie told me that many of the editions were rare.

It seemed to me in my ignorance, that there could be no more beautiful room than this simple, book-lined, wood-panelled parlor in the old manor of Lamoral. I felt an ownership in it, for I had helped in part to create the intimate atmosphere that I knew must be like home,—something I had dreamed of, but never expected to make real. The owner, whose voice I heard for the first time talking to the dogs as he came down stairs, presented himself to me at that moment as an outsider, an intruder. I waited until I heard him close the dining-room door; then I went up stairs again to my own room.

VIII

I did not light the candles. The firelight showed through the mica in the stove grate. I sat down by the window and looked out. A full moon shone high and clear above the dark irregular outline of the massed treetops in the woods across the creek, now covered with ice and blanketed with white. The great hemlock branches, crowding close to the house, were drooping, snow-laden. The moonlight, reflected in them, flashed diamond dust from the upper branches; beneath the lower ones it cast violet shadows on the snow.

"What next?" I was thinking, and might have spared myself the trouble of that thought, for just then Mrs. Macleod knocked at the door and came in.

"In the dark? Marcia, my dear, we need you down stairs."

"Of course I 'll come, Mrs. Macleod, if you wish me to, but I don't quite see how, as your companion and assistant, I am needed now down stairs. I shall feel as if I were not earning my salt, just playing lady."

Now, can any one tell me why the spirit of revolt at the change in my position in this house, through the coming of the owner and his friend, should have materialized in just this ungracious speech? I was ashamed of myself the moment I had given it utterance. Such a mean sentiment! Not worthy of a woman of twenty-six. I was thankful she could not see my face.

She hesitated before replying. When she spoke I heard a note of displeasure in her voice.

"I need you now, perhaps, more than before. With these guests in the house, there is more responsibility than during the last three weeks."

"If only they *were* guests!" The perverse spirit was still at work within me. "But we are the guests now, and I don't quite see what my work is to be; my position seems to be an anomalous one."

"It may seem so to you," she replied quietly. I knew by the tone of her voice she was exercising great self control, and that had the candles been lighted I should have seen her cheeks flush a deep pink; "but evidently it is perfectly clear to Doctor Rugvie. The position is his creation. I think you can trust him.— Are you coming?"

The rebuke was well deserved, and, in accepting it, my respect for her was doubled.

"Just let me get my work," I said, fumbling in my basket for some petty crochet. She said nothing, and in silence we went down stairs together, she little realizing that, in referring to Doctor Rugvie as the one to whom I was indebted for being here, she twisted some fibre in my mental make-up and caused it to vibrate painfully. Had I but known it, I had been keyed to this moment ever since hearing Delia Beaseley's account of my mother's death—keyed too long and at too high a pitch. Something had to give way; hence my mood of apparent revolt, because I could not live in unchanged circumstances in this manor of Lamoral.

As we entered the living-room the three pipes were in full blast.

"Permitted?" said the Doctor, waving his towards us as he rose. Mr. Ewart, also, rose and came towards us. In the manner of his action I saw that, already, he had taken his rightful place as host. He held out his hand in greeting, and I took it.

"Sit here, Miss Farrell, by me," he motioned to the corner of the sofa next his easy chair, "and tell me how you have managed to accomplish a home—in three weeks. Mrs. Macleod and Jamie have been giving you all the credit for this transformation. How did you do it?"

He put me at ease at once, for what he said sounded both cordial and sincere. The tone of voice challenged me instantly to be as sincere with him.

"Perhaps it's because I never have had the chance to make what you call a 'home' before, and besides," I looked up from my sofa corner and dared to say the truth, "it was such a pleasure to spend some money that I did n't have to earn by hard work; this was play for me. But, truly, Mrs. Macleod and Jamie are not fair to themselves; they not only helped, but inspired me."

"Oh, woman, woman!" said the Doctor, laughing; "shopping is the characteristic symptom of the sex!"

"Talk about inspiration," said Jamie; "Marcia put mother and me through our best paces. I can tell you we conjugated: I must hustle, Thou must hustle, He must hustle, We must hustle, You must hustle, They must hustle, for three weeks," he said emphatically.

"You seem to have thriven on it," said the Doctor.

"Your work was in the New York Library, Miss Farrell?" It was Mr. Ewart who spoke.

"Yes, in a branch; I was there for five years."

"Who told you that, Gordon?" Jamie demanded.

"Who?—Who but Cale?"

Mrs. Macleod laughed outright at that, and Jamie and I joined her; we could not help it. The mere inflection of Mr. Ewart's voice, told us he had succumbed on the way over to our omniscient One. I saw that, quiet as he was, he had a keen sense of humor.

"Yes," he continued, "Cale made my acquaintance on the platform, and half way on the road he took occasion to give me some information concerning my household."

"Oh, I know that too," I said, "for Cale confided to me immediately on his arrival that, to use his own expression, he could n't get in a 'word edgewise', on account of the rapidity with which you and Peter were carrying on a conversation in French. I think he is jealous of every tongue but

his own."

"We had better compare notes, Miss Farrell. I concluded that Cale was a firm friend of yours from his remarks."

"What did he say? Do tell me."

"I will—if you 'll agree to tell me his comments on my talk with Pierre. I believe Pierre's words fell over themselves, he had so much to tell me."

"Hear—hear!" This from Jamie.

"I agree; tell me, please."

"I think it was just before we entered the river road—"

"I know it was, for he told me so," I said, enjoying the fun.

"Oh, he did! Well, perhaps you will be so good as to tell me, if he told you what he told me you told him?"

"You would n't ask that if you knew Cale," said Jamie, shaking his head dubiously.

"No, he did n't," I said. "Cale is a genuine Yankee. What did he say?"

"You hear that, Ewart? What did I tell you?"

"Oh, you've been telling, too, have you, Jamie Macleod? He gave me to understand that it was he who brought you from the steamboat to the house; that you were born in New York; that you had been in the Public Library of that city; that in consequence what you did n't know about books was, in his estimation, not worth knowing; that you were just as handy with hammer and tacks as you were with books, and that you had been 'fixin' up' the old manor till it shone. I gathered further, that he expected me to be properly appreciative of the benefits conferred upon me in this matter. As, up to that time, I had heard nothing of your arrival in Richelieu-en-Bas, and as my friend here, Doctor Rugvie, was likewise in the dark in regard to your personality, you may imagine our curiosity; in fact, he wanted to rouse it, and took the best way to do it."

"He can do that," said Mrs. Macleod, smiling at this description of Cale's powers; "but he rarely satisfies us in regard to himself. Of course, Jamie and I respect his reticence, but I should like to know if he has been married. He is such a character! I should like to know more of his life."

"I must take a good look at him to-morrow," said the Doctor, filling his pipe.

"I should n't know him if I met him on the road," said Mr. Ewart; "for his cap was drawn over his forehead, and his beard and side whiskers were a mask. Won't he come in with us for a few minutes, Jamie?— By the way, you say that he is always with you at porridge, a custom I hope you will not depart from, now I am here, Mrs. Macleod."

"I shall want some too," said the Doctor, whimsically; "it will be like those never-to-be-forgotten days in Crieff fifteen years ago."

Mrs. Macleod said nothing; but she turned to him with such an indulgent smile, that I knew she would give the great man anything in reason or unreason for what he had been, and was, to her son and to herself.

Jamie jumped up impulsively.

"Tell me what he said, Marcia, about Gordon's talk with Pierre, and then I 'll go and have him in—without the porridge, though, for it's too late to-night."

"He said that if the old manor barns had been 'afire', and Mr. Ewart and Pierre had been trying to get the horses out, they could n't have talked faster."

"That's one on you, Ewart," said Jamie, gleefully. Mr. Ewart laughed. "I hope to make a friend of Cale; I like him."

Jamie left the room, and the talk drifted to other things.

"Have you seen Mère Guillardeau lately?" Mr. Ewart asked of Mrs. Macleod.

"Not since the last of October; but Marcia has seen her recently."

He looked at me inquiringly.

"I bought the rag carpet strips of her daughter."

"Is the old woman well?"

"Yes, she is wonderful for her age."

"Ninety-nine next year," said Mr. Ewart. "What a century she has lived!"

"André père must be ninety, then," said Doctor Rugvie. "How well I remember him! He is Mère Guillardeau's brother, as perhaps you know," he said turning to me. "Jamie must have told you of André."

"Yes, of André father and André son; you know them both?"

It was the first time I had spoken directly with the Doctor, although he was the one in the room upon whom all my thoughts centered.

"For many years; I saw him first in Tadoussac, just after the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Afterwards, for six consecutive summers I was in camp with him and his son on the Upper Saguenay. There 's none like him. By the way, Miss Farrell, has Jamie ever told you how the old guide André went to the World's Fair at Chicago?"

"No."

"We 'll get him to tell you—and us; I can never hear it too many times. It's unique, and it takes Jamie to tell it well. André told me years ago, and last summer he told Jamie and Mr. Ewart. Jamie wrote me about it."

"I shall never forget that night," said Mr. Ewart.

He laid his pipe on the mantel and stood back to the fireplace, his hands clasped behind him. He was not so tall as Jamie or Doctor Rugvie; not so thin as the former, nor stout like the latter. He had kept his body in good training for, as he stood there, despite the few gray hairs on the temples, he looked like a man of thirty, rather than one who might be father to Jamie.

Jamie came in at this moment, looking thoroughly cross as well as crestfallen.

"He won't come," he announced bluntly, taking his seat and leaning forward to the fire, his long arms resting on his knees, his hands clasped and hanging between them. He glared at the andirons.

"What's the matter, Jamie?" I asked; I knew something had gone wrong.

"He says he does n't belong here, and all that rot. Confound it all! When you come up against Cale's crotchets you might as well go hang yourself for all you can move him."

I looked at Mr. Ewart. I saw the gray eyes flash suddenly.

"We must change all that, Jamie. Just give him leeway till I 've looked about a bit and struck root into my—home." I noticed the slight hesitation before the word "home". "By the way, it's early yet."

"Early!" Jamie was rousing himself from his private sulk. "You might like to know that generally we have porridge at nine and are in bed by half-past."

"We 'll change all that too, Mrs. Macleod—with the Doctor's permission, of course," he said, sitting down beside her. "We 're not going to lose the pleasure of these long winter evenings. After porridge, we 'll have grand bouts of chess, Jamie, and a little music—I see that Miss Farrell has not included a piano in her furnishings—"

"Not for eighty-seven dollars," I said, hoping he would appreciate the financial fact; but he only looked a little mystified, and went on:

"—And hours with the books, and some snowshoeing on fine moonlight nights; you 'll see that the winter is none too long in Canada—*O pays de mon amour*!" he said smiling. Clasping his hands behind his head, he looked steadily at the leaping flames.

The tone in which he said all this would have heartened a confirmed pessimist; upon Jamie Macleod it acted like new wine. His face grew radiant, and the look he gave his friend held something of worship in it.

Doctor Rugvie groaned audibly as he laid aside his pipe.

"What is it, *mon vieux*?" said Mr. Ewart.

"You make me envious," he said, rising and putting on another log; "but if I can be with you only one week, I 'm going to make the most of it. No turning in before eleven-thirty while I 'm here."

"I 'll make it one with you any time you say, John." Underneath the banter we heard the undercurrent of deep affection. "You 'll be up here two or three times during the winter, and next summer you 've promised to camp with Jamie and the Andrés, father and son, and me, for two

months on the Upper Saguenay. Speaking of André, père, Jamie, have you redeemed the promise you gave me last summer?"

Jamie twisted his long length in his chair before answering. "Yes, in a way."

"What does 'in a way' mean? What promise?" asked the Doctor eagerly. Mr. Ewart answered for him.

"It was about André—old André's story of his voyage to the Columbian Exposition in 'ninety-three. Have you written it up?"

"In a way I have, yes."

"Well, Jamie Macleod," I exclaimed, half impatiently, "for lack of originality, commend me to you to-night!"

I was afraid I should not hear the story. I exulted in the thought that my intuition concerning a second R. L. Stevenson in Jamie Macleod, was to prove correct. Jamie looked over at me and smiled provokingly.

"Come on, Boy, out with it!" said the Doctor encouragingly. "I 'm willing to be bored with your literary style for the sake of hearing dear old André's story rehashed by a young aspirant for honors."

"Have you seen anything of this?" Mr. Ewart turned to Mrs. Macleod.

"I 've neither seen nor heard anything of this kind," she replied with an amazed look at her son. Jamie smiled again, this time quizzically.

"What's this you 've been keeping from your mother, Boy?"

"Oh, Jamie, do read it to us!" I begged.

Jamie laughed aloud then, much to the two men's delight, as I could see, and said—tease that he is:

"I 've been waiting for Marcia to ask me; she is n't apt to ask favors of any one; but I say,—" he looked half shamefacedly at his friends,—"it's rough on me to read anything of mine before such critics as you and Gordon, Doctor Rugvie."

"Do you good," growled the Doctor; "get you used to publicity. If we have a genius in the family, it's best he should sprout his pin feathers in our presence before he becomes a full-fledged Pegasus. We could n't hold you down then, you know."

"You 've had a lot of faith in me, Doctor—you and Ewart; after all, Oxford mightn't have done what that has for me. I 'll read it—but I shall feel like a fool, I know."

"It won't hurt you to feel that way once in a while at twenty-three; it's educative," said the Doctor dryly.

In the general laughter that followed, Jamie left the room. He was gone but a minute. When he came in, I saw he was nervous. He cleared his throat once or twice, after taking his seat at the left of the fireplace, and glanced anxiously at the candles; but they were fresh at nine, and good for two hours longer. Doctor Rugvie looked at his watch.

"Half-past ten; I 'll keep time, Jamie."

"What do you call it, Jamie?" Mr. Ewart asked, to ease the evident embarrassment in which the young Scotsman found himself.

"'André's Odyssey'."

"Good! I like that," said the Doctor; "that's just what it was. Nothing like a good title to work up to."

"Of course, I embellished a little here and there, but I stuck to the facts and in many places to André's words; and I tried to make the whole in André's spirit."

"Intentions all right, Boy—let us judge of the result," said the Doctor. He settled comfortably in his chair, leaned his head on the back and gazed steadily at the wooden ceiling; but I think he managed to keep an eye on Jamie.

And, oh, that bright eager face, the firelight enhancing its brightness! The hand that trembled despite his effort at control, the slight flush on the high cheek bones from which the summer's tan had not yet house-worn! The expressive unsteady voice that gradually steadied itself as, in the interest of reading, self-consciousness was forgotten!

I bent low over my crochet; I did not want to look again at him, for I was glad, so glad for him, for his mother, for his two friends, who had had such faith in him, for myself that I could

count him as a friend. This was, indeed, the beginning of fulfilment.

IX

For five and twenty years no man had seen in Tadoussac old André's face nor heard his voice upon the river's lower course. Both long and late within their icy caves the winters dwelt. The spring-tides, messaging the wild emancipated water's glee, rushed down to meet the short-lived summer joy, and autumn after autumn fled with torch of flaming leaf, reversed, death-heralding, far up the Saguenay's dark winding gorge—yet André came no more in all that time.

And now, behold them both, in Tadoussac! old André and his dog, Pierre, le brave, or was it Pierre's son?—lean-ribbed, thin-haunched and tragic-eyed, with fell of wolf, Pierre! How well they all remembered him, le brave! The frosts were in his bones, oh, long ere this; so Pierre's offspring, then?—as large as life! And André, too, old guide and voyageur!

Of notches six times ten had André cut within the shaft of one great pine that sings above that wonderful caprice of pool, and quiet river reach, and torrent wild, men long have called the Upper Saguenay. That very day when his boy's heart beat wild to suffocation, as upon the bank he landed his first salmon—nom de Dieu, no sunset glow e'er equalled in his eyes that palpitant and silver-scalèd mass of vibrant rose!—the sap from that first notch had oozed; and now they said in Tadoussac that André never knew his age!

Oh, fools! What matter of a few years more or less? He counted all his years by his heart's youth, as here he was in Tadoussac to prove.

"And whither away?"—"To see Mère Guillardeau?"—"To visit once again in Richelieu-en-Bas?"—"Or else Trois Rivières where long ago the maskinonge leaped for him?" "To see the Seigniory of Lamoral where lived his grandpère's seignior, lived and died?"—"A pilgrimage? Sainte Anne de Beaupré, then?"—"Or Indian Lorette just by Quebec?" The questions multiplied. "Come, tell us all." And André told them all.

"'Tis true," he said, "that there upon the Upper Saguenay strange tales are rife. From o'er the distant sea the English came to camp within the wilds, and I was guide. I listened to their tales whene'er the camp-fire crackled and the snow, the feather-snow that melted from the pines, fell hissing on the glowing arch of logs."

How André loved that sound! How dear to him was that one time in all the year's full round, when freeze the nights, the sap grows chill and numb; when warms the rising sun at early dawn and that sweet ichor runs! It kept him young; within him stirred his youthful forest hopes and joys with that first mounting life. And loud he laughed, nor gave the secret of his youth, his woodsman's lasting joys.

He told them how with mien impassive he had listened well, reflected long on what the English said, till May clouds, mirrored in the darkling pools, foreshadowed substance for those haunting dreams of glories human eyes had never seen; for far away upon the Lake there stood a city marvellous, the English said,—and they to André never yet had lied,—and who beheld it saw with naked eye the glories of the New Jerusalem.

And André, marking how the little runs were earlier loosened from their icy chains, how soft beneath the black and sodden leaves the water trickled free with here and there a bubble rising, proving spring had come—old André, listening so, the echo caught of that far song of storm-tossed Michigan as its wild waters, mingling with the rest, pursued their steady seaward course and swept with undertones enticing past the gorge of Saguenay and sang in André's ear:

> "Viens, viens, tu trouveras
> Là bas, là bas,
> Le royaume cher et merveilleux
> Du bon Dieu."

What wonder that his simple woodsman's heart was moved to quick response! That ere one moon had waxed and waned his dugout was prepared for its long journey inland, west by south, along the waterway of two great Lands! He showed it now in Tadoussac with pride: this fruit of two Canadian winters' toil. Its ample hull was shiny black with age. Its prow sharp-nosed and long to cleave, pike-like, the rapids' wave, capricious, treacherous. Its stern was truncated like tail of duck, the waters never closed but on it pressed, and sped it on the river's lower course.

For twenty years he watched the sturdy growth of one great tree that towered above its mates; and when the noble bole, both straight and strong, was grown to such proportions that he deemed it fit to brave the rapids, such its curve, he laid the monarch low, and hewed, and

shaped, and burned, and thickly overlaid with pitch, and launched it on the Lower Saguenay—a fine, well-balanced craft, his floating camp; and this was thirty years or more agone.

His destination now made known, upon the river bank a crowd eyed him agape. With pride he showed to wondering Tadoussac how he had made provision for his voyage.

Along one side was lashed a sapling pine with seamless sail, three-cornered and close furled; 'twas fashioned from the stout flap of a tent. Along the other stretched two pockets strong of moose skin, hair side out to shed the rain. The topmost one he filled with ample store of salmon smoked on his own spit of ash, and good supply of that brown wrinkled leaf whose qualmy fragrance, issuing from the bowl of his loved pipe, had ever proved in camp and wild the solace of his lonely life.

Within the other pocket he had placed his comrade-breadwinner, his trusted gun. Its shining barrel glistened cunningly from out the soft black depths, and knowingly, for many a wingèd voyager of the air would it bring low to beat the lucent wave to crimson froth before the voyage were done. Both oars and paddles of well-seasoned ash he laid within the dugout's ample hulk.

Then he was ready to set out, and seek that shining wonder-city by the Lake—a "New Jerusalem", the English said, and they to André never yet had lied. His old-time friends were gathered at the pier to bid him on his quest "God Speed". They cast the painter loose.

"Adieu—adieu," a hand clasp here and there, and then again: "Adieu!"

Pierre, with forepaws stemmed against the prow, bayed musical farewell. Old André turned and murmuring, "Adieu," broke forth exultantly in joyous song:

"Je chercherai
Là bas, là bas
La ville de Dieu, la merveilleuse;
Si je la trouve, quand je serai
De mon retour,
Elle chante toujours, mon âme joyeuse,—
Les gloires de Dieu, les gloires de Dieu."

So aged André, guide and voyageur, his parchment face alight with inward joy, fared forth to seek that City in the West.

For you who love the sunlight on the wave, who hail with joy the sunrise ever new; for you to whom the starlight brings a thought of that high peace that guides the wanderer; for you who watch the coming of the day with eyes that see the miracle of life; for you who share in all the fair delights of sunlight, moonlight, starlight, twilight, dawn, and feel their charm in every mood and tense of nature's perfecting—for you alone I sing this voyage over inland seas.

By sunlight, moonlight, starlight, André fared along the river called "the Queen's Highway"; and soon there frowned upon him, dark, superb, the crested towering headland of Tourmente that signals to the Plains of Abraham. And ever westwards, west by south, he fared until he saw the shipping of Quebec like some huge cobweb outlined intricate in black against the golden gleaming west.

The sunset gun resounded in mid-air as André anchor dropped below the town. The man-of-war's huge bulk belched answering flame, and ere the cannon's echoing roar had ceased, a sharp report was heard, a pigmy sound that woke its pigmy echo from the Rock. So André fired salute and quickly ran aloft his tiny Union Jack. 'Twas seen along the quays; the sailors cheered and cheered, until Pierre bayed musical response.

Then André, when the moon had fully risen, stretched out along the stern and smoked his pipe, Pierre at his feet, and watched the Rock that, like a jewel many facetted, now held, now flashed at every point the lights along the Terrace in the Upper Town. He heard a merry song, a peal of bells, a strain of distant music, plash of oars—then silence. One by one the lights went out; the moon was riding high and full above the scarp and ramparts of the Citadel; beneath, the river rolled its silvered flood.

Then onwards, ever onwards toward the West fared steadily this old French voyageur, and as he passed the dreaded Raven Cape he trolled a catch, "*Un noir corbeau*", to ward all ill and evil from his sturdy craft. So sped unharmed, swift-paddling toward the broad and sunlit shallows of Saint Peter's lake, and ever westwards to the Royal Isle where Montreal's green height looks down upon its shadowy reflex in Saint Lawrence's wave.

On, on he sped and ever to the West, land-locked at times in prairie-bound canals; then pulling vigorously, the rapids past, along the River's narrowing polished curve, with oar stroke, swift and sweeping, keeping time to hit of merry raftsmen on the Sault.

Fresh-hearted André! All the wholesome joys to which his simple life was consecrate were his as on he voyaged; his eventide brought joy and calm and light-of-evening peace. But once he would have tarried—as alights a wearied sea-mew on some lonely isle—when, paddling slow and noiselessly he steered his craft among the leafy waterways of that Arcadian Venice of our North: the Thousand Isles. His woodsman's heart beat high when, gliding silently past sunny glades and darkling glens, he heard the wavelets lap the crinkling sands and saw the water glint against the slopes fringed deep with June's lush green.

At times he paused, the paddle braced, and leaned thereon his weight; the while, his lungs inflate, he drew deep breaths of fragrance balsamic that flowed in counter currents, sensate, warm, from out the depths of cedar thickets gray, and red, and white. And then away, away he sped past gardens gay with summer blooms, past emerald lawns set round by sapphire waves. And here and there an islet laughed at him—a tiny patch of verdure overhung by one white birch that glistered in the sun.

And every night a strange enchantment wrought upon his spirit when, beneath the stars, on some long reach that narrowed suddenly, embraced by banks converging, forest clad, the dugout drifted 'twixt two firmaments. Then André dreamed of pool and river reach and ancient pine o'er-hanging torrents wild, far distant on the Upper Saguenay; and summer dwellers on those Fortunate Isles were ware at midnight of a singing voice and fragment of a song, like some last chord drawn lingeringly across responsive strings:

> "Je cherche, je cherche, là bas, là bas,
> La ville de Dieu, la merveilleuse;
> Si je la trouve, quand je serai
> De mon retour je chante toujours
> Les gloires de Dieu, les gloires de Dieu."

Ontario, Ontario, all hail thou lovely Lake that in thy breast doth hide the many secrets of Niagara! Upon thy waves, soft thrilling joyously with rush of thunderous waters from afar, see, like a gull, the white three-cornered sail dip lightly to the fair breeze from the North!

"Là bas, là bas," sang André o'er and o'er, and e'en Pierre bayed long into the West, awoke shrill echoes from the border farms at early dawn, and told his nightly tale to waning summer moons till cliff and shore gave back the sound in echoes manifold.

And what of nights within some sheltered cove when storm and darkness claimed both sea and sky? And what of days when furious cross-winds rose, and smote the lake that hissed and writhed and roared beneath the scourge that welted its white breast? Then André crossed himself and told his beads; Pierre crouched low adown within the hull; the dugout rocked safe moored within the cove or, drawn up on a strip of pebbly beach, with softly-grating keel in rhythmic beats told off the lapsing surges till the West translucent 'neath the lifting cloud mass gleamed, and in the sedges near the shore he heard the reed birds whistle plaintively and low.

Three moons had waxed and waned since, far away upon the Upper Saguenay, the pools foreshadowed substance of those haunting dreams of glories human eye had never seen—thrice thirty days ere André neared his goal. At last, emerging from the narrow strait of savage Mackinac, he set his sail and voyaged ever southwards day by day with many a tack cajoling every breeze. The white fish leaped within the dugout's wake; the gulls' harsh cry was heard above the mast; at times a passing steamer's paddles throbbed an hour and broke the dead monotony of sea and sky on lonely Michigan.

On silent sea, neath silent skies he voyaged, till lo! one silent morn ere rise of sun, the light mists, veiling yet disclosing, crept slow-curling o'er the surface of the Lake to meet the brightening east, and there dissolved in sudden glory, leaving André rapt, with dripping oars suspended and with eyes intent upon a vision marvellous!—The softened radiance of breaking day shone clear, subdued, on dome and tower and arch, on rich facade and many-columned gate of that ethereal Wonder-City white, the fundaments of which in amethyst and chrysopras were seen deep down beneath the surface of the Lake that, motionless, reflected heaven on earth and earth in heaven!

And André, gazing so, bared his gray head, the slow tears coursing down his furrowed cheeks, and, folding on his breast his calloused hands, prayed low and fingered o'er his wellworn beads.

Old André moored his dugout to the pier, and leaving tragic-eyed Pierre within as sentinel, slow-blinking towards the east, he turned his steps to that high-columned gate, the prototype of

heaven on this our earth, and passed beneath the portal as the sun rose o'er the Lake in gorgeous crimson state.

X

I can still hear in memory the sudden hiss from a bursting air-pocket in the forelog; it broke the silence which followed Jamie's reading. At the sound, it seemed as if we drew a freer breath.

Was it Jamie Macleod who was sitting there with flushed cheeks, bright eyes, dilated pupils, and eager inquiring look which asked of his friends their approval or criticism? Or was it some changeling spirit of genius that for the time being had taken up its abode in the frail tenement of his body?

His mother leaned to him and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"My dear boy," was all she said, for they were rarely demonstrative with each other; but, oh, the pride and affection in her voice! I saw Jamie's mouth twitch before he smiled into her eyes.

"You 've made us live it, Boy," said the Doctor quietly and with deep feeling; "but I never thought you could do it—not so, for all the faith I 've had in you."

Jamie drew a long breath of relief; he spoke eagerly:

"It was the trial trip, Doctor, and I did hope it would stand the test with you and Ewart."

Mr. Ewart rose and crossed the hearth to him. He held out his strong shapely hand. Jamie's thin one closed upon it with a tense nervous pressure, as I could see.

"I congratulate you, Macleod." The tone of his voice, the address as man to man, expressed his pride, his love, his admiration.

Jamie smiled with as much satisfaction as if for the first time there had been conferred upon him manhood suffrage, the freedom of the city of London, and a batch of Oxford honors. Then, satisfied, he turned to me. I spoke lightly to ease the emotional tension that was evident in all the rest of us:

"You 've imposed upon me, Jamie Macleod. You 're classed henceforth with frauds and fakirs! How could I know when you were scrapping with me the last three weeks over such prosaic things as rag carpets, toilet sets and skins, that you were harboring all this poetry!"

"Then you think it's poetry? You 've found me out!" Jamie said, showing his delight. "Honestly, Marcia, you like it? I want you to, though I say it as should n't."

"Yes, I do," I answered earnestly; "I can understand the song the better for it."

"What song?" the Doctor asked, before Jamie could speak.

"'*O Canada, pays de mon amour*'," I quoted.

"You know that?" Mr. Ewart spoke quickly.

"Only as I have heard it through the graphophone, in the cabaret below the steamboat landing."

"I say, Marcia, that's rough on the song!—Gordon," he exclaimed, "do you sing it for us, do; then she 'll know how it ought to sound."

"It's the only possible epilogue for the 'Odyssey'—what a capital title, Boy! Sing it, Ewart."

"Wait till I have a piano."

"You don't need it. You used to sing it in camp."

"But I had André's violin."

"I have it! Pierre will fiddle for you." Jamie jumped to his feet. "Hark!"

We listened. Sure enough, from some room behind the kitchen offices, probably in the summer kitchen, we could hear the faint but merry sounds of a violin.

"They 're celebrating your home-coming, Ewart! I knew they were up to snuff when Angélique gave me an order for a half a dozen bottles of the 'vin du pays', you remember, Marcia? They 're at it now. I might have known it, for they have n't come in to say good night."

"Let's have them all in then," said Mr. Ewart. "They 'll stay up as long as we do."

"Will you sing for them?" Mrs. Macleod put the question directly to her host.

"For you and them, if you wish it," was the cordial reply. "Jamie, you 're master of ceremonies and have had something up your sleeve all this evening; I know by your looks. Bring them in."

Jamie laughed mischievously. "Oh, I 'll bring them in," he said. I knew then that, unknown to his mother and me, he had planned a surprise.

"Get Cale in, if you can," Mr. Ewart called after him.

"Oh, Cale 's abed before this; *he* does n't acknowledge you as his lord of the manor, not yet."

"That was remarkable, Gordon," said the Doctor, as soon as the door closed on Jamie.

"Yes, he has given me a surprise. Of course you realized that whole description was in metre?"

"I was sure of it after the first page or two, but I could scarcely trust my ears. What the boy has done is to make of it a true Canadian idyl. I wish Drummond might have heard it."

"I believe Jamie knows 'The Habitant' book of poems by heart. Have you ever read it, Miss Farrell?"

"Yes, in New York; and Jamie has promised to give me a copy for a Christmas remembrance."

"I 'll add one to it," said the Doctor, "'The Voyageur,' then you will probe a little deeper into Ewart's love and mine for Canada."

"Oh, thank you; these two will be the beginning of my private library."

"I 'll give you an autograph copy of 'Johnnie Courteau,' if you like; I knew Drummond," said Mr. Ewart.

To say I was pleased, would not express the pleasure those two men gave me in just thinking of me in this way. I thanked them both, a little stiffly, I fear, for I am not used to gifts; but my face must have shown them how genuine was my feeling for the favors. They both saw my slight confusion and interpreted it, for Mr. Ewart said, smiling:

"If you don't mind I will add to the unborn library Drummond's other volume; I 'm going to try to live up to Cale's expectation of me concerning your connection with books. They will help you to remember this evening."

"As if I needed anything to remember it!" I exclaimed, at ease again. "It's like—-it's like—"

"Like what, Marcia?" Mrs. Macleod put this question.

"Tell us, do," the Doctor added; "don't keep me in suspense; my temperament can't bear it." He looked at me a little puzzled and wholly curious. I was glad to answer both Mrs. Macleod and him truthfully:

"Like a new lease of life for me." My smile answered the Doctor's, and I was interested to see that the same wireless message I was transmitting again across the abyss of time, failed again of interpretation. I turned to Mrs. Macleod.

"I think I may be needed in the kitchen." I rose to leave the room.

"Are you in the secret too?" Mr. Ewart asked.

"No, but I 've been recalling certain commissions Angélique gave me—extra citron, pink coloring for cakes, and powdered sugar for which, as yet, we have had no use in the house. But I want to be in the secret, for Jamie—"

The sentence remained unfinished, for Jamie flung open the door with a flourish, and stout Angélique, flushed with responsibility and the "vin du pays", entered carrying a huge round platter, whereon was a cake of noble proportions ornamented with white frosting in all sorts of curlycues and central "*Félicitations*" in pink. Behind her came Marie with a tin tray, laid with an immaculate napkin—one of our new ones—filled with pressed wine-glasses and decanters of antiquated shape. Following her was little Pete, carrying on each arm an enormous wreath of ground pine and bittersweet. Big Pete brought up the rear, his face glowing, his black eyes sparkling, his earrings twinkling. He was tuning his violin.

All rose to greet them; but ignoring us, with intense seriousness, they ranged themselves in a row near the door. They still held their offerings. Pierre, drawing his bow across the strings, nodded his head. Thereupon they began to sing, and sang with all their hearts and vocal powers to the accompaniment of the violin:

"*O Canada, pays de mon amour!*"

With the first words, Mr. Ewart's voice, full, strong, vibrant with patriotism, joined them; his fine baritone seemed to carry the melody for all the others. The room rang to the sound of the united voices. I saw Cale at the door, listening with bent head. Jamie stood beside him, triumphant and happy at the success of his surprise party.

How Angélique sang! Her stout person fairly quivered with the resonance of her alto. Marie's shrill treble rose and fell with regular staccato emphasis. Pierre, father, roared his bass in harmony with Pierre, son's falsetto, and beat time heavily with his right foot.

At the finish, the Doctor started the applause in which Jamie and Cale joined. With a sigh of absolute satisfaction, Angélique presented her cake to Mr. Ewart who, taking it from her with thanks, placed it on the library table and paid her the compliment of asking her to cut it. Marie passed around the tray and decanted the "vin du pays". Little Peter, following instructions given him in the kitchen, hung a wreath from each corner of the mantel. Compliments and congratulations on the cake, the wine, the wreaths, the song, the master's home-coming, the refurbished manor house, were exchanged freely, and we all talked together in French and English. My broken French was understood because they were kind enough to guess at my meaning—the most of it.

Then the healths were drunk, to Mr. Ewart, to the Doctor, to Jamie, Mrs. Macleod and me; and we drank theirs. Finally, Mr. Ewart went to Cale, whom Jamie had persuaded to step over the threshold, and gave his health, touching glasses with him:

"To my fellow laborer in the forest." He repeated it in French for the benefit of the French contingent.

Cale, touching glasses, swallowed his wine at one gulp and abruptly left the room. He half stumbled over little Pierre who was sitting in the corner by the door, supremely happy in the remains of his huge piece of cake, which at his special request was cut that he might have the pink letters "Félici", and in the two lumps of white sugar which Mr. Ewart dropped into a glass of wine highly diluted with water.

Oh, it was good to see them! It was good to hear their merry chat; to be glad in their rejoicing over the return and final settlement of Mr. Ewart among them, their "lord of the manor", as they persisted in calling him to his evident disgust and amusement. But their joy was genuine, a pleasant thing to bear witness to in these our times.

And if Father Pierre in his exuberance of congratulation repeated himself many times; if Angélique asked Mr. Ewart more than once if the cake was exactly to his taste; if Marie grew doubly voluble with her "Dormez-biens", and little Pierre was discovered helping himself uninvited to another piece of cake—an act that roused Angélique to seeming frenzy—Mr. Ewart closed an eye to it all, for, as they trooped, still voluble, out of the room, he knew as well as we that their measure of happiness was full, pressed down and running over. Oh, their bonhomie! It was a revelation to me.

The embers were still bright in the fireplace but the candles were burning low in the sconces; it was high time at half-past eleven for the whole household to say good night.

"A home-coming to remember, Gordon," I heard Doctor Rugvie say, as I left the room.

"I can't yet realize it; but I 've dreamed—"

I caught no more, for the door closed upon them.

The two men must have talked together into the morning hours, for I heard them come upstairs long after I was in bed. Not until the house was wholly quiet could I get to sleep.

XI

I was up betimes the next morning, but Cale had been before me and taken up the offending rag carpet from the passageway. When I went into the kitchen, Angélique told me that the seignior—she persisted in calling him that—and the Doctor had had their coffee and early doughnuts and were off in the pung, the seignior driving; that they said they would be at home for dinner. I found Cale and Pierre, acting under orders in the early morning, taking the trunks up to the bedrooms, placing the guns in the racks, removing the various sporting implements to a room behind the kitchen, and the chests to a storeroom. At breakfast we three were alone together as usual. The four dogs were absent.

Mrs. Macleod and I spent the entire forenoon bringing order again into the various rooms. In the meantime, Jamie was dreaming and reading in the living-room. I had been there just a month

and a day, and could not help wondering who would pay me! I needed the money for some heavier clothing.

The two friends appeared promptly for dinner and brought with them appetites sharpened by the increasing cold. They had been in Richelieu-en-Bas and arranged for a telephone for the manor, called on some English friends visiting at the new manor house in the village, and stopped at some of the seigniory farmhouses on the way home. I found Mère Guillardeau had been remembered at this early date.

"Are you busy this afternoon, Miss Farrell?" said the Doctor, as we rose from our first meal together and went into the living-room.

"Not unless Mrs. Macleod needs me?" I looked at her inquiringly.

"No, there is nothing more, Marcia; you did a good day's work in a few hours this morning," she replied in answer to my look.

"Can I be helpful to you in any way?" I said, turning again to the Doctor.

"Yes—I think you can." He smiled quizzically, looking down upon me from his substantial height. "You may not know—of course you don't, how could you know, never having heard much of an old fellow like me—"

"Oh, have n't I?"

"Have you? Then the Boy here has been giving me away. Has he ever told you I am something of a whip?"

"No, not that."

"Well, then, I am going to prove it to you. I propose to show the two French coach horses how to draw a pung,—Ewart does n't yet own a sleigh, you know in Canada,—and I wish you would lend me your company for an hour or so."

If the Doctor expected an enthusiastic response he must have been disappointed. Not that I did n't want the ride in the pung, but it occurred to me that here was my opportunity, offered without my seeking it, to ask of him all that I had been planning to ask during many weeks. As this door of opportunity was so suddenly opened to me, I felt the chill of the unknown creeping towards me over its threshold. I answered almost with hesitation:

"Certainly, I will go, unless Mrs. Macleod—"

"Mrs. Macleod says she does n't need you." He spoke quickly, his keen eyes holding mine for a moment.

"I say, that's a jolly cool way you have at times, Marcia!" Jamie exploded in his usual fashion when he is ruffled. "But you 'll get used to it, Doctor—I have."

"A martyr, eh, Boy?" The Doctor looked amused.

"Well, rather—at times."

"Don't mind Jamie's martyrdoms, Doctor Rugvie; tell me when you want me to be ready."

"In half an hour. I don't want to start too late; be sure to take enough wraps."

I left them to go upstairs, wondering on the way what wraps I should take—I, who possessed only sufficient clothing to help out a New York winter, but no furs, no fur coat, no warm moccasins, no mittens, only an unlined gray tweed ulster that with a grey sweater had done duty for four years.

"I want my pay more than I want a pung ride," I growled, as I was trying to make the one thick veil I owned do double duty for head and ears protector. I folded a square of newspaper and laid it over my chest under my sweater; I put on two pairs of stockings. Thus fortified against the Canadian cold, I went downstairs promptly on time.

Mr. Ewart came out into the passageway; the Doctor was talking with Mrs. Macleod in the living-room.

"Why, Miss Farrell," he exclaimed, "I see you don't realize our climate; you can't go without more wraps—"

He hesitated, grew visibly embarrassed. I knew by his manner he had unwittingly probed my poverty to the quick, and I crimsoned with shame; yes, I was ashamed that my lack should thus be made known to him—ashamed as when Delia Beaseley's keen eyes read my need of money.

"Oh, I don't need to bundle up—I have been accustomed to go without such heavy clothing," I said, with ready lie to cover my confusion.

The Doctor came out and took his fur-lined coat from a wooden peg under the staircase. Mr. Ewart turned abruptly and reached for something on an adjoining peg; it was a fur coat of Canadian fox, soft and fine and warm.

"You are to wear this, otherwise the Doctor won't let you go," he said quickly, decidedly, shaking it down and holding it ready for me to slip in my arms.

For a second, a second only, I hesitated, searching for some excuse to give up the drive and so avoid acceptance of this favor; then I slipped into it, much to Jamie's delight who, appearing at the living-room door, cried out:

"My, Marcia, but you 're smart in Ewart's togs! We 'll have some of our own if this is the kind of weather they treat us to in Canada. I 've been hugging the fire all the morning."

He saved the situation for me and I was grateful to him; but Mr. Ewart looked at him, almost anxiously, saying:

"I should have been getting the heater put up this forenoon, instead of rushing off the first thing this morning. A poor host thus far, Jamie, but I 'll make good hereafter."

The Doctor looked me over carefully.

"You 're safeguarded with that; the sleeves are so long and ample they are as good as a modern muff—go back, Boy,"—he spoke brusquely, as he opened the outer door,—"this is no place for you."

Cale vacated the pung, and the Doctor and I filled it. He took the reins; the beautiful creatures rose as one in the exuberance of life; shook their heads, and the bells with them, as they poised a moment on their hind feet; then they planted their hoofs in the crisping snow, and we were off.

"Your ears must have burned more than a little this forenoon, Miss Farrell," he said, after driving in silence for ten minutes during which time he proved conclusively to the French horses that he was a "whip" of the first order, and to be respected henceforth as such. It was a pleasure to see his management of the high-lifed animals.

"Mine? I was n't conscious of anything unusual about them."

"We were speaking of you and your evident executive ability, and we took the time on our drive to try to settle a little business matter that concerns you. ("Ah, wages," I thought with satisfaction.) We tried to agree but we failed; and although we did not come to blows over the question, it was not settled to my satisfaction, at least. You don't mind my speaking very frankly?"

"No, indeed; I wish you would." I looked up at him over the turned-up fur collar of Mr. Ewart's fox skins—"pelts" is our name for them in New England—and smiled merrily. I was right glad to get down, at last, to some business basis and know where I stood. Again I saw the perplexed look in his eyes.

"Why?"

"Because, naturally, you know, I look for pay day to help out."

"Naturally," he repeated gravely; then laughed out, a hearty, good-comrade laugh. "Just how long have you been here?"

"A month yesterday."

"And wages overdue!"

I nodded emphatically. I felt as if I could tell this man beside me, with his wide experience of humankind, about the pitiful sum of twenty-two dollars I had saved from my wreck of life in New York; about my scrimpings; even of the two pair of stockings, and the square of newspaper reposing at that very minute on my chest and crackling audibly when I drew a deeper breath. There was no feeling of soul-shame on account of my poverty with him, any more than I should have felt physical shame at the nakedness of my body if subject to one of his famous surgical operations. Had not this man helped to bring me into the world? Should I have been here but for him? Had he not known me as an entity before I knew anything of the fact of life? This idea of him disarmed my pride.

"H'm," he said at last, thoughtfully, "I must live up to my reputation of owing no man or woman over night. You shall have it so soon as we get back to the house—and well earned too," he added; "I had no idea an advertisement could bring about such a satisfactory result."

"Do you mean me or the refurbished house?"

"I mean you. And now that we 're alone, do you mind telling me something of how it came about? I 'll own to asking you to come with me that we might have a preliminary chat together."

"I thought so."

"Oh, you did! Well, commend me to one of my compatriots to ferret out my intentions. I heard Cale say you were born in New York."

"Yes, twenty-six years ago, but I have lived most of my life in the country, in northern New England."

"Wh—?" he caught himself up in his question, and I ignored it.

"That climate is really just as severe as the Canadian, so I feel quite at home in this."

"May I ask if your parents are living?"

"No, they 're not living; my mother died when I was born. I told Delia Beaseley so when I applied for this place."

("Now is my time; courage!" I exhorted myself in thought.)

"I 'm glad you know Delia Beaseley, she 's a fine woman."

"A noble one," I said, heartily.

"Yes, noble—and good."

"And good," I repeated.

"I think I 'll tell you a little how good."

"I think I know."

"You do?" He looked surprised.

"Yes, she told me something of her life." He turned squarely to me then.

"How came she to?" He asked bluntly.

"Now, courage, Marcia Farrell, out with it," I said to myself, but aloud:

"She said I resembled some one whom she knew years ago—some one who, she said, had 'missed her footing'."

"She said that?"

I nodded. "Then she spoke of her own life and what came of it—how she had tried to save others; and one thing led on to another until I felt I had always known her."

He turned again to look at me, and it was given me to read his very thought:—Have you ever come near missing your footing? Did Delia Beaseley save you from any pitfall?

I answered his unspoken thought:

"Oh, you may take my word for it I am wholly respectable—always have been. I could n't have answered your advertisement if I had n't been."

"The deuce you are! Well, young lady, I 'll ask you not to answer a man's thoughts again before he has given them expression; it's uncanny." He was growling a little.

I laughed aloud, for it delighted me to puzzle him a bit, especially with the revelation of my identity in prospect. I was enjoying the pung ride too. We were on the river road. The black tree trunks, standing out against the white snow-covered expanse of the St. Lawrence, seemed to speed past us. The sharp bits of ice-snow flew from the fleet horses' hoofs, and now and then one stung my cheek.

"Cale informed me that you worked in the New York Library; may I ask how you happened to answer the advertisement?"

"I wanted to get away from the city—far away."

"Tired of it—like the rest of us?"

"Yes—and I was ill." He gave me a look that was suddenly wholly professional.

"Long?"

"Ten weeks."

"What was it?"

"Typhoid pneumonia with pleuri—"

"And you were going to come out with me for a spin in that ulster!"

He roared so at me that the horses, taking fright at the sound of his voice, plunged suddenly and gave him plenty to do to calm them into a trot again. I enjoyed the equine gymnastics so promptly provided for his diversion.

"I was at St. Luke's." I volunteered this information when he was free to receive it.

"St. Luke's, eh? That's where you heard of this old curmudgeon."

"Yes, there; and from Delia Beaseley, and Jamie, and Mrs. Macleod."

"By the way, you and Jamie seem to be great friends."

"I love him," I said emphatically.

"H'm, lucky dog; better not tell him so."

"Why not?" I asked, at once on the defensive.

The Doctor compressed his lips in a fashion that said as plainly as if he had spoken, "Unsophisticated at twenty-six; I don't believe her!"

"I love Cale, too, and he is my own kind."

"Cale 's all right; I 'm going to know him better before the week is out. And how about Mrs. Macleod?"

"Mrs. Macleod is Jamie's mother, and I like her and respect her—but she 's not easy to love."

"That's true—she is not easy to love. About the salary," he said changing the subject; "I intended to pay it myself until you were installed on the farm; it is a favor to me to be allowed to help out Mrs. Macleod. I knew from private sources that she needed someone to cheer her here in this Canadian country; it's a great change from her home in Crieff, and then she carries Jamie on her heart all the time. I insisted this morning on taking charge of the whole business, you included," he smiled ruefully, "but Ewart would n't hear to it. He argues that so long as you are in his house, and your work is—well, we 'll call it home-making, he, being the beneficiary has the sole right to pay for his benefits."

"That's just what I told Mrs. Macleod and Jamie I would try to make of you and him—"

"The dickens you did! A beneficiary of me, eh?"

"Yes, and I shall try to," I said earnestly. The Doctor grew serious at once.

"It will not be a hard task, Miss Farrell; I begin to dream of what the farm will be like with you to help make it a home for me and, in time, many others, as I hope."

"Doctor Rugvie, would you mind calling me by my first name?"

"Yes, I should mind very much, because it's exactly what I have wanted to do, but did not feel at liberty to."

"In my position it is better that all in the house should call me Marcia."

"Your position?" He looked around at me with a queer twist of his upper lip. "What is your position?"

"According to the advertisement it was for service on a farm in Canada."

"And now you find yourself in an anomalous one? Is that the trouble?"

"Yes, just it. I don't know what is to be required of me—I really don't see how I am to earn my salt."

"Don't bother yourself about that." He frowned slightly. "I confess this insistence on Ewart's part to pay you, complicates matters a little. *I* wanted to be boss this time."

"And I hoped you would be mine, anyway," I said mutinously. "I am far from satisfied to have my business dealings with Mr. Ewart, a stranger and an alien."

"It will be only for a time; I am going to tell you, all of you, about my farm plans this evening. I have n't spoken yet to Ewart very freely about them."

The horses were turned homewards, and I felt that little time was left me to ask any intimate questions of the Doctor concerning myself. I could not find the right word—and I knew I was not trying with any degree of earnestness. "I 'll put it off till the last of the week," I said to myself; then I began to speak of that self, for I knew the Doctor was waiting for this and, wisely, was biding my time. I was grateful to him.

I told him of my hard-worked young years and my longing to get away to independence. I entered into no family details; it was not necessary. I told him something of my struggle in New York and of my place in the Branch Library; of my long illness and how it had left me: tired out, listless, practically homeless and in need of immediate money. I told him how I sought Delia Beaseley on the strength of the advertisement; how she helped me; how I felt I had found release from the city and its burden of livelihood, and how happy I was with my new duties in the old manor house; how the fact that it was an old manor fed the vein of romance in me which neither hard work nor illness had been able to work out; how I enjoyed Jamie and Mrs. Macleod, Angélique, and Pierre and all the household—and how I had dreaded his coming, yet longed for it, because it would unsettle my future which was not to be in the manor house of Lamoral.

I told him all this, freely; but to speak of my mother, of my birth, of the papers, and of what I wanted them for, was beyond me. The secret of the Past, projected on the possible Future, loomed gigantic, threatening. I would let well enough alone.

"You poor child," he said, when I finished. That was all; but I knew that henceforth I should have a friend in Doctor Rugvie. He drove the rest of the way in silence.

XII

When I joined them an hour after supper, they were talking about the heater that had been put up in the living-room while we were away. The warmth from it was delightful, but the blazing fire in the fireplace gave the true cheer to the room, added charm for the eye. The Doctor looked up as I came in.

"Have you ever seen a stove like this—Marcia?" There was a twinkle both in his voice and his eye, as he called me for the first time by my Christian name. He was tease enough to try it in the presence of the rest of the household.

"Oh, yes, my grandfather had two in his farmhouse. There is nothing like them for an even heat; it never burns the face. The top is a lovely place to fry griddlecakes."

"You seem to know this species root and branch, Miss Farrell," said Mr. Ewart. "After that remark may I challenge you to make a few for us some night for supper?"

"You won't have to challenge, for I like them myself; and if you 'll trust me we 'll have a griddlecake party here in this room some evening."

"My first innings, Marcia!" cried Jamie.

"I 'll have to let that go unchallenged, Macleod, seeing I 'm host; but you took unfair advantage of me. I 'll get even with you sometime."

"Where did you get your idea, Gordon?" The Doctor turned to his friend.

"I was born with it, you might say. I don't remember the time when we did n't have two or three in my father's house, and I 've never found anything equal to them for heating. They 're all out of date now; there is no manufactory for them. I had trouble in finding these, but I unearthed three last spring when I was in northern Vermont. I knew we should need them, and they keep all night, you know. I 'm going to have one put up in the bathroom—these oil stoves are an abomination."

"Amen," said the Doctor.

"So say we all of us.— Hark, hear that wind!" said Jamie.

The stove was of soapstone, square, with hinged top that, opening upward, gave room for the insertion of a "chunk"—a huge, unsplittable, knotty piece of maple, birch, or beech. Cale came in with one while we were listening to the roar of the gale; it was a section of a maple butt.

"There, thet 'll last all night an' inter the forenoon," he said, lowering it carefully into the glowing brands in the box. "I 'll shet up the drafts, an' you 'll have a small furnace with no dust nor dirt to bother with; an' the ashes is good fertilizer—can't be beat for clover."

"Let's take a household vote on the subject of modern improvements for the manor," said Mr. Ewart, helping himself to a cigar and then passing the box to Cale who had turned to leave the room.

Cale took one with an "I thank *you*" this being a habit of speech to emphasize the last word, and was about to go out.

"Stay a while with us, Cale," said Mr. Ewart, speaking as a matter of course; "I want the

opinion of every member of my household—my Anglo-Saxon one, I mean."

The two men stood facing each other, and between them I saw a look pass that bespoke mutual confidence. I thought they must have made rapid progress in one short day.

"Wal, I don't mind if I do. It's flatterin' to a man, say what you 've a mind ter, ter have his advice asked on any subject—let alone what interests him."

"That's a fine back-handed compliment for you, Ewart," said Jamie, whose delight in Cale's acquiescence was very evident.

"I took it so," said Mr. Ewart quietly, drawing up a chair beside his and motioning to Cale who, after a slight hesitation, sat down.

How cosy it was around the fire! Since our return from the pung ride, the wind had risen, keen and hard in the northwest and, crossing the Laurentians, was swooping down upon the river lands, swaying the great spruces in the woods all about us till it seemed as if ocean surf were breaking continuously just without the walls of the manor and, now and then, spending its force upon them until the great beams quivered under the impact. Every blast seemed to intensify our comfort within.

"The telephone will be a great convenience," Mrs. Macleod remarked from the corner of the sofa, looking up from her knitting; "it will save so many trips to the village in weather like this."

"Is it a long distance one, Gordon?" said Jamie who was lolling on the other end.

"Yes; I thought we might as well connect with almost anywhere. Our household is rather cosmopolitan. Does this suit you?"

"Suits me to a dot. I can talk with my 'best girl', as they call her in the States, when she is on the wing—as she is now."

"Oh, ho, Boy! Has it come to this so soon?" The Doctor sighed audibly, causing us to laugh.

"Jamie's 'best girl' changes with the season and sometimes the temperature, Doctor," said Mrs. Macleod, smiling at some remembrance. "Do you recall a little girl who with her mother had lodgings at Duncairn House, just opposite ours in Crieff?"

The Doctor nodded. "Yes, and how Jamie Macleod enticed her away one summer afternoon to the meadows and banks of the Earn just below the garden gate, and the hue and cry that was raised when the two failed to make their appearance at supper time? Somebody—I won't say who—went to bed without porridge that night. What was her name, Boy?"

I saw, we all saw, just the least hesitation on Jamie's part to answer with his usual assurance. We saw, also, the touch of red on his high cheek bones deepen a little.

"Bess—Bess Stanley."

"There is a Miss Stanley who visited at the new manor last summer—any relation, do you know?" asked Mr. Ewart.

"Same," Jamie answered concisely, meanwhile puffing vigorously at his pipe.

"The plot thickens, Mrs. Macleod," said the Doctor dubiously.

"Is she tall and slender and fair, Jamie?" I put what I considered an opportune question; I knew it would both surprise and irritate him as well as rouse his curiosity of which he has an abundance. I really spoke at a venture because the name recalled to me the two girls in the sleeping-car and their destination: Richelieu-en-Bas.

He turned to me with irony in his look. "She is all you say. May I make so bold as to enquire of you whether you speak from knowledge, or if you simply made a good guess?"

"From knowledge—first hand, of course," I said with assurance.

He sat up then, eyeing me defiantly, much to the others' amusement.

"Perhaps you can give me further information about the young lady—all will be gratefully received."

"No, nothing—except that I believe it was she through whom you obtained Cale, was n't it?" I heard Cale chuckle.

"Look here, Marcia," he began severely enough, then burst into one of his hearty laughs that dissolves his irritation at once; "you 'll be telling me what she wrote me in my last letter if you 're such a mind reader. I say," he said, settling himself into a chair beside me, "let up on a man once in a while in the presence of such a cloud of witnesses, won't you? Take me when I 'm alone. The truth is, Ewart, Marcia gives herself airs because she is three years my senior. She takes the

meanest kind of advantage; and I can't hit back because she 's a woman. But about that telephone, Ewart; are they going to run it on the trees."

"It's the only way at this season."

"Could n't it remain so the year round?" I asked.

"Why?" said Mr. Ewart.

"Because the poles will just spoil everything; as it is, it is—"

"Is what, Marcia? Out with it," said Jamie encouragingly.

"Perfect as it is," I said boldly, willing they should know what I thought of this wilderness of neglect that surrounded us in the heart of French Canada.

"Guess we can keep it perfect, as you say, Marcia, 'thout havin' to rub the burrs off'n our coats every time we go round the house," said Cale. "We 're going to do some pretty tall cuttin' inter some of this underbrush and dead timber next week if the snow ain't too deep."

"Oh, Cale, it will spoil it!"

"Wal, thet 's as you look at it; but 't ain't good policy to keep a fire-trap quite so near to a livin'-place; makes insurance rates higher."

"How would you feel then about having a modern hot water heater put into the old manor, Miss Farrell?" Mr. Ewart put the question to me.

"Put it to a vote," I replied.

"All in favor, aye," he continued.

There was silence in the room except for one of the dogs that, asleep under the table, stirred uneasily and whined as if rousing from a dream of an unattainable bone.

"It's a vote against. How about piping in gas?"

"No!" we protested as one.

"Settled," he said smiling. We saw that our decision pleased him.

"Confess, now, Gordon, you did n't want any such innovations yourself," said the Doctor.

"I did n't, for I like my—home, as it is," he said simply.

"I like to hear you use that word 'home', Gordon," said the Doctor, looking intently into the fire; "as long as I 've known you, I think I 've never heard you use it."

"No." The man on the opposite side of the hearth spoke decidedly, but in a tone that did not invite further confidence. "I 've never intended to use it until I could feel the sense of it."

"Another who has felt what it is to be a stranger in this world," I thought to myself. And the fact that there were others, made me, for the moment, feel less a stranger. I was glad to hear him speak so frankly.

The Doctor looked up, nodding understandingly.

"Now I want some advice from all this household," he said earnestly, and I thought to change the subject; "it's about the farm I 've hired and the experiment with it. Give it fully, each of you, and, like every other man, I suppose I shall take what agrees with my own way of looking at it. My plans were so indefinite when I wrote to you to hire it, Gordon, that I went into no detail; and I 'm not at all sure that they are so clear to me now. Here 's where I want help."

"That's not like you, John; what's up?" said his friend.

"I want to start the thing right, and I 'm going to tell you just how I 'm placed; a deuce of a fix it is too."

Cale put on a log and left the room, saying good-night as he passed out. I gathered up my sewing—I was hemming some napkins—and made a motion to follow him.

The Doctor rose. "Marcia,"—he put out a hand as if to detain me; he spoke peremptorily, —"come back. There are no secrets among us, and I want you to advise with."

There seemed nothing to do but to obey, and I was perfectly willing to, because I wanted to hear all and everything about the farm project that threatened to break up my pleasant life in the manor.

I took up my work again.

"Put down your work, Marcia; fold your hands and listen to me. I want your whole attention."

I obeyed promptly. Jamie gleefully rubbed his hands.

"It takes you, Doctor, to make Marcia mind."

"I 'm a man of years, Boy," the Doctor retorted, thereby reducing Jamie to silence.

We sat expectant; but evidently the Doctor was in no hurry to open up his subject. After a few minutes of deep thought, he spoke slowly, almost as if to himself:

"I'm wondering where to begin, what to take hold of first. The ordering of life is beyond all science—we 've found that out, we so-called 'men of science'. The truth is, I believe I have a 'conscience fund' in the bank and on my mind. I know I am speaking blindly, and perhaps reasoning blindly, and it's because I want you to see things for me more clearly than I do, and through a different medium, that I am going to tell you, as concisely as I can—and without mentioning names—of an experience I had more than a quarter of a century ago. I 've had several of the kind since, they are common in our profession—but the result of this special experience is unique." He paused, continuing to look steadfastly into the fire.

In the silence we heard the sweep of the wind through the woods, now and then the scraping swish of a pine branch brushing the roof beneath it.

"I recall that it was in December. I was twenty-nine, and had just got a foothold on the first round of the professional ladder. Near midnight I was called to go down into one of the slum districts—I don't intend to mention names—of New York. There in a basement, I found a woman who had just been rescued from suicide."

He paused, still keeping his gaze fixed intently on the fire. And I?

At the first words a faint sickness came upon me. Was I to hear this again?—here, remote from the environment from which I had so recently fled? Could it be possible that I was to hear again that account of my mother's death? I struggled for control. They must not know, they should not see that struggle. Intent on keeping every feature passive, hoping that in the firelight whatever my face might have shown would pass unnoticed, I waited for the Doctor's next word.

"It seems unprofessional, perhaps, to enter into any detail, but we are far away from that environment now—and in time, too, for it was over a quarter of a century ago. She was very young, nineteen perhaps, and about to become a mother. I remained with her till morning. I knew she would never come through her trial alive. I went again in the evening and stayed with her till her child was born and—to the end which came an hour afterwards. During all those twenty-four hours she spoke but twice. She gave me no name, although I asked her; no name of friends even —God knows if she had any, or why was she there?

"Now, here is my dilemma: in the morning, I signed the death certificate and then went out of the city on a case that kept me forty-eight hours. On my return, the woman, who had rescued this poor girl,—a woman who took in washing and ironing in that basement—told me a man had appeared at the house to claim the body he said was his wife's. She gave me the man's name, but the name of this man was not the name of the husband according to a marriage certificate which I found in an envelope the young woman entrusted to me for her child. At any rate, he had claimed the body and taken it away.

"Now, ordinarily the living waves of existence close very soon over such an episode—all too common; and, so far as I am concerned, in such and other similar cases I forget; it is well that I can. But I 've never been permitted to forget this!"

He made this announcement emphatically, looking up suddenly from the fire, and glancing at each of us in turn.

"And, moreover, I don't believe I am ever going to be permitted to forget. Some one intends I shall remember!

"With me it was merely a charity case—one, it is true, that called forth my deepest sympathy. The circumstances were peculiar. The woman was young, rarely attractive in face, refined, well dressed. Her absolute silence concerning herself during all that weary time; her heroic endurance and, I may say, angelic acceptance of her martyrdom—and all this in such an environment! How could it help making a deep impression? Still, I am convinced I should have forgotten it, had it not been for a constant reminder.

"In the first week of the next February, I received a notification from a national bank in the city that five hundred dollars had been deposited to my credit. The woman who lived in that basement received during the first week of the New Year a draft on that bank—and mailed by the bank—for the same amount. She consulted me about accepting it. When I attempted to investigate at the bank, I found that no information would be given and no questions answered—only the statement made that the money was mine to do with what I might choose. Next December, and a year to a day from the death of that young woman, I received a similar notification, and the woman a draft for one hundred. Since that time, now over twenty-five years

ago, no December has ever passed that the regular notification has not been mailed to me and to the woman. I wrote to the man who had claimed the body, and whose name and address the woman, who lived in the basement, remembered. The letter was never answered. I waited a year, and wrote the second time. The letter came back to me from the dead letter office. I invested the increasing amount after two years and let it accumulate at compound interest. As you will see, these donations have amounted now to a tidy sum. I believe it to be 'conscience money'—either from the man who claimed the body as that of his wife, or from the woman's husband according to the marriage certificate. Or are both men one and the same?

"I hired the farm of you, Gordon, merely telling you it was one of my many philanthropic plans that, thus far, I have been unable to carry out. As yet I have not used that money for any benefactions. Would you hold it longer, or would you apply it to my farm project which is to provide a home for the homeless, and for those whose home does not provide sufficient change for them? I have thought sometimes I would limit the philanthropy to those who need up-building in health.— What do you say, Gordon?"

He looked across the hearth to his friend who was leaning back in his chair, his arm resting on the arm, his hand shading his eyes from the firelight.

"I should like to think it over, John; it is a peculiar case. Have you ever thought of the child? Do you know anything about it? Was it a boy or a girl?"

"A girl. No, I never thought of the child—poor little bit of life's flotsam. We don't get much time to think of all those we help to float in on the tide. Now this is what I am getting, by looking at the matter through others' eyes—you mean she should be looked up, and the money go to her?"

"That was my first thought, but, as I said, I must think it over. The two men, at least, the two names of possibly the same man, complicate matters."

"That's what puzzles me," said Jamie. The Doctor turned to him.

"How do you look at it, Boy, you, with your twenty-three years? The world where such things happen is n't much like that world of André's Odyssey, is it?"

Jamie answered brightly, but his voice was slightly unsteady:

"Yes, it's the same old world; it's a wilderness, you know, for all of us, only there are so many paths through it, across it, and up and down it—paths and trails and roads that cross and recross; so many that end in swamp and bog; so many that lead nowhither; so many that are lost on the mountain. And so few guideposts—I wish there were more for us all! You may bet your life that man—whether the girl's husband or lover—has had to tread thorns until his feet bled before he could clear his way through. Those five hundred dollars, in yearly deposits, he intends shall be guideposts, and he trusts you to put them up in the wilderness where they will do the most good. —I 'd hate to be that man! Would you mind telling me, Doctor, how she attempted to make way with herself?"

"Tried to drown herself from one of the North River piers."

"And her child too," said Jamie musingly; "there came near being two graves in *his* wilderness." He thought a moment in silence. "Make the home on the farm with the money, Doctor Rugvie; use the interest in helping others who have lost their way in the wilderness."

"Good advice, Boy, I 'll remember to act on it." The Doctor spoke gratefully, heartily. His glance rested affectionately upon the long figure on the sofa. Was he wondering, as I was, how Jamie at twenty-three could reach certain depths which his particular plummet could never have sounded? I intended to ask him what he thought of Jamie's outlook on life, sometime when we should be alone together.

"Mrs. Macleod," he said, "do you think with your son?"

She hesitated. It is her peculiarity that a direct question, the answer to which involves a decision, flusters her painfully.

"I shall have to think it over, like Mr. Ewart," she replied.

"And you, Marcia," he turned to me. Out of my knowledge I answered unhesitatingly:

"It's not of the child I 'm thinking; she could n't accept the money knowing for what it is paid. Nor am I thinking about those women who need 'guide-posts', Jamie. I 'm thinking of that other woman who lived in the basement and took in washing and ironing, the one who rescued that other from her misery and cared for her with your help, Doctor Rugvie—should n't she be remembered? She, who is living? If I had that money at my disposal, I would found the farm home and put that woman at the head of it. You may be sure she would know how to put up the guideposts—and in the right places too."

I spoke eagerly, almost impulsively.

The Doctor looked at me comprehendingly—he knew that I knew that it was of Delia Beaseley he had been speaking—and smiled.

"Another idea, Marcia, also worth remembering and acting upon with Jamie's."

I turned suddenly to Mr. Ewart, not knowing why I felt impelled to; perhaps his silence, his noticeable unresponsiveness to his friend's proposition, impressed as well as surprised me; at any rate I looked up very quickly and caught the look he gave me. It half terrified me. What had I said to offend him? The steel gray eyes were almost black, and the look—had it possessed physical force, I felt it would have crushed me. It was severe, indignant, uncompromising. I was mystified. The look was more flashed at me than directed at me for the space of half a second—then he spoke to Jamie.

"You are right, Jamie, about the wilderness; we 'll talk this matter over sometime together before John goes,"—I perceived clearly that Mrs. Macleod and I were shut out of future conferences,—"and I know we can make some plan satisfactory to him and to us all. Count on me, John, to help you in carrying out the best plan whatever it may be. In any case, it will mean that we are to have more of your company, and that's what I want." He spoke lightly.

Doctor Rugvie smiled, then his features grew earnest again.

"Gordon, I want to put a question to you, and after you to Jamie."

"Yes; go ahead."

"I have given you the mere outlines of a bare and ugly episode of New York city. That man, or those two men, or that dual entity, has never ceased to perplex me. How does it look to you, knowing merely the outlines?"

"As if the woman had been dealing with two different men," he replied almost indifferently.

The Doctor looked at him earnestly, and I saw he was puzzled by his friend's attitude. "That may be—one never can tell in such cases," he answered quietly; but I could feel his disappointment.

"That's queer, Ewart," said Jamie, gravely; "to me it looks as if two men had done a girl an irreparable wrong." Perhaps we all felt that the conversation had been carried a little too far in this direction. The Doctor turned it into other channels, but it lagged. I felt uncomfortable, and wished I had insisted upon going up to my room when the subject of the farm was broached. After all, we had come to no decision, and I doubted if the Doctor was much the wiser for all our opinions.

Marie's entrance with the porridge relieved the tension somewhat, and I was glad to say good night as soon as I had finished mine.

XIII

Doctor Rugvie had opened an easy way of approach for me to ask him what I would, but that question put by Mr. Ewart in regard to the child, whether it was a boy or a girl, seemed to block the way, for a time at least, impassably. If I were to make inquiry now of the Doctor concerning my identity and ask the name of my father, naturally he would infer, after Mr. Ewart's remark, that the question of the property was my impelling motive. My reason told me the time was ripe to settle this personal question, but something—was it intuition? I believe in that, if only we would follow its lead and leave reason to lag in chains far behind it—seemed to paralyze my power of will in making any move to ascertain my paternal parentage. And yet I had dared to respond to that demand in Jamie's advertisement "of good parentage"!

"Well, I am myself," I thought, half defiantly, "and after all, it's not what those who are dead and gone stood for that counts. It's what I stand for; and what I am rests with my will to make. They 'll have to accept me for what I am."

I was in the kitchen, concocting an old-fashioned Indian pudding and showing Angélique about the oven, as these thoughts passed through my mind. At that moment Jamie opened the door and looked in.

"I say, Marcia—awfully busy?"

"No, not now; what do you want?"

"You—I 'm lonesome. Come on into the living-room—I 've built up a roaring fire there—and let's talk; nobody 's around."

"Where 's Doctor Rugvie?"

"Gone off with Cale to the farm. He 'll get pneumonia if he does n't look out; the place is like an ice-house at this season."

I slipped the pudding into the oven. "Now look out for it and keep enough milk in it till it wheys, Angélique." I turned to Jamie. "Where's Mr. Ewart?"

"Oh, Ewart's off nosing about in Quebec for some old furniture for his den. Pierre drove him to the train just after breakfast. He told mother he would be back in time for supper."

"That's queer," I said, following him through the bare offices, one of which was to be the den, into the living-room where stale cigar smoke still lingered. "Whew! Let's have in some fresh air."

I opened the hinged panes in the double windows; opened the front door and let in the keen crisp air.

"There, now," I closed them; "we can 'talk' as you say in comfort. I did n't air out early this morning, for when I came in I found Mr. Ewart writing. He looked for all the world as if he were making his last will and testament. I beat a double-quick retreat."

"I 'll bet you did. I 'd make tracks if Ewart looked like that." He drew up two chairs before the fire. "Here, sit here by me; let's be comfy when we can. I say, Marcia—"

He paused, leaning to the fire in his favorite position: arms along his knees, and clasped hands hanging between them. He turned and looked at me ruefully.

"We all got beyond our depth, did n't we, last night?"

"I thought so."

"The Doctor 's a dear, is n't he?"

"He 's the dearest kind of a dear, and I could n't bear to see him snubbed by your lord of the manor."

Jamie nodded. "That was rather rough. I don't understand that side of Ewart—never have seen it but once before, and I would n't mind, you know, Marcia," he lowered his voice, "if I never saw it again. It made no end of an atmosphere, did n't it?"

"Thick and—muggy," I replied, searching for the word that should express the mental and spiritual atmospheric condition, the result of Mr. Ewart's attitude in last evening's talk. "And it has n't wholly cleared up yet."

He nodded. "I believe that's why he took himself out of the way this morning. Look here—I 've a great overpowering longing to confide in you, Marcia." He laughed.

"Confide then; I 'm a regular safe deposit and trust company. Tell me, do; I'm dying to talk."

"Oh, you are!" He turned to me with his own bright face illumined. "Is n't it good that we 're young, Marcia? I feel that forcibly when I am with so many older men."

"I 'm just beginning to feel young, Jamie; to see my way through that wilderness you spoke of."

I knew his sympathy, his understanding, not of my life but of the condition of mind to which that life had brought me. It is this quick understanding of another's "sphere", I may call it, that makes the young Scotsman so wonderfully attractive to all who meet him.

"You know what the Doctor said about the world of which he told us last night and of André's world?"

I nodded.

"Well, one night in camp—last summer, you know, it was just before Ewart left me there—old André told us what happened years ago up there in the wilds of the Saguenay. He said one day two Indian guides, Montagnais, came to his camp. The oldest, Root-of-the-Pine, a friend of André's, brought him word from old Mère Guillardeau, André's sister—you know her—who is living here in Lamoral. She told him to receive two of the English, a man and a woman, as guests for a month. The Indian told André they were waiting across the portage.

"André said he went over to meet them, and they stayed with him not only one month, but four. He told us the girl had a voice as sweet as the nightingale's; that her eyes were like wood violets, her laugh like the forest brook. He said they loved each other madly, so madly that even his old blood was stirred at times. He was alone with them there in that wilderness for all those months, caring for them, fishing, hunting, picking the mountain berries, till the first snow flew. Then they took their flight.

"Mère Guillardeau had sent in her message: 'Ask no questions. You can confess and be shriven when you come to Richelieu-en-Bas.' He obeyed to the letter.

"He knew, he said, that they were not married, but he caught enough of their English to know they were looking forward to being married when it should be made possible for them. Whence they came, he never knew; whither they went, he never asked. They came, as birds come that mate in the spring; they went, as the late birds go after the mating season is over, with the first snow-fall; but, Marcia—"

"Yes, Jamie."

"You won't mind my speaking out after what was said last evening?"

"I mind nothing from you."

"André told us that before they left he knew a nestling was on its way; the slender form, like a willow shoot, as he expressed it, was rounder, and the face of the girl was the face of a tender doe. You should have heard him tell it—there in the setting of forest, lake and mountain!

"'All this happened long, long ago,' he said, 'but still I hear her voice in the forest; still I see her eyes in the first wood violets; see her smile that made sunshine in the darkest woods. Still I hear her light steps about the camp and follow her still in thought across the last portage when we carried her in our arms; still see her waving her hand to me from the canoe that floated like a brown leaf on the blue lake waters. Wherever she may be, may the Holy Virgin, Our Lady of the Snows, guard her—and her child! I have waited all these years for her to come again.'

"Marcia—André called their love 'forest love'. Sometimes I think he spoke truly; untaught, he knew the difference."

I listened, caught by the pathos of the tale, the charm of old André's words; but in love I was untaught. I wondered how Jamie could know the "difference".

"But now to my point. Of course I listened all eyes and ears to André. When he finished, the camp fire was low. The full moon had risen above the waters of the lake and lighted the tree-fringed shore. I turned to Ewart, and caught the same look on his face that I saw last night when the Doctor was telling his story: the look of a man who is seeing ghosts—more than one. For three days I scarce got a decent word when he was with me, which was seldom; he was off by himself in the forest. So you see *this*, last night's occurrence, does not wholly surprise me."

We sat for a while without talking. Jamie took his pipe, filled and lighted it with a glowing coal.

"Jamie," I said at last. He nodded encouragingly.

"You know you told me about that queer rumor that crops out at such odd times and places—about Mr. Ewart's having been married and divorced, and the boy he is educating, 'Boy or girl?' you know he said—"

"Yes, I know."

"Might n't it be—I know you did n't believe it, but would n't it be possible that there is some truth in that, distorted, perhaps, but enough to make him suffer when there is any reference to love that has brought with it misery and suffering?"

"It may be you 're right; I had n't thought of it in that light. Of course, I never heard of the rumor till I came back from camp in September; then it seemed to be in the air. I wonder if the Doctor has ever heard anything."

"Probably his coming home so soon and making his home here started the gossip. Jamie—"

"Yes."

"You said he never spoke much to you about his personal affairs—that you don't know so very much of his intimate personal life. Does n't that prove that he has had some trouble, some painful experience?"

"Woman's logic, but I suppose he has. Most men have been through the wilderness, or been lost in it, by the time they are forty. I should think if—mind you, I say 'if'—he was ever married, ever divorced, ever had a child somewhere, he might find his special trail difficult at times; but he has n't lost it! Ewart does not lose a trail so easily! Look at his experience—Oxford, London, Australian sheep-ranchman, forester here in Lamoral! And he 's so tender with everything and everybody. That's what makes him so beloved here in this French settlement."

"Except towards the Doctor last night."

"That's so; but he is tender just the same. I 've seen that trait in him so many times."

"I should think he might be—and like adamant at others," I said, and began to put the room to

rights.

XIV

"We shall miss the Doctor no end," said Jamie ruefully.

We caught the last wave of his hand; the pung's broad fur-behung back could no longer be seen; the jingle of the bells grew fainter; soon there was silence.

"He promised to come again in February. And, now, what next?" I turned to Mrs. Macleod who was standing with Jamie at the window.

"There does n't seem to be any 'next'?" she answered with such evident dejection that Jamie and I laughed at her.

"Take heart, mither," her son admonished her, using for the first time in my presence the softer Scotch for mother.

"It's been such a pleasant week for us—and I find Mr. Ewart so different; not that I mean to criticize our host," she added hastily and apologetically. She seemed to take pleasure in refusing to be comforted for the loss of the Doctor's cheering presence.

"Of course he 's different; there can't be two Doctor Rugvies in this needy world; but you wait till you know Ewart better, mother. Talk about 'what next'! You 'll find as soon as Ewart sets things humming here there 'll be plenty of the 'next'; Cale can give you a point or two on that already. By the way, he seems to have sworn allegiance to Ewart; he does n't have time for me now."

"But what are we women to do here?" I exclaimed half impatiently. My busy working life in the city, with the consequent pressure that made itself felt every hour of the day, and burdened me at night with the dreadful "what next if strength and health should fail?", had unfitted me in part for the continued quiet of domesticity. I found myself beginning to chafe under it, now that the house was settled. I wanted more work to fill my time.

"Better ask Ewart," said Jamie to tease me.

"I will." I spoke decidedly and gave Jamie a surprise. "I 'll speak to him the very first time I get the chance. He has n't given me one yet."

"You 're right there, Marcia. I noticed you and the Doctor were great chums from the first, but Ewart has n't said much to you—he is so different, though, as mother says. It takes time to know Ewart, and sometimes—"

"What 'sometimes'?"

"Sometimes when I think I know him, I find I don't. That interests me. You 'll have the same experience when you get well acquainted with him."

"There is no monotony about that at any rate."

"I should say not." He spoke emphatically.

Mrs. Macleod turned to me.

"I 'm sure I feel just as you do, Marcia, about the 'what next'. I don't know of anything except to keep house and provide for the meals—"

"That's no sinecure in this climate, mother. Such appetites! Even Marcia is developing a bank holiday one."

"And gaining both color and flesh," said Mrs. Macleod, looking me over approvingly. I dropped her a curtsey which surprised her Scotch staidness and amused Jamie.

"Are you *sure* you are twenty-six?" He smiled quizzically.

"As sure as you are of your three and twenty years."

Jamie turned from the window, took a book and dipped into it. I thought he was lost to us for the next two hours. Mrs. Macleod left the room.

"Sometimes I feel a hundred." Jamie spoke thoughtfully.

"And I a hundred and ten." I responded quickly to his mood.

"You 're bound to go me ten better. But no—have you, though?"

I nodded emphatically.

"Where?"

"Oh, in New York."

"Why in New York?"

"You don't know it?"

"No; but I mean to."

"I wish you joy."

"Tell me why in New York."

"You would n't understand."

"Would n't I? Try me."

I looked up at him as he stood there thoughtful, his forefinger between the leaves of the book. *He* had no living to earn. *He* had not to bear the burden and heat of an earned existence. How could he understand? So I questioned in my narrowness of outlook.

"I felt the burden," I answered.

"What burden?"

"The burden of—oh, I can't tell exactly; the burden of just that terrible weight of life as it is lived there. Before I was ill it weighed on me so I felt old, sometimes centuries old—"

Jamie leaned forward eagerly, his face alive with feeling.

"Marcia, that's just the way I felt when I was in the hospital. I was bowed down in spirit with it—"

"You?" I asked in amazement.

"Yes, I; why not? I can't help myself; I am a child of my time. Only, I felt the burden of life as humanity lives it, not touched by locality as you felt it."

"But you have n't really lived that life yet, Jamie."

"Yes, I have, Marcia."

"How?"

"I wonder now if *you* will understand? I get it—I get all that through the imagination."

"But imagination is n't reality."

"More real than reality itself sometimes. Look here, I 'm not a philanthropic cad and I don't mean to say too much, but I can say this: when a thinking man before he is twenty-five has run up hard against the only solid fact in this world—death, he somehow gets a grip on life and its meaning that others don't."

I waited for more. This was the Jamie of whom the depth of simplicity in "André's Odyssey" had given me a glimpse.

He straightened himself suddenly. "I want to say right here and now that if I have felt, and feel—as I can't help feeling, being the child of my time and subject to its tendencies—the burden of this life of ours as lived by all humankind, thank God, I can even when bowed in spirit, feel at times the 'rhythm of the universe' that adjusts, coordinates all—" He broke off abruptly, laughing at himself. "I 'm getting beyond my depth, Marcia?"

I shook my head. He smiled. "Well, then, I 'll get down to bed rock and say something more: you won't mind my mooning about and going off by myself and acting, sometimes, as if I had patented an aeroplane and could sustain myself for a few hours above the heads of all humanity —"

I laughed outright. "What do you mean, Jamie?"

"I mean that as I can't dig a trench, or cut wood, or run a motor bus, or be a member of a life-saving crew like other men, I 'm going to try to help a man up, and earn my living if I can, by writing out what I get in part through experience and mostly through imagination. There! Now I

've told you all there is to tell, except that I 've had something actually accepted by a London publisher; and if you 'll put up with my crotchets I 'll give you a presentation copy."

"Oh, Jamie!"

I was so glad for him that for the moment I found nothing more to say.

"'Oh, Jamie,'" he mimicked; then with a burst of laughter he threw himself full length on the sofa.

"What are you laughing at?" I demanded sternly.

"At what Ewart and the Doctor would say if they could hear us talking like this so soon as their backs were turned on the manor. I believe the Doctor's last word to you was 'griddlecakes', and Ewart's to me: 'We 'll have dinner at twelve—I 'm going into the woods with Cale'. Well, I 'm in for good two hours of reading," he said, settling himself comfortably in the sofa corner. I had come to learn that this was my dismissal.

Before Mr. Ewart's return, I took counsel with myself—or rather with my common-sense self. If I were to continue to work in this household, I must know definitely what I was to do. The fact that I was receiving wages meant, if it meant anything, that I received them in exchange for service rendered. The Doctor left the matter in an unsatisfactory, nebulous state, saying, that if Ewart insisted on paying my salary it was his affair to provide the work; and thereafter he was provokingly silent.

I had been too many years in a work-harness to shirk any responsibility along business lines now, and when, after supper, I heard Jamie say just before we left the dining-room: "I'm no end busy this evening, Gordon, I 'll work in here if you don't mind; I 'll be in for porridge," I knew my opportunity was already made for me. I told Mrs. Macleod that, as she could not tell me what was expected of me, I should not let another day go by without ascertaining this from Mr. Ewart. Perhaps she intentionally made the opening for my opportunity easier, for when I went into the living-room an hour later, I found Mr. Ewart alone with the dogs. He was at the library table, drawing something with scale and square.

"Pardon me for not rising," he said without looking up; "I don't want to spoil this acute angle; I 'm mapping out the old forest. I 'm glad you 're at liberty for I need some help."

"At liberty!" I echoed; and, perceiving the humor of the situation, I could not help smiling. "That's just what I have come to you to complain of—I have too much liberty."

"You want work?"

It was a bald statement of an axiomatic truth, and it was made while he was still intent upon finishing the angle. I stood near the table watching him.

"Yes." I thought the circumstances warranted conciseness, and my being laconic, if necessary.

"Then we can come to an understanding without further preliminaries." He spoke almost indifferently; he was still intent on his work. "Be seated," he said pleasantly, looking up at me for the first time and directly into my face.

I did as I was bidden, and waited. I am told I have a talent for waiting on another's unexpressed intentions without fidgetting, as so many women do, with any trifle at hand. I occupied myself with looking at the man whom Jamie loved, who "interested" him. I, too, found the personality and face interesting. By no means of uncommon type, nevertheless the whole face was noticeable for the remarkable moulding of every feature. There were lines in it and, without aging, every one told. They added character, gave varied expression, intensified traits. Life's chisel of experience had graven both deep and fine; not a coarse line marred the extraordinary firmness that expressed itself in lips and jaw; not a touch of unfineness revealed itself about the nose. Delicate creases beneath the eyes, and many of them, mellowed the almost hard look of the direct glance. Thought had moulded; will had graven; suffering had both hardened and softened —"tempered" is the right word—as is its tendency when manhood endures it rightly. But joy had touched the contours all too lightly; the face in repose showed absolutely no trace of it. When he smiled, however, as he did, looking up suddenly to find me studying him, I realized that here was great capacity for enjoying, although joyousness had never found itself at home about eyes and lips. He laid aside the drawing and turned his chair to face me.

"Doctor Rugvie—and Cale," he added pointedly, "tell me you were for several years in a branch of the New York Library. Did you ever do any work in cataloguing?"

"No; I was studying for the examinations that last spring before I was taken ill."

"Then I am sure you will understand just how to do the work I have laid out for you. I have a few cases still in storage in Montreal—mostly on forestry. Before sending for them, I wanted to see where I could put them."

"Cut and dried already! I need n't have given myself extra worry about my future work," I thought; but aloud I said:

"I 'll do my best; if the books are German I can't catalogue them. I have n't got so far."

"I 'll take care of those; there are very few of them. Most of them are in French; in fact, it is a mild fad of mine to collect French works, ancient and modern, on forestry. I 'll send for the books after the office has been furnished and put to rights. I am expecting the furniture from Quebec to-morrow. And now that I have laid out your work for you for the present, I 'll ask a favor—a personal one," he added, smiling as he rose, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and jingled some keys somewhere in the depths.

"What is it?" I, too, rose, ready to do the favor on the instant if possible, for his wholly businesslike manner, the directness with which he relied upon my training to help him pleased me.

"I 'd like to leave the settling of my den in your hands—wholly," he said emphatically. "You have been so successful with the other rooms that I 'd like to see your hand in my special one. How did you know just what to do, and not overdo,—so many women are guilty of that,—tell me?"

He spoke eagerly, almost boyishly. It was pleasant to be able to tell him the plain truth; no frills were needed with this man, if I read him rightly.

"Because it was my first chance to work out some of my home ideals—my first opportunity to make a home, as I had imagined it; then, too,—"

I hesitated, wondering if I should tell not only the plain truth, but the unvarnished one. I decided to speak out frankly; it could do no harm.

"I enjoyed it all so much because I could spend some money—judiciously, you know,"—I spoke earnestly. He nodded understandingly, but I saw that he suppressed a smile,—"without having to earn it by hard work; I 've had to scrimp so long—"

His face grew grave again.

"How much did you spend? I think I have a slight remembrance of some infinitesimal sum you mentioned the first evening—"

"Infinitesimal! No, indeed; it was almost a hundred—eighty-seven dollars and sixty-three cents, to be exact."

"Now, Miss Farrell!" It was his turn to protest. He went over to the hearth and took his stand on it, his back to the fire, his hands clasped behind him. "Do you mean to tell me that you provided all this comfort and made this homey atmosphere with eighty-seven dollars and sixty-three cents?—I'm particular about those sixty-three cents."

"I did, and had more good fun and enjoyment in spending them to that end, than I ever remember to have had before in my life. You don't think it too much?"

I looked up at him and smiled; and smiled again right merrily at the perplexed look in his eyes, a look that suddenly changed to one of such deep, emotional suffering that my eyes fell before it. I felt intuitively I ought not to see it.

"Too much!" he repeated, and as I looked up again quickly I found the face and expression serene and unmoved. "Well, as you must have learned already, things are relative when it comes to value, and what you have done for this house belongs in the category of things that mere money can neither purchase nor pay for."

"I don't quite see that; I thought it was I who was having all the pleasure."

His next question startled me.

"You are an orphan, I understand, Miss Farrell?"

"Yes." Again I felt the blood mount to my cheeks as I restated this half truth.

"Then you must know what it is to be alone in the world?"

"Yes—all alone."

"Perhaps to have no home of your own?"

"Yes."

"To feel yourself a stranger even in familiar places?"

"Oh, yes—many times."

"Surely, then, you will understand what it means for a lonely man to come back to this old

manor, which I have occupied for years only at intervals, and more as a camping than an abiding place, and find it for the first time a home in fact?"

"I think I can understand it."

"Very well, then," he said emphatically and holding out his hand into which I laid mine, wondering as I did so "what next" was to be expected from this man, "I am your debtor for this and must remain so; and in the circumstances," he continued with an emphasis at once so frank and merry, that it left no doubt of his sincerity as well as of his appreciation of the situation, "I think there need be no more talk of work, or wages, or reciprocal service between you and me as long as you remain with us. It's a pact, is n't it?" he said, releasing my hand from the firm cordial pressure.

"But I want my wages," I protested with mock anxiety. "I really can't get on without money—and I was to have twenty-five dollars a month and 'board and room' according to agreement."

He laughed at that. I was glad to hear him.

"Oh, I have no responsibility for the agreement or what the advertisement has brought forth; it was one of the great surprises of my life to find you here. By the way, I hear you prefer to receive your pay from the Doctor?"

"Did he tell you that?" I demanded, not over courteously.

"Professionally," he replied with assumed gravity. "I insisted on taking that pecuniary burden on myself, as I seemed to be the first beneficiary; but I 've changed my mind, and, hereafter, you may apply to the Doctor for your salary. I 'll take your service gratis and tell him so. Does this suit you?"

"So completely, wholly and absolutely that—well, you 'll see! When can I take possession of the office? It needs a good cleaning down the first thing." I was eager to begin to prove my gratitude for the manner in which he had extricated me from the anomalous position in his household.

"From this moment; only—no manual labor like 'cleaning down'; there are enough in the house for that."

"Oh, nonsense!" I replied, laughing at such a restriction. "I 'm used to it—

"I intend you to be unused to it in my house—you understand?"

There was decided command in these words; they irritated me as well as the look he gave me. But I remembered in time that, after all, the old manor of Lamoral was his house, not mine, and it would be best for me to obey orders.

"Very well; I 'll ask Marie and little Pete to help me."

Marie appeared with the porridge, a little earlier than usual on Jamie's account, and Mr. Ewart asked her to bring a lighted candle.

"Come into the office for a moment," he said, leading the way with the light.

He stopped at the threshold to let me pass. The room was warm; the soapstone heater was doing effective work. The snow gleamed white beneath the curtainless windows, and the crowding hemlocks showed black pointed masses against the moonlight. There was some frost on the panes.

"It looks bare enough now," he said, raising the candle at the full stretch of his arm that I might see the oak panels of the ceiling; "I leave it to you to make it cheery. Here 's something that will help out in this room and in the living-room."

He took a large pasteboard box from the floor, and we went back into the other room. Jamie and Mrs. Macleod were there.

"Now, what have you there, Gordon?" said the former, frankly showing the curiosity that is a part of his make-up.

"Something that should delight your inner man's eye," he replied. Going to the table, he opened the box and took from it some of the exquisite first and second proofs of those wonderful etchings by Meryon.

We looked and looked again. Old Paris, the Paris of the second republic, lay spread before us: bridges, quays, chimney-pots, roofs, river and the cathedral of Notre Dame were there in black and white, and the Seine breathing dankness upon all! I possessed myself of one, the Pont Neuf, and betook myself to the sofa to enjoy it.

"You know these, Miss Farrell?"

"Only as I have seen woodcuts of them in New York."

"They are my favorites; I want nothing else on my walls. Will you select some for this room and some for the den? I will passepartout them; they should have no frames."

"You 're just giving me the best treat you could possibly provide," I said, still in possession of the proof, "and how glad I am that I 've had it—"

"What, Marcia?" This from Jamie.

"I mean the chance to extract a little honey from the strong."

Mrs. Macleod and Jamie looked thoroughly mystified, not knowing New York; but Mr. Ewart smiled at my enthusiasm and scripture application. He understood that some things during the years of my "scrimping" had borne fruit.

"I believe you 're more than half French, Ewart," said Jamie, looking up from the proof he was examining; "I mean in feeling and sympathy."

"No, I am all Canadian."

"You mean English, don't you?"

"No, I mean Canadian."

This was said with a fervor and a decision which had such a snap to it, that Jamie looked at him in surprise. Without replying, he continued his examination of the proof, whistling softly to himself.

Mr. Ewart turned to Mrs. Macleod and said, smiling:

"I want all members of my household to know just where I stand; in the future we may have a good many English guests in the house.—Please, give me an extra amount of porridge, Mrs. Macleod."

XV

With the coming of the furniture and the furnishing of the office, my hands were full for the next week. During the time, Mr. Ewart was in Ottawa on business, and I worked like a Trojan to have everything in readiness on his return. I was determined he should be the first to see the transformation of his special room, and forbade Jamie to open the door so much as a crack that might afford him a peep.

"It does n't seem much like the manor with Ewart away and you invisible except at meals," he growled from the arm-chair he had placed just outside the sill of the office door. He begged me to leave the door open just a little way, enough to enable him to have speech with me—a privilege I granted, but reluctantly, for I was putting the books on the shelves and giving the task my whole attention. The last day of the week was with us, and Mr. Ewart was expected in a few hours. I stopped long enough, however, to peep at him through the inch-wide opening. He was drawing away at a cold pipe and looked wholly disconsolate.

"A new version of Omar Khayyàm," I said.

> "'A pipe, you know ... and Thou
> Beside me, chatting in the wilderness.'"

"I suppose you 'll let me in when Ewart comes."

"I 've nothing to say about that; it is n't my den."

"I was under the impression it was wholly yours, judging from your possession of it."

"Now, no sarcasm, Jamie Macleod; work is work, and there 's been a lot to do in here—not but what I 've taken solid comfort in putting this room into shape."

"Oh, yes, we have seen that; even Cale remarked to me the other night that he 'guessed' Mr. Ewart knew a good thing when he saw it, as he had a general furnisher and library assistant all in one, who was working for his interest about as hard as she could."

"Good for Cale, he is a discerning person. But he seems to be following suit pretty closely

along his lines."

"I hear you 're to catalogue the books that are in the den."

"That is my order."

"Don't you want me to help you? Old French is n't so easy sometimes," he asked, coaxing.

"Oh, no; I 've help enough in Mr. Ewart. He knows it a good deal better than you do."

"'Sass'," was Jamie's sole reply, a word he had borrowed from Cale's vocabulary; he used it to characterize my attitude towards his acquirements.

I worked on in silence till the books were housed; then I drew a long breath of satisfaction.

"What's that sigh for?" was the demand from the other side of the door.

"For a noble deed accomplished, my friend."

"Humph!"

"Now move away your chair, I 'm coming out."

"Come on."

There was no movement of the chair, and, to punish him, I locked the door on the inside and went out through the kitchen up to my room.

I recall that afternoon: the heavy first-of-December skies; the gray-black look on the hemlocks; the faded trunks of the lindens; the dullness of the unreflecting snow; the intermittent soughing of the wind in the pines. All without looked drear, jaded, almost lifeless; the cold was penetrating. I determined that all within should be bright with home cheer on the master's return. Did he not say I had made a home of the old manor?

I recall dressing myself with unusual care and wishing I had some light-colored gown to help brighten the interior for him.

For him! I was looking in the mirror and coiling my hair when I realized my thought; to my amazement my own face seemed to me almost the face of a stranger. I saw that its thin oval had rounded, the cheeks gained a faint color; animation was in every feature, life anticipant in the eyes.

"That's what the change has done so soon; pure air, home life, good food and an abundance of it."

I failed to read the first sign.

There was nothing for it but to put on the well-worn skirt of brown panama serge, a clean shirt waist and a white four-in-hand. I promised myself not only a warm coat out of the first month's wages, but a light-colored inexpensive dress that would harmonize with the general feeling of youthfulness of which my inner woman was now aware. I sat down at the window to wait for the sound of the pung bells. Soon there was a soft tap at my door.

"Come in." Jamie made his appearance with a bunch of partridge berries in his hand.

"With Cale's compliments; he found them under the snow in the woods, and hopes you will do him the honor to wear them in your hair. He left them with me just before he went to meet Ewart; I had them under the arm-chair to present to you formally when you should come out of the den; instead of which, you ignominiously—"

"Please, don't, Jamie—no coals of fire; give me the lovely things."

"But, remember, you are to wear them in your hair, so Cale says."

"It's perfectly absurd—but I must do it to please him. Who would credit him with such an attention?"

"May I stay while you put them in?" he asked meekly.

"Of course you may, you sisterless youth."

I parted the bunch, and pinned a spray on each side, in the coils and plaits of my over heavy hair. Jamie said nothing till this finishing touch had been put to my toilet.

"I say, it's ripping, Marcia. Cale will be your abject slave from henceforth. By the way, I 've never heard him call you 'Happy', as he proposed to do."

"Nor I."

"I wonder what's the reason? Perhaps he thought he had been too fresh, and he does n't dare —There 's Ewart!" He was off on a run.

I thought I would wait for the various greetings to be over before going down. I felt sure I should not see his hand withdrawn this time, as on the occasion of his first home-coming. When I heard his voice below in the hall, I was aware of a warm thrill of delight, a joyous expectancy of good, a feeling as if the home-coming were my own; for never in my life had I been welcomed as he was, with a shout from Jamie, an outburst from the dogs, and joyful ejaculations from Angélique and Marie.

I went down, my cheeks glowing, my heart warm with the home-sense, and—I wondered at myself—my hand outstretched to his. When his closed upon it with the same cordial pressure of the week before, I knew for the first time in my life the joy of being "at home".

And I failed to read the second sign.

XVI

It was a busy winter and a joyous one for me; a short and happy one for Jamie, so he said. He was correcting proof for the first venture and collecting data for the second; trying his hand at a chapter here and there; alternately despairing, rejoicing, appealing to Mr. Ewart or me for criticism—something we were unable to give him, as from disjointed portions of his work we did not know the trend of his ideas; protesting one day that he could write nothing worth reading, then on the next proclaiming to the household, including Cale, his temporary triumph of mind over material. We enjoyed his moods, all of them, whether of despair or enthusiasm, guying him in the one and encouraging him in the other.

The cataloguing took me well into the first week in January. Mr. Ewart was often in the den with me of an afternoon, and I was glad to take advantage of his knowledge of the language in translation, and the use of obsolete words. His own time seemed over full for those first few months. On Tuesday and Saturday mornings, he was always in the office to see the farmers on the estate and talk with them about his plans for future development. On other week-days, when weather permitted, he and Cale were much in the woods.

I found that Mr. Ewart did not intend it should be all work and no play for me. Twice in December he drove me in the pung—no sleigh had as yet been purchased, although a piano filled a corner of the living-room; once, early in the morning, before the sun had a chance to warm and partly melt the ice-crystals that encased every branch, every twig and twiglet. On that morning, we drove without speech for miles behind the swiftly trotting French coach horses; the beauty about us was indescribable, and silence was the best appreciation. We sped through the woods'-road, a prismatic arcade of interlaced crystals; along the river bank beside the vast frozen expanse of the St. Lawrence, gleaming and glittering with blinding reflected radiance. It was so brilliant, that against it the trees by the roadside, laden as they were with ice, stood out black and gaunt. Then into Richelieu-en-Bas, where every roof, every fence, every post and rivet, looked to be pure rock crystal. Window-frames, eaves, doors, the old pump in the marketplace were behung with icicles. The world about us that morning was another world than the work-a-day one to which I was accustomed. I had seen this special condition of ice in northern New England, but never in such beauty and grandeur.

We drove home before the ice began to soften. Afterwards, I sat for an hour at my open window, listening to the musical tinkle and metallic clink of the falling ice from the trees in the woods across the creek.

With the reason given that Jamie and I needed exercise in the open every day,—our occupations being of the sedentary kind, as he said,—Mr. Ewart bade us fare forth with him to learn the art of snowshoeing. He was past master in it and a good teacher. By the middle of January we were well on our feet and independent of any help from him.

Oh, the joy of the fleet tracks over the unbroken white! Oh, the coursing of the blood, the deep, deep breaths of what Mr. Ewart called the "iced wine" air! Oh, the blessed hunger that was satisfied with wholesome food after the invigorating exercise! Oh, the refreshing sleep, with the temperature at zero and the still air touching my cheeks under the fur robe across my bed! And with it all the sense of security, the sense of peace, of rest!

In this atmosphere, the remembrance of the weary years in the great city grew dim. I rejoiced at it.

I was beginning, also, to make myself easily understood with the French. Their language I loved; their literature I cultivated. It was a delight to be able to visit the tiny homes in the village, whither I was sent on one errand or another by Mr. Ewart, so getting extra rides in the pung and

longer hours in the bracing air. It was an education to make the acquaintance of various families, learn the names of every member of the households, their interests and occupations. They were such tiny homes, made so high of stoop to avoid the rising spring flood that the great river is apt to send far and wide and deep into the village streets, covering the noble park and flooding first floors, respecting neither twin-towered church nor manor house; so low in the walls, few-windowed, and those double and packed with moss.

And such expansive souls as I found in the tiny homes: the hostess of the inn, Mrs. Macleod's dressmaker who lived beneath the shadow of the great twin-towered church; the furrier and his wife on the market-square; from them I bought my warm coat; ancient Mère Guillardeau and her old daughter, weaver of rag carpets, and some of her friends who followed the same calling and showed me, during the short winter days, how to weave them on their rough looms.

Of the three or four English families, with the exception of the postmistress, I knew nothing, or knew of them only through Mr. Ewart and Jamie. The "Seignior" and "Seignioress", so-called although English, were in Montreal for the winter. The old General and his wife were housed through infirmities. Now and then I saw a bevy of red-cheeked English girls, driving over from their home-school in Upper Richelieu for a jolly lark on their half-holiday. Of other English I heard nothing; there were none in Richelieu-en-Bas.

As the season advanced and I was firm on my winter feet, I made many a snow-shoe call on the farmers' families who lived on the old seigniory lands. It was good to hear them tell their hopes and anticipations; for Mr. Ewart's plan to do away with the old seigniorial rents and leases, and make of each farmer, at present paying rent, a freeholder, was welcomed, with almost passionate enthusiasm, in this community, where, generally, change is looked at askance. It was not long before I discovered that, on entering these homes, I found myself anticipating some word of praise, some expression of loyalty and devotion to the man who was to give them a new outlook on life. I listened with willing ears and led them, many times of my own accord, to speak of him.

In the long winter evenings I read thoroughly into the history of French Canada. It took me far afield, into English as well; into biography and the work of pioneers. It showed me the flaming enthusiasm of the fanatic, the faith of the apostle, the courage of high adventure, the chivalry of noble lives, the loyalty and devotion of the humble. It showed me, also, the cruelty of man to man, the divergence of race, the warring of nations, the battlefields, the conquests, the heavy hand of the conqueror, the red man's friendship, the red man's enmity, fire, sword, torture. But in and through and above all, it opened to me the high heart of the Canadian, the undaunted faith in established principles, and the patriotism that is a veritable passion.

"O Canada, my Canada!" an old French Canadian once exclaimed to me as we sat by the box-stove in his little "cabin". "There is no land like it; no land where they live at peace as we do here; no land where they are so content by their own fireside." And he spoke the truth.

I began to understand, through my intercourse with our neighbors on the estate and the village people, those words of Drummond—Drummond who has shown us the hearts of Canada's children:

"Our fathers came to win us
This land beyond recall—
And the same blood flows within us
Of Briton, Celt and Gaul—
Keep alive each glowing ember
Of our sireland, but remember
Our country is Canadian
Whatever may befall.

"Then line up and try us,
Whoever would deny us
The freedom of our birthright,
And they 'll find us like a wall—
For we are Canadian, Canadian forever,
Canadian forever—Canadian over all!"

One night in February, just before the Doctor's mid-winter visit, a friend of the dead poet passed a night beneath the roof of the old manor house as Mr. Ewart's guest. After the yellow chintz curtains were close drawn, so shutting out the wintry night, and while the backlog was glowing, he read to us from those poems that at the author's will exact tears or smiles from their hearers. After the reading of "The Rossignol", Jamie took his seat at the piano and played softly that exquisite old French Canadian air "*Sur la montagne*".

Mr. Ewart rose and, taking his stand beside him, sang the words of the poem which have been set to this music.

"Jus' as de sun is tryin'

Climb on de summer sky
Two leetle birds come flyin'
Over de mountain high—
Over de mountain, over de mountain,
Hear dem call,
Hear dem call—poor leetle rossignol!"

They recalled to me that twin song of Björnson's which, despite its joyous note of anticipation, holds the same pathos of unsatisfied longing.

The last note had scarcely been struck when Jamie broke into the jolly accompaniment to

"For he was a grand Seigneur, my dear,
He was a grand Seigneur."

And, listening so to poems and music and the talk of these men of fine mind and high aspirations, to their hopes for Canada as a whole, to their expression of pride in her marvellous growth and their faith in her future, I said to myself:

"Am I the girl, or rather woman now, who a few years ago made her way up from the narrow thoroughfares about Barclay Street to her attic room in 'old Chelsea'—up through the traffic-congested streets of New York, in the dark of the late winter afternoon, the melting snow falling in black drops and streams from the elevated above her; the avenues running brown snow-water; the rails gleaming; the steaming horses plashing through slush; the fog making haloes about the dimmed arc-lights; the hurrying, pressing tide of humanity surging this way and that and nearly taking her off her feet at the crossings; the whole city reeking with a warm-chill mist, and the shrieking, grinding, grating, whistling, roaring polyglot din of the metropolis half deafening her?"

Thinking of this as I stared into the fire, listening to the good talk on many subjects, something—was it the frost of homelessness?—melted in my heart. The feelings and emotions that had been benumbed through the icy chill of circumstance, thawed within me. The tears, usually unready, filled my eyes. I bent my head that the others might not see, but they fell faster and faster. And with every one that plashed on my hands, as they lay folded in my lap, I felt the unbinding from my life of one hard year after another, until the woman who rose to bring in the porridge, in order to cover her emotion, was one who rose free of all thwarting circumstance. I had come into my own—a woman's own.

But I failed to read the third sign.

XVII

Doctor Rugvie's visit! It was fruitful of much, little as I anticipated that.

I wrote regularly every month to Delia Beaseley telling her all that I knew would be of interest to her about my life at Lamoral, and assuring her that my lines had fallen in pleasant places. She wrote, at first, to tell me that my wish, in regard to keeping my identity from Doctor Rugvie for the present, would be respected; but in a later letter she urged me to make it known to him; to ascertain all the facts possible about my parentage. I replied that I preferred to wait.

And why did I prefer to wait? I asked myself this question and found no answer. When the answer came, it was unmistakable in its leadings.

"A letter from Doctor Rugvie; he is coming Monday!" I cried joyfully, flourishing the sheet in Jamie's face when he appeared at the door to ask for his mail.

I was sitting on the floor by the shelves in the living-room, for I was busy cataloguing the books in the general and mixed collection, and searching for allied subjects. This work Mr. Ewart assigned to me after I had finished the "forestry" cataloguing.

"Where 's mine?"

"You have n't any, nor Mr. Ewart—from the Doctor, I mean."

"You seem to be particularly elated over the fact."

"Jamie, my friend, feel—" I held up the envelope to him; he took it and fingered it investigatingly.

"What's this in it?"

"That is an object which in international currency exchange we call a draft—the equivalent of my wages, Jamie; in other words, payment for industrial efficiency; do you hear?"

"My, but you are a mercenary woman! One of the kind we read of in the States," he retorted.

"Wait till you get your first check for royalties from London, then use that word and tone to me again if you dare."

Mr. Ewart opened the door of the office.

"What's this I hear about the Doctor and mercenary tendencies—the two don't go together as I happen to know." He spoke from the threshold.

Jamie showed him the envelope, holding it high above my head.

"This, Ewart, is the compensation for sundry days of so-called labor on the part of Miss Farrell—drives, snow-shoeing, tobogganing with Cale not discounted, of course. Shall I read it, Marcia?"

"For all I care."

Mr. Ewart looked on smiling at our chaff.

"It's on the First National Bank of New York, Ewart, for the amount of fifty-two dollars and eighty-seven cents—how 's that about the cents, Marcia?"

"Because the Doctor insists on paying me every two months and seems to call thirty days a month—why every two, I don't know, do you?" I said laughing, and looking up, questioning, into Mr. Ewart's face. What I saw there, what I am sure Jamie saw, was not encouraging for more jesting on Jamie's part or mine. He turned away abruptly and sat down at his desk before he spoke:

"The Doctor wired me this afternoon that he would be here to-night instead of Monday, as he can get in an extra day. I can't say how sorry I am it has happened so, for I made arrangements to be in Quebec to-night and in Ottawa to-morrow night. I return Monday. Well, I must leave him in your hands—he won't lack entertainment. I wish, Jamie, it were possible for you to risk it and meet him with me this evening; but I suppose this night air is too keen—it's ten below now. I shall take the train he comes on and may not have time for a word of welcome."

"I suppose it would be risking too much." Jamie spoke with something that sounded like a sigh. "I don't want the Doctor to roar at me the first thing because I am indiscreet—not after what he and his advice and kindness have done for me already."

Mr. Ewart laid a hand on his shoulder.

"You 're another man, Macleod, since coming here. We won't make any back tracks into that wilderness, will we?" He spoke so gently, so affectionately, that Jamie turned suddenly to him, exclaiming impulsively:

"Gordon, if you were a woman I 'd kiss you for saying that."

I knew what courage it gave him to hear this from his friend; and I wondered what kind of a man this might be who, one moment, could look stern and unyielding at our half childish chaffing, and in the next be all affectionate solicitude for this younger man who, at times, was all boy.

"Then, Miss Farrell," he turned to me, "won't you come? Cale will drive me over in the double pung."

There was no hesitation in my giving an affirmative answer.

"We 'll have supper within an hour, please, Mrs. Macleod," he said, as she entered the room. He looked at the pile of books on the floor beside me.

"It's too late for you to work any more." He stooped and, gathering up an armful, began to place them. "Will you be so kind as to speak to Marie and tell her to have four soapstones thoroughly heated, and ask Cale to warm the robes? It will be twenty below before you get back."

"Just what I 've wanted to do all winter," I exclaimed; "a drive on such a clear, full-moon night to Richelieu-en-Haut will be something to remember."

"I hope to make it so; for it's a typical Canadian midwinter night—a thing of splendor if seen with seeing eyes."

"Then you won't expect me to talk much, will you?"

"No,"—he smiled genially, and Jamie audaciously winked at me behind his back,—"it's apt to make my teeth ache, and although yours are as sound as mine, I don't believe they can stand prolonged exposure to severe cold any better. But how about Cale? There is no ice embargo on

his flow of speech."

Jamie burst into a laugh. "You 're right, Gordon, he 'll do all the talking for both, and for the Doctor too. By the way, mother," he said, turning to Mrs. Macleod and at the same time holding out a hand to help me up from the floor—an attention I ignored to save his strength—"something Cale said the other day, but casually, led me to think he may be a benedict instead of a bachelor; you have n't found out yet?"

"No, but sometime it will come right for me to ask him. He has consideration for women in just those little things that would lead me to believe that he has been married—"

"Oh, I say, mother, that's rough on Ewart and me. Give us a point or two on the 'little things', will you?"

"Stop teasing, Jamie; I still think, as I thought from the first, that he has been—"

"Perhaps more than once, mother! Perhaps he 's a widower, or even a grass widower—I 've heard of such in the States—or he might be a divorcé, or a Mormon, or a swami gone astray—"

"Havers!" she exclaimed, with a show of resentment which caused her son to rejoice, for it was only when thoroughly out of patience with him that she used the Scotch.

"You 're too absurd," I said with a warning look.

"Mother is for stiff back-boned unrelentingness in such things," he remarked soberly, after she and Mr. Ewart left the room; "and I 've put my foot into it too," he added dolefully. "Why, the deuce, did n't you stop me in time?"

"How did I know how far your nonsense would lead you?"

"Well, I don't care—much; I can't step round on eggs just because of what I 've heard—"

"If only you had n't said anything about 'grass widower'!"

"Don't rub it in so," he said pettishly, and by that same token I knew he was repentant because, without intention, he might have spoken in a way to hurt momentarily his friend.

"Beats all how dumb critters scent a change," said Cale, just after supper. He was loaded with the robes he had been warming. Pierre was waiting in the pung, having brought the horses around a little early. Little Pete with a soapstone was following Cale. "They begun to be uneasy 'bout two hours ago; I take it they heard Mr. Ewart say he was leavin' on the night express, and begun to get nerved up."

"So they did, Cale; they were in the office, all four of them, and heard every word. Look at them!"

Cale stopped on his way to the front door and looked up the stairway. Mr. Ewart was coming down, a dog on each side of him, and two behind fairly nosing his heels. They made no demonstration; were not apparently expectant; but, as Cale remarked 'they froze mighty close to him', sneaking down step by step beside and behind him, ears drooping, tails well curled between their legs—four despairing setters!

We watched them. Mr. Ewart paid no heed to them. They heeled along in the passageway almost on their bellies when he took his fur coat from the hook. He had another on his arm which he held open for me.

"I really am warmly enough dressed," I said.

"I don't doubt it—for now; but you 'll be grateful enough to me three hours later for insisting on your wearing it—in with you!" He moved a dog or two from under his feet, gently but forcibly with the tip of his boot; whereupon they literally crawled on the floor.

"If you don't mind, Cale,"—he spoke purposely in a low monotone, but with a look of amusement,—"if you don't mind having the dogs in with you under the robes on the front seat, I 'm willing to have them go, but I don't want them to run with the pung."

I noticed no movement on the part of the dogs except an intense quivering of the whole body. One who does not understand doghood might have fancied they were shivering at the prospect of the eighteen-mile drive in the cold.

"I ain't no objection," said Cale; "the fact is there ain't no better foot-warmer 'n a dog on a cold night, an' I was goin' ter ask if I could n't have the loan of one of 'em fer ter-night."

"Well, they can all go—"

The last word was drowned in a chaos of frantically joyous barks. They leaped on him,

caressed him, stood up with their forepaws stemmed on the breast of his fur coat, licked his boots, his hands, and attempted his face—but of that he would have none.

"Be still now—and come on, comrades!" he said. The four made a mad but silent rush for the door. Cale gave them right of way; Pierre swore great French oaths wholly disproportionate to the occasion, for the outrush of the dogs caused the French coach horses to plunge only twice. At last we were in—the dogs in front with Cale, and Mr. Ewart and I on the back seat, so muffled in furs, fur robes, fur caps, coats and mittens, that we humans were scarce to be distinguished from our canine neighbors.

We no longer used the frozen creek for a crossing, but drove a mile up the road to the highroad bridge. The night was very cold. The moon had not yet risen. The stars shone with Arctic splendor. Cale drove us rapidly over the dry, hard-packed snow—to my amazement in silence. Through the woods, down the river road we sped, and on through Richelieu-en-Bas. The light in the cabaret by the steamboat landing shone dimly; the panes were thick with frost. Here and there a bright lamp gleamed from some window, but, as a whole, the village was dark. We drove on to the open country towards Richelieu-en-Haut six miles away, sometimes through a short stretch of deep woods where the horses shied at the misshapen stumps, snow-covered. Then out into the open again, the flat expanse of white seemingly unbroken. Here and there, far across the snow-fields, I caught a glimpse of a light from some farmhouse. Once we heard the baying of a hound, at which all four setters came suddenly to life from beneath the robes and barked vindictive response.

To the north the sky was dark and less star-strewn than above. Suddenly I was aware of a wondrous change: the stars paled; the north glowed with tremulous light, translucent yellow that deepened to gold—an arc of gold spanning twenty degrees on the horizon. The glory quivered; ran to and fro; fluctuated from east to west, unstable as liquid, ethereal as gas; paled gradually; then, in the twinkling of an eye, dissolved, and in its dissolution sent streamer after streamer, rose, saffron, pale crocus and white, rapidly zenithward, rising, sinking, undulating, till the heavens were filled with marvellous light. Cale reined in the horses for a moment.

"Guess this can't be beat by the biggest show on earth," he remarked appreciatively.

"Look to the right—the east, Miss Farrell," said Mr. Ewart.

I leaned forward to look past him. Over the white expanse, lightened in the rays of the northern aurora, the moon, nearly full, showed the half of its red-gold disk.

The glory faded from the heavens; the moon, rising rapidly, sent its beams over the fields; the horses saw their shadows long on the off side. Cale chirruped to them, and we sped onwards to the station.

I was happy! If Cale had called me by that name at this time I would have welcomed it. It applied to me. It was good to be alive; good to be out in such a world of natural glory; good to have, in the night and the silence, such companionship that understood my own silence of enjoyment.

I was happy at the prospect of the Doctor's coming. The thought of the future removal to the farm no longer filled me with misgivings. "I shall still be near the manor, it will not be banishment in any sense." So I comforted myself.

I turned to get a look over the ridge of fur at the man beside me. He had spoken but once, to ask if I were comfortable. I wondered if he were enjoying all this as much as I? He must have read my thought for he turned his face to me, saying:

"I am enjoying all this on my own behalf, and doubly because your enjoyment of it is so evident."

"How evident? You can't see that, and I have n't said a word."

"Perhaps for that very reason."

He leaned over and drew the robe farther about my exposed shoulder. I felt the strength of his arm as he pulled at the heavy pelt, the gentleness of his touch as he tucked it behind my back. So little of this thoughtfulness and care had been mine! Almost nothing of it in my life! No wonder that other women who are cared for, carried on loving hands, protected by the bulwark of a man's love, cannot understand what the simple adjustment of that robe around a chilled shoulder meant to me, Marcia Farrell!

He was always doing something in general for my comfort and pleasure, but never anything special. Even this drive I owed to Jamie's physical inability to accept his friend's invitation. But this fact did not quench my joy.

"Are you comfortable—feet warm?" he asked for the second time.

"As warm as toast."

What was it that I felt as I continued to sit silent by this man's side?—an alien, I had called him to the Doctor; fool that I was! I felt a peculiar sense of perfect physical rest I had never before experienced, a consciousness of happy companionship that needed no word to make itself understood. This sense of companionship, this rest of soul and body during the two hours I passed at this man's side—I enjoyed them to the full. The feelings and emotions of the woman who, only a few evenings before, had thrown off the yoke of burdening circumstance, who had broken, to her own physical benefit, with past associations and memories, found scope, in the protecting night and the silence, for perilous nights of imagination. Thoughts undreamed of hitherto, desires I had never supposed permissible in my narrow walk of life, proved their power over me at this hour. Hopes unbounded, if wholly unfounded,—for what had this man ever said to me since his home-coming that he had not said a dozen times to every member of his household? —imagined joys of another, a dual life—

"Yes," I said to myself, giving rein to pleasing fantasy, "a dual life in one—our lives, his and mine, one and inseparable; why not, Marcia Farrell? Why should n't I grasp with both hands outstretched at all life may have to give me? Why not hold it fast even if it have thorns?"

Imagination was carrying me out of myself. I called a halt to all this frenzy, as it at once appeared to me by the cold light of the moon, and brought myself down to earth and common sense with a jolt. I moved uneasily.

"Are you cold?" Mr. Ewart asked, evidently noticing the movement.

"No; but too much aurora, I 'm afraid."

"Did you feel that too? I thought I would n't mention it, but something affected me powerfully for the moment, and there has been an aftermath of sensation since. If this display is wholly electrical, it may easily be that some human machines are tuned like the wireless to catch certain vibrations at certain times."

I sat down hard, metaphorically, on eight feet of frozen earth upon hearing this explanation. "You little fool," I said to myself, but aloud:

"Whatever it was, it was effectual; I have never experienced anything like it."

"Never?"

"No; have you?"

The answer seemed long in coming.

"Yes, many years ago; and it was here in this northern country too. Sometime I would like to tell you about it.—Cale," he spoke quickly, abruptly, "I hear the train. Keep the horses in the open roadway behind the station, then if they bolt at the headlight you can have free rein and a clear road. They 've never seen that light. We 'll get out here," he said, throwing off the robes as Cale drew rein at the edge of the platform, "and you can welcome the Doctor for me if I miss him."

He whisked me out of the pung, giving me both hands as aid, and replaced the robes.

"Keep the horses head on, and don't let the dogs run," were his last words to Cale.

The Quebec express whistled at the curve an eighth of a mile distant from the junction; the sound fell strangely flat in the intense cold. Cale braced himself to handling the horses. I followed Mr. Ewart to the front of the platform.

The engine was thundering past us, and the train drawing to a stop of fifteen seconds.

"Take off your mitten," he said abruptly; I pulled it off with a jerk. He held out his ungloved hand, and I laid mine within it. The two palms, warm, throbbing with coursing life, met—

"Goodby till Monday—and thank you for coming. There he is!"

He had just time to see the Doctor appear on the platform at the other end of the car. Mr. Ewart called to him as he swung himself on to the already moving train:

"John, look out for Miss Farrell—"

The dazed Doctor failed to grasp the situation. Mr. Ewart waved his hand as he passed him; "Till Monday—Miss Farrell will explain."

"Miss Farrell, eh?" The Doctor turned to me who was at his side by means of an awkward skip and a jump, cumbered as I was with the long coat. "Br-r-rre! Is this the weather you give me as a greeting?"

"Why don't you say rather: 'Is this the weather you brave to meet me in?' Would n't that sound more to the point? Come on to the pung; the soapstones are fine."

"Ah—that sounds more like Canadian hospitality. Come on yourself, Marcia Farrell; where's

the pung?"

"Behind the station, that is, if the horses have n't bolted with Cale and the four dogs. Here he is."

Four canine noses were visible above the robes; eight delicate nostrils were flaring after the departing train. At the sound of the Doctor's voice a concerted howl arose from among the robes on the front seat—a howl expressive of disappointment, of betrayal by their master: "He is gone, we are left behind."

"Shut up," said Cale shortly, with a significant movement of his foot beneath the robes.

"Oh, Cale!" I made protest, for at that moment I sympathized. I should have felt the same had I been a dog; as it was—

I looked after the swiftly receding train, a bright beaded trailing line of black in the white night. The Doctor was opening the robes.

"In with you, and then we can talk; there 's no wind to prevent."

As soon as he was seated beside me and the horses' heads turned homewards, he began to chat in his cheery way, he asking, I answering the many questions; he telling of Delia Beaseley and his delight to be in Canada again, I inquiring, until we found ourselves passing through Richelieu-en-Bas. And during all the time I was listening to his merry chat and chaffing, to his kindly expressed interest in all that pertained to my small doings at the manor, I was hearing the on-coming thunder of the engine and those last words: "Take off your mitten—Good-by till Monday—thank you for coming."

During that hour and a half of our homeward drive, I gave no heed to the perfect Canadian night, its silver radiance, its snow gleam and sparkle enhancing the violet shadows. I was seeing only that long-stretching waste of white beyond the junction, that bright beaded trailing line of black, narrowing and foreshortened as it receded swiftly into the night.

And where was the sense of physical rest? Why had this unrest I was experiencing taken its place? I was sitting beside as good a man, as fine a man, one more than that other's equal in achievement, as the world counts achievement. I was groping for a solution when the Doctor exclaimed: "There's the manor!"

The white walls and snow-covered roof stood out boldly against the black massed background of spruce, hemlock and pine. The yellow chintz curtains were drawn apart, showing us both the gleam of lamplight and the leaping firelight. At the windows in the living-room were Jamie and his mother; at those of the dining-room both Angélique and Marie were visible for a moment. The Pierres, father and son, were at the steps to lend a helping hand.

"We are at home again, Marcia," the Doctor spoke significantly. I responded, simulating joyousness:

"Yes, and does n't it give us a warm cheery welcome?"

But even as I replied, I was conscious that the old manor of Lamoral without its master would never be home for me.

I went up the steps answering gayly to Jamie's "Is he here?" But by the emptiness of heart, by the emptiness of the passageway, by the empty sound of the various greetings, joyous and hearty as they in truth were, I knew I needed no fourth sign to interpret myself to myself.

My woman's hour had struck—and with no uncertain sound.

XVIII

"And what next?" I asked myself after my head was on the pillow and while staring hour after hour at the opposite wall. Surely I had read enough of love! I had imagined what it might be like, even if I had never experienced it, even if I had thought little enough about it in connection with myself. I did not know it on what might be called the positive side, but I seemed to have some knowledge of it negatively. I knew it could be cruel, cruel as death; my own mother was a dead witness to that. I knew it could be brutal when passion alone means love; I was eye witness to this on Columbia Heights not so very long ago. I knew, or thought I knew, that it could be killed, or rather worn to a thread by the slow grinding of adverse circumstance. I recalled my own lack of affection after the years of sacrifice for the imbecile grandfather, my shiftless aunt.

And now, in the face of such knowledge, to have this revelation! This sudden absorption in another of my humankind; all my thought at once, without warning, transferred to that other wherever he might be; all interest in life centering with the force of gravity in that other's life; "at home" only in that other's presence; at rest only by his side—

"Now, look here, Marcia Farrell, don't you be Jane Eyrey," I said to myself in a low but stern voice. I sat up in bed and drew the extra comforter about my shoulders. "No nonsense at your age! You accept the fact that you love this man,—and you will have to whether you want to or not,—a man who has never spoken a word of love to you, who has treated you with the consideration, it is no more, no less than that, which he shows to every member of his household. Now, make the most of this fact, but without showing it. Don't make the youthful mistake, since you are no longer a girl, of fancying he is reciprocating what you feel, feeling your every feeling, thinking your every thought. And, above all, don't betray your self at this crisis of your life, to him or any member of his household—not to Delia Beaseley, not to Doctor Rugvie. Rest in his presence when you can. Rejoice to be near him—but inwardly, only, remember that!—when you shall find opportunity, but don't make one; discipline yourself in this, there will be need enough for it. 'Stick to your sure trot'; give full compensation in work for your wages—and enjoy what this new life may offer you from day to day. This new joy is your own; keep it to yourself. Now lie down for good and all, and go to sleep."

Thereupon I snugged down among the welcome warmth of the bed-clothes, saying to myself:

"I don't care 'what next'. I am so happy—happy—happy—"

But, even as I spoke that word softly—oh, so softly!—laying the palm of my right hand, that still felt the strong throbbing of his, under my cheek, I remembered that Cale had never once called me by the name he had proposed, "Happy"; that Jamie noticed the omission and remarked on it.

And what did Cale know? What could he know? There used to be a family of Marstins in our town before I was born. My aunt told me once that her sister married into the family; that, too, was before I was born. I never knew any one of the name, and I never cared to look at the old family headstones. The churchyard, because it held my mother, was hateful to me.

And I? I was too cowardly to ask Cale why he omitted to call me by his chosen name; for by that name my mother was known among her own, so I was told—that mother whom I never knew, whose memory I never loved, of whom I was ashamed because people said she had belied her womanhood.

But ever since Delia Beaseley opened my eyes to a portion of the truth concerning her, I had felt great pity for her. Now, at the thought of her, dying for love, for this very thing that had come to me like lightning out of the blue, dying without friends in that dull basement in V—— Court, my heartstrings contracted, literally, for I experienced a feeling of suffocation.

"Mother, oh, mother," I cried out under my breath, "was it for this, that I know to be love, you gave your all, even life itself? Oh, I have understood so little—so little; I have been so hard, mother. I did n't know—forgive me, mother—forgive, I never knew—"

It eased me to speak out these words, although I knew that in giving utterance to them my ears were the only ones the sound of my pleading could reach. Those ears, on which the word mother would have fallen so blessedly, would never hear, could never hear. Not so very far away, in northern New England, the snows lay white and deep, as white and deep as in Canada, on her neglected grave.

Something Delia Beaseley quoted from my mother in her hour of trial flashed again into consciousness: "The little life that is coming is worth all this." And my mother must have said it knowing all the joy, the bliss, the suffering, both of body and of soul, that this love must in due time bring to her daughter, because she was a woman-child.

What a Dolorous Way my mother must have trodden, must have been willing to tread for *this*!

There are minutes, rare in the longest lives, when life becomes so intensified that vision clears almost preternaturally, sees through telescopic lenses, so to speak. At such moments, the soul becomes so highly sensitized that it may photograph for future reference the birth or passing of Love's star.

XIX

"It's my innings now, while Ewart is away," said the Doctor; "Marcia, will you go skiing to-morrow with me and Cale?"

"Did n't I promise you I would wait till you came?"

"I know you did; but possession, you know, is nine tenths of the law, and Ewart has been having it all his own way here with you since I left. He did, however, give me a parting word to look out for you. I don't see that you need much looking after; a young lady perfectly able to look out for herself, eh, Mrs. Macleod?"

"Perhaps the circumstances warranted some sort of chaperonage, Doctor," said Mrs. Macleod, entering into his fun and frolic as into no one's else. "As Marcia sets it forth, she was alone, except for you, on the platform of the junction nine miles from home, with Cale braced in the pung on the highroad, ready for the horses to bolt."

"Yes," said the Doctor, musing, "the circumstances were slightly out of the ordinary.—A full bowl, if you please, Marcia."

We were sitting around the hearth in the livingroom on the following Sunday evening. Porridge had just been brought in and I was dispensing it. Mr. Ewart's insistence upon Cale's joining us at this hour every evening, and remaining with us when no guest was present—the Doctor we counted one of us—had for result that, many an evening, we listened delighted and interested to his stories of adventure in the new Northwest. He was, in truth, a man of the woods, a man also of their moods, and like them showing track and trail, leafy underbrush, primeval forest trees, and the darling flowers of the forest as well; but, also, like them, withholding from our eyes the secret springs of his life. We often wondered if ever he would disclose any one of them.

"A Yankee brother to old André," was Jamie's definition of him. He seldom spoke of matters personal to himself, so seldom that Jamie's great joke, perpetrated in his mother's presence and mine, was to the effect that "Ewart and Cale and Marcia are all enlisted in the reserves, mother; and only you, the Doctor, and I are able to fight in the open." The full significance of which good-natured raillery I understood, and answered him accordingly:

"All in good time, Jamie. There is so little to tell, it's worth while to keep you guessing."

I was serving Cale with his portion of porridge when he spoke, answering the question put by the Doctor to *me*. Cale had been gradually appropriating me since my coming, and I had no cause to resent his right of proprietorship.

"Guess 'twill take two ter hold her up the fust few times; but Marcia's nimble on her feet; she 'll outstrip us soon. She 's a mighty good one on snowshoes."

"Ewart taught you, did n't he?" said the Doctor, turning to me and holding out his bowl the second time. "Just a spoonful more, if you please. I take it this oatmeal came direct from Scotland, did n't it, Mrs. Macleod?" She nodded a pleased affirmative.

"Yes, and a fine teacher he is too," I responded heartily. I was determined the Doctor should not find me backward or awkward when his friend's name was mentioned. With the thought that to-morrow that friend would be with me—us—again, I found my spirits rising. It was hard to repress them. Perhaps the Doctor's keen eye noticed something in my manner, for he spoke with emphasis:

"Well, something has made you over; there 's no exercise like it in this northern climate."

"I guess 't ain't all snow-shoeing," said Cale sententiously.

"You 're right, Cale," I said.

"Account for it then, Cale; I 'd like to hear."

"We 'll give Doctor Rugvie the recipe for all the future farm-folks, won't we?" I nodded understandingly at Cale.

"So we will—so we will," he replied thoughtfully. "Out with it, Cale. What is it has changed Marcia so?"

"Wal, if you want to know I can give it ter you—a reg'lar tonic to be taken daily in big doses. It's old-fashioned, mebbe, but genu*ine*," he said with so comical an emphasis and inflection that we laughed. "It can't be beat, you 'll see. Take equal parts of dry clean air, so bracin' thet sometimes a man feels as if he was walkin' on it, good food and plenty of it, good comp'ny. Shake 'em well together to get out the lumps, and mix well in—a good home. I take it thet's about it, Doctor?"

"Cale, you old Hippocrates," said the Doctor, delighted at Cale's gift of speech, for he had heard him discourse only on "hosses" when he was with us the first time, "you 'd be worth three thousand dollars a year to me as consulting hygienist. Do you want the job?"

"No." He spoke decidedly. "This job 's good enough fer me. I hope 't will be for life now."

"Ewart's colors again, eh, Jamie?" He turned to Jamie with a lift of his eyebrows.

"Winning all along the course, Doctor."

"How do you know all that, Cale?" The Doctor dropped his chaffing and looked over earnestly at Cale beside the chimney-piece.

"Know what?"

"The fact that those special ingredients must be mixed in a good home to prove so effectual as in Marcia's case?" He turned to examine me.

"How do I know it?" He spoke slowly, almost with hesitation, and beneath his bushy eyebrows I thought I saw a suspicious glitter in his small keen gray eyes, but it may have been imagination. "I have n't always been a lonely man, you know—"

"That's just what I don't know, Cale." The Doctor spoke with the encouragement of good fellowship, not as one willing or wanting to ask his confidence, but as one hoping in friendship to receive it. I am sure we all felt with the Doctor at this moment, for Cale's reticence had been a matter of concern to Jamie and Mrs. Macleod. But Jamie had respected his silence.

Cale set his emptied bowl on the tray and sat down again, making himself comfortable by crossing his legs. He heaved a sigh of satisfaction. Mrs. Macleod, Jamie and I read that sign; Cale was ready to expand a little more in the cheerful atmosphere of friends and fireside. We three knew that what he had to retail would be well worth hearing. Jamie settled himself in the sofa corner as usual. The Doctor insisted on carrying the tray to the kitchen.

"Ah, this is good," he said, seating himself by me and spreading his hands to the blaze. "We shan't be interrupted, and the rest of the evening is ours. It's a bitter night, too, which, by contrast, makes this comfort delectable."

We waited, expectant, for Cale.

"You 've been wonderin' now fer 'bout six months, Mis' Macleod, you an' Jamie, whether I was a married man or not, now, hain't you?" He smiled as he spoke, the creases about his eyes deepening slowly.

Mrs. Macleod, with an embarrassment we all enjoyed seeing, moved to a seat beside him; saying gently, if deprecatingly:

"Yes, I could n't help it, Cale."

"How could you, bein' a woman?" he replied as gently. "An' you too, Marcia?"

"Of course; don't I belong to the weaker sex? But here is Jamie, although a man—"

"Oh, I say, Marcia, that's not playing fair," Jamie growled at me as if indifferent; but I knew his curiosity was at the flood, and Cale knew it too. I feared he might tease without satisfying.

"Yes, I 'm married, Mis' Macleod, an' it seems as if I 'd always been married."

Jamie's recent remark about Cale's being a widower, grass-widower, divorcé, Mormon, etc., came back to me, and I could hardly keep from laughing aloud at Mrs. Macleod's look of dismay and amazement.

"I say I'm married, fer you see that once married is always married with *me*," he repeated emphatically.

The Doctor nodded approvingly. "No uncertain note about that, Cale."

"No sir—*ee*," Cale nodded understandingly at him in turn, much to Jamie's delight. "A marriage when it *is* a marriage—'fore God an' men, an' 'fore the altar of two lovin' hearts, is fer good—fer this world anyway, an' fer the next if there is one. 'T ain't often you can come acrosst 'em now-a-days. I guess some men, put it to 'em on a sudden, could n't say under oath whether they was married or single, seein' this divorce business mixes things up worse 'n a progressive euchre party. I 'm only speakin' fer myself, mind you, an' I don't set up fer judgin' others."

"Good for you, Cale! Those are my sentiments," said the Doctor laughing heartily at Cale's idea of the "progressive euchre party".

"It's what keeps me young," Cale continued earnestly; "fer jest the thought of the one woman I loved, an' love now with all the love thet 's in me, warms me jest as this blaze would thaw freezin' sap; it keeps me, as you might say, kinder thawed out with folks, an' a durned cussed tough world."

He paused a moment and, leaning forward, clasped his hands around his crossed knees. I had seen him do this only when he was bracing himself to say something of deep significance. He faced me squarely, with the same keen look that I detected on the first night of my arrival.

"I 've been wonderin', Marcia, if you did n't hail from somewheres near my place,

Spencerville, in northern New England, jest over the line—though come ter think of it, you said you was born in New York, did n't you?"

Brought to bay by this question, put to me suddenly without warning, I brought all my self control to bear on my voice and answered:

"Yes, I was born there, but my home for two thirds of my life was in the vicinity of Spencerville."

"I thought so," said Cale almost indifferently. "You had a way with you like the folks round there—not that I know any of your generation," he added hastily. "I left there over a quarter of a century ago. Only, now and then, your ways take me back into another generation where my wife belonged," he said, as if explaining why he had taken the liberty to approach me with the direct question. I forced myself to put on a bold front and ask:

"Who was your wife, Cale? I may know of the family."

"I have my doubts about *thet*," he said with considerable emphasis. "Girls of your age ain't apt to know of folks thet lived, an' loved, an'—I was goin' to say 'lost', but she ain't never thet to me, 'fore they was born. My wife's name, Marcia, was Morey, Jemimy Morey—one of three—"

"Triplets? Yes *marm*," he said, in reply to Mrs. Macleod's look of surprise. "Job Morey, her father, was a poor man, poor, as we used ter say, as Job's turkey. He 'd had a hard time, no mistake. He 'd had five boys ter raise on a farm thet was half rocks. Then come the war an' the two oldest had ter go. The third an' fourth was drafted an' Job hired the money to pay bounty; but the cuss turned bounty jumper an' they had ter go. Thet was the year when there was a bleedin' heart an' a rag of crape in most every house in the village. Two on 'em come home ter die, an' the t' other two was never heard from; it most killed Aunt Sally. They 'd had poor luck with four boys, an', by George, after the youngest of them five was fifteen if Aunt Sally did n't have triplets—gals all on em!

"Mother said half the women in the village was there ter help. She said she was out in the woodshed cuttin' up some kindlin'—Job never was known ter be forehanded in anythin'—an' Job come out the kitchen end without seein' her. She heard him give a groan an' say, all to himself he s'posed, as plain as could be: 'O Lord, three more mouths ter fill, an' so little ter fill 'em with!' Then, turnin' an' seeing mother, he smiled as well as he could in the circumstances, an' tried ter put a good face on it by sayin':

"'Well, Aunt Marthy, I ain't got all the material goods thet Old Testament Job had, but I 've got one of his latter day blessings, three daughters, an' I guess, if Sally don't mind, I 'll name 'em after 'em.'

"Thet 'show they come by their names: Keziah, Jemimy, and Keren-happuch, which was the most outlandish name fer about the prettiest baby, mother said, thet ever she 'd set eyes on. They shortened it to 'Happy' mighty quick.

"Aunt Sally who 'd never been strong sence the girls was born, broke right down under her trouble, when she lost her last boy, and never rallied. She died when the girls was n't more 'n ten year old, an' after thet, those six little hands worked early an' late to keep the house for their father. An' they kept it well too.

"Many 's the time after chores was done, I 'd sly over to Job's to fetch wood an' carry water for the sake of gettin' a smile from my pet, thet was Jemimy—a fair-skinned, blue-eyed little thing thet looked as if a breath of wind would blow her over. I watched her grow up like one of them pink-and-white wind-flowers thet come so early in spring, an' I used ter pull whole basketfuls for her, jest ter see her flush up so pleased like, an' get a kiss for my pains.

"I was ten years older than her—old enough ter know what would happen when Jemimy was ten years older too. She growed right inter my life, an' I growed right inter hers, so 't was nat'ral enough when she was seventeen for us ter say we belonged to one another.

"Job never could get ahead, and the farm was mortgaged clear up to the handle. I had n't much neither, for I had mother ter support and worked out by the month, an' Jemimy said 't was no time ter think of gettin' married; we 'd better wait till we could get a little ahead. She said she 'd heard of a place in the mills down Mass'chusetts way, an' although I stood out against it, she had set her heart on goin' an' earnin' a little extra, an' I let her have her way. Keziah married jest 'bout thet time a poor shote of a feller, an' went out West with him on ter some gov'ment lands. Happy was ter keep the house.

"Jemimy promised faithfully ter write, an' so she did, though 't was hard work after mill hours, she said, for she was so tired; but she loved me too well to have me fret an' worry, so she wrote pretty reg'lar every two weeks.

"She 'd been away 'bout seven months an' Job was lookin' like a man with some backbone in him, for half of Jemimy's pay kept comin' reg'lar an' Happy made everything she come nigh like sunshine, when one evenin' Job come over an' asked me how long it had been sence I heard from Jemimy. 'Goin' on four weeks,' says I. 'She told me not to expect much this month she 's so busy.'

"'We ain't heard for six weeks,' says Job, 'an' t'other night I had a dream; 't war n't much of a dream neither—only I can't get rid of it, work it off nor sleep it off, neither. S'posin' you write.'

"You may be pretty sure I did, an', not gettin' an answer, I drove down ter the nearest station an' sent a telegram, an' thet not gettin' an answer neither, I jest put myself aboard the next train for Lowell. Fust time I 'd been on the cars too, but they could n't go fast enough for me.

"I went straight ter the mill she 'd been workin' in, an' asked fer the boss. Then I put the question thet had been hangin' round me like a nightmare for twenty-four hours back.

"'Can you tell me where ter find Jemimy Morey?'

"There was a cur'ous sort er smile went curlin' round the man's lips as he opened a great ledger, an' read an entry thet made me set down on a chair handy, feelin' weak as water:

"'Entered February 2.—Left July 19.'

"Thet was all, but 't was enough.

"'Where 's she gone ter?' says I.

"'We don't keep run of the hands after they 've left unless they go ter another mill, an' she ain't,' says he, clappin' to the ledger with a bang thet said plain as could be, 'Time 's up.'

"'I guess you 'll have ter let me see the women, fer it's a life an' death matter ter me', says I, fer his drivin' ways madded me, an' I was pretty green an' did n't know as much as I might have.

"The strength seemed ter come floodin' right in ter me when I 'd said thet, and I guess there must have been a kinder 'knock-yer-down' look in my eyes, fer the feller sort o' winced—there war n't but us two in the office—an' said:

"'It's against the rules an' 't won't do no good, but if you 'll feel any better you can this time.'

"You see I thought if I could see the women, I 'd ask 'em, an' p'raps they 'd know 'bout her. But, Lord! when I see thet great room stretchin' away ter nothin', an' them hundreds of girls and women a-workin', tendin' them looms as if their life depended on them wooden bolts shovin' back'ards an' for'ards like lightnin', I jest set down on the first bench I come ter sicker 'n death.

"A great wave of black an' a wave of green went through the room. My pulses kept time to the *rick-rack* of the flyin' shuttles, an' my head swum with the dizzyin' of the wheels an' the pumpin' of the shafts.

"'Good God,' I thought, 'is this the place she 's been breathin' out her sweet life in!'

"I tried ter think, but could n't, the floor jarred so with the rumble of the great machines; an' the air grew as thick with dust as a barn floor in threshin' time; an' right through it all, a scorchin' August sun burned in great quiverin' furrers; an' from outside where it slanted on the river rushin' through the mill-sluices, it sent a blindin' reflection whirlin' an' eddyin' along the glarin' white ceilin's till I felt like a drownin' man bein' sucked under...

"I got out somehow, fer I found myself on the street. I went ter every mill in the place—an' might have spared myself the trouble.

"Then I took the houses by rote, askin' at each one for Jemimy Morey. Up one street, down another, I went, the little red brick boxes lookin' as like as one honeycomb ter another; most of 'em was empty—all at the mills except the old women and babies; the fust could n't give me no kind of an answer, an' the second I stumbled over.

"It was gettin' towards six, an' I war n't no nearer findin' what I 'd come fer than when I started, when I heard a factory bell ringin' an' asked what it meant. They told me a quarter ter six an' shuttin' off steam. I started on a dead run fer the little footbridge thet led from the canal alongside, to the mill gates. There I took my stand jest as the six o'clock whistle blew and the great mill gates was hoisted, an' the women an' children come flockin' out an' over the bridge.

"I asked every squad of 'em—they could n't get by me without answerin' me fer 't was only a foot-bridge—if they knew a mill hand by name Jemimy Morey?

"For five minutes I got pretty much the same answer, then a little slip of a gal no higher'n my elbow says: 'What d' you want of her? You can't see her for she 's up at Granny's sick of the fever, an' nobody dass n't go near her.'

"There 's no use my tellin' you how I found her nor what we said—only 't war n't exactly what I 'd planned all through hayin' time when, noonin's, I 'd stretch out in the shadder of a hayrick an', buryin' my face in the coolin' grass, think how 't would seem to have *her* hand strokin' my forehead an' smoothin' all care away by her lovin' ways.

"Jest as soon as she was strong enough, I took her home; an' without much ceremony, she sittin' in the arm-chair an' I standin' by her side, we was made man an' wife.... Oh, we was happy!

an' thet choice of our happiness, for we both knew it war n't for long. I 've sometimes thought we took out a mortgage on our future bliss we was so happy.... Six months from the day I took her home, the church bell tolled nineteen—an' might have tolled a thousand for all I heard."

XX

There was a long silence; no one cared to break it. As for me, I felt as if stricken dumb by what I was hearing. I knew, intuitively, what I was about to hear. Mrs. Macleod put her hand on Cale's hard brown fist as it lay on his knee. I am sure the sympathetic pressure prolonged the silence. Doctor Rugvie and Jamie were staring into the fire. I could not take my eyes from Cale's face; I was as if fascinated. He, on the contrary, never looked once my way.

His voice grew husky towards the last; it was not till he had cleared his throat several times that he could speak.

"I ain't said much 'bout Happy,—that's short for Keren-happuch, the name she always went by,—but she was the fust thing I took any interest in after thet. My wife charged me over an' over again to look out fer her, an' I 'd begun ter think 't was time.

"There ain't no telling jest what Happy was. She war n't what you 'd call real harn'some, not at fust; but she had a way with her thet was winnin', an' a laugh thet always put me in mind of our old North Crick in August when it goes gurglin' an' winnerin' over its stony bed. She had a smile, too, to match the laugh. There ain't no tellin' what she was like. She was jest Happy, an' there warn't a likely chap this side of the border and t'other, thet knew her, who had n't tried ter get some hold on her. But 't war n't no use; she jest laughed 'em off, fust one, then t' other—but still they kept tryin' till she was twenty-one.

"On her birthday she come over to me jest 'bout dusk as I was milkin' in the shed,—I can see her now, standin' by old Speckles' head an' hangin' on tight ter both her horns as if fer support—an' turnin' sudden ter me with a kind o' laugh, thet sounded a good deal more like a choked-down sob, she says:

"'Brother Si.'

"My name is Silas C., but when I left what used ter be home ter me, I war n't willin' ter have strangers call me by the name thet belonged ter those I loved, so I 've been Cale to all the rest fer a good many years now.

"'Brother Si,'says she, 'you loved my sister; won't you tell me what ter do?'

"'What's up?' says I, fer I could n't collect myself she come on me so sudden, an' I knew by her looks she meant business. Then she blurted it all out:

"'George Jackson has asked me to marry him—an' father wants me to. I don't know whether I ought ter.' She wound up with a sigh.

"'Why not?' says I, fer I war n't master enough of my feelin's to say any more.

"'Well, I don't know exactly—only, I 'm afraid I don't love him as I 'd ought ter.'"

Cale moved uneasily. He leaned his elbows on his knees, resting his chin in the palms of his hands. He continued in a lower voice:

"May the Lord forgive me, but I thought I was doin' fer the best to argue her inter thinkin' she loved him, an' if she did n't, then she would after marriage. An' I'd ought 'er known better! I ain't never fergiven myself fer meddlin'.

"George Jackson was nigh ter me, although he was born in Canady an' I in New England. His farm was a border one, just over the line. There was about three hundred acres of extra good farmin' land and some heavy timber. My five acres was on the border, too, an' many a time we 've clasped hands over the old stone wall on our boundary, an' I 've said, laughin': 'Blood 's thicker 'n water, boy!'

"I used ter work fer him a lot. He was his own master for he was an orphan; an' I had mother, an' thet kinder drew us closer, fer mother mothered him. There war n't a likelier young feller anywheres round. He was ten years younger 'n me, an' I 'd half brought him up in the farmin' line—proud of him, too, if I do say it.

"There war n't a gal in our village or out of it fer a good many miles round thet had n't tried fer him but Happy—an' she was the only one he 'd ever had eyes fer. Thet's the way it mostly goes in life. He was two years younger 'n she was—an' smart! He 'd been through the Academy,

an' would have made something of himself besides a farmer if he had n't got bewitched, like most men sometimes in their lives, by a gal.

"I 'd seen which way the wind was blowin' fer quite a while, but kept still, fer George never wanted ter be interfered with, an' Happy was as shy as a wood thrush. The long an' short of it is, they was engaged, an' Job seemed ter think his luck had come at last. But it war n't so with Happy. She never seemed the same after thet. She kept sayin' she wanted ter see a little more of the world before she settled down. An', sure enough, in September she got a chance; fer Keziah, who 'd lost her husband an' been awful sick with chills an' fever, come back ter the old place, an', as there war n't enough fer one more, Happy teased Job ter let her go down with a neighbor's gal to Boston an' work in a store there. 'Only fer a little while,' she said.

"George set his face against her goin' like flint, tellin' her he had enough fer all. But I, knowin' what she said ter me thet night in the milkin' shed, advised him ter let her go an' have her way, tellin' him she 'd be all the happier afterwards, an' be contented ter settle down.

"Wal, she went, an' all Job's peace of mind went with her. You see he was gettin' on in years, nigh on ter seventy-one, an' down with the rheumatiz all thet winter an' spring. The next July he come down with a kind of typhus, an' they sent fer Happy ter come home.

"The minute I see her, I knew she war n't the same Happy as went away. She wore ear-jewels an' a locket, an' had plenty of city airs and ways; but the old laugh an' smile war n't all there. She was harn'some, though, at last! Harn'some as a picture, an' nobody blamed George fer puttin' up with what he did fer the sake of gettin' her. She led him a chase thet summer. She give him every chance ter break with her; but he would n't, an' she dass n't, fer Job had set his heart on the match, an' was thet weak an' childish thet he kept harpin' on their marriage from mornin' till night, an' thet kept up George's courage more 'n anything else. So things went on fer most two months.

"One afternoon, late in September—I shall never ferget the day fer 't was Sunday, an' it seems as if the Sabbath was the devil's own day after all—George an' me took the team ter go up ter the north pasture to ketch his colts. Word had come down thet they 'd broke loose an' needed ter be tended to thet very night; so, without sayin' nothin' ter nobody, fer 't was only our own business if we *did* go on Sunday, we set out.

"On the way up George told me he an' Happy was ter be married the next week, an' I, fer one, was mighty glad on 't, fer I longed ter see her settled down an' like herself again.

"The north pasture lays up over the hill good two mile from the farm, an' when we 'd gone 'bout half way, George reined up, an' says:

"'Let's hitch the team here an' go over ter the pasture crosslots. It ain't more 'n half as fur, an' I 'm afraid it 'll get too dark ter hitch 'em if we drive round the road.'

"'All right,' says I; an' we set off, George takin' the five-rail fences at one bound an' walkin' as if on air.

"He was jest lettin' down the bars an' callin' the colts by name, when we heard a team comin' from the north. Both of us stopped ter listen an' see what 't was, fer there war n't but one road over the hill on the north side, an' thet was so steep it war n't travelled many times a year. We could look right down the slope of the pasture onter the road 'bout a hundred foot below, an', in a minute, a team hove in sight—the horse followin' pretty much his own lead an' feelin' his way down as best he could.

"There was a man an' a woman in the buggy pretty well occupied with one 'nother, fer his arm was round her, an' her head was leanin' on his shoulder. Somehow I did n't like the look of it, an' I was jest turnin' ter George ter say so, when I heard sech an oath from his lips as gives me the creeps every time I think on 't.

"There war n't no time ter say a word, fer I see what he see jest as plain as the sun in the sky: —the woman liftin' her face a little an' the man kissin' her over 'n over again.... 'T was Happy.

"'Do you see thet?' says George, turnin' ter me with a glare like a madman.

"'Yes,' says I, fer I could n't get out another word.

"'You lie!' says he, 'an' if you say thet again it 'll be the last word as leaves your body alive!'

"An' with thet he sprung at me like a tiger, an' the Lord only knows 't was my great pity fer him thet held my hand. But he did n't touch me—oh, no! His hand dropped as if it had been shot, an', leanin' all white an' quiverin' up against the fence, he dropped his head onter his folded arms an' burst inter great sobs thet shook the rails. It was like one of them spring freshets thet tears up the face of nature, an' I knew he 'd be the better fer it, fer he was only a boy in his years, if he was a man in his love.

"'You ain't goin' ter let 'em go?' was the first words I could muster courage to say, as I see him turnin' back ter the pasture bars again.

"'Yes, I 'm goin' ter let them go—ter the devil,' he muttered, between his teeth; then, turnin' ter me, as cool an' calm as if there war n't a woman nor a sarpent in the world, he says:

"'You know, Si, there 's the colts ter be ketched, an' it's gettin' late.'

"An', by the Lord Harry, they was ketched! I never see sech racin' an' tearin' an' rarin'! He was all over the pasture ter once, so it seemed, headin' 'em off, hangin' on ter their manes, throwin' himself astride of fust one then 'nother. I thought the old pasture would be ploughed ready fer spring sowin', the way their heels tore up the sod. I dass n't help him fer I knew the madness thet had been on him, an' the heat he was in, was workin' off thet way. So I kept out of his way, an' within three quarters of an hour he 'd got those four colts well in hand an' started fer home.

"Mother told me the rest.

"'Job had two sinkin' spells thet Sunday afternoon,' she said, 'an' there war n't a drop of sperits in the house. I 'd used up the last of the elderberry wine,' she said, 'an' long 'bout three o'clock, I told Happy she 'd better run down to Seth White's an' get some brandy. She come back in a hurry an' said he had n't a drop of anything in the house, an' she 'd run down to the Crick House,—'t war n't more 'n a mile—an' get some.

"'Thet's the last I see of her till half past eight,' said mother, 'an' when she did come she was all of a shake. She said she 'd hurried so, an' had ter wait at the tavern till they 'd sent down ter the next village. I thought 't was kinder queer,' mother used ter say, 'fer 't was the fust time I 'd ever known the Crick House to run dry of a Sunday.

"'I did n't say nothin', but took the bottle an' started upstairs, leavin' her settin' there on the settle. Job was ramblin' some, an' Keziah had all she could do to keep him pacified.'

"George and me,"—Cale interrupted his story to explain to us,—"had moved Job over inter the north chamber over the kitchen, fer 't was handier ter tend him there; an' all the cookin' was done in the woodshed. But you could hear every sound in the kitchen plain as could be.

"'Job was jest fallin' asleep,' mother said, 'when I heard George come in through the woodshed an' shut the door with a bang thet pretty nigh raised the roof, an' started Job off again; an' I jest riz up out of my chair ter give them young folks a piece of my mind when, all of a suddin', I heard Happy cry out sharp, as if somebody was hurtin' her:

"'"Oh, don't—don't!"

"'Then I knew there was trouble brewin'. I held up my finger ter Keziah ter keep still, an' slippin' down the back stairs, thet led inter the kitchen, laid my eye to the crack in the door thet was part open.

"'I could see Happy crouchin' on the settle with both hands over her face, an' George, standin' over her, had laid a pretty heavy hand on her shoulder.

"'"Who was thet devil?" says he, in a hoarse voice like a crow's-caw. There was only a groan fer answer.

"'"Tell me the truth," says he with a great shudderin' breath thet seemed ter go down clean ter his finger-tips, fer she shook like a leaf under the power of his hands. "Are you fit ter be my wife?"

"'"Fit ter be your wife!" she shrieked, and with a bound thet shook his hand free of her an' left her standin' face ter face with him. Then, liftin' both her round white arms, she opened her little palms upwards jest as if', mother said, 'she was tryin' ter reach the horns of the altar, an' it sounded as if she was prayin': "As there 's my mother's God in heaven above me, I am clean an' fit ter be your wife, George Jackson, an' the wife of any honest man livin', an' if you 'll take me, knowin' what you do—an' you 've seen all there was of harm—I 'll marry you ter-morrow."

"'Her arms dropped by her side as if she had n't a mite of strength left in her body, an' she looked at him with a look thet will ha'nt me ter my dyin' day.'

"Mother said: 'If I 'd had a daughter, I 'd ruther laid her in her grave than seen her marry any man with thet look on her face.'

"'"So help me God, Happy, I 'll save you from yourself an' marry you ter-morrow," says George, slow an' solemn. An' at those words, Job riz right up in bed an' hollered "Amen, amen!" till the rafters rung.'

"Mother 's told me the story over 'n over again, an' always in them same words," said Cale thoughtfully. "She used ter say she guessed Happy made a clean breast of it to George after hearin' that 'Amen'.

"Sure enough they was married the next day—late in the afternoon—when Job had a lucid spell an' cried fer joy. 'I can leave you now, Happy,' was all he said as he give 'em his blessin'. When night come on he wandered again. He 'd had watchers more 'n three weeks, an' Keziah was

all tuckered out, an' mother too. I said I 'd watch thet night, but Happy stuck to it she was goin' ter.

"'But, Happy—' says mother, with a meanin' look an' smile.

"'I know, Aunt Marthy.' She answered, sorter hesitatin'; then, settin' the bowl of porridge she had in her hand down on the table, she beckoned mother out inter the shed an', shuttin' the door tight, flung her arms round mother's neck an' begged her ter speak ter George, an' ask him ter let her watch jest this one night with her father.

"'He can't deny me thet, Aunt Marthy, an' if you had a daughter placed as I am, would n't you do as much fer her?'

"Mother said she 'd never ferget the scairt look on the girl's face, nor the feel of her two hands, like chunks of ice, round her neck.

"'My heart ached fer her,' mother said, 'an' I told her I 'd speak ter George, an' I knew 't would be all right.'

"An' so 't was. He was only too glad to do anything fer her ter make her feel easier in her mind; he said he 'd stretch out on the sofy in the parlor, so as to be on hand if they wanted him.

"Mother set up till twelve, an' then Happy brought her up a steamin' bowl of catnip tea.

"'Take it, Aunt Marthy,' she said, coaxin', 'it 'll do you good.'

"'Bless your thoughtful little soul,' says mother, an' gulped it down as innercent as a lamb."

At this point Cale rose, with one stride reached the fireplace and gave the backlog a mighty kick that sent the sparks in showers up the chimney; then, seating himself again, he went on in a hard unyielding voice:

"I ain't made up my mind whether I 've fergiven her or not. I s'pose I have, seein' what the gal must have suffered after thet; but it was my innercent lovin' mother—an' how she could have done it beats all creation! But she was desp'rit.

"George got up twice in the night, but all was quiet. He even walked round the house an' stood under the winder, hopin', as he told me afterwards, to see her shadder on the curtain. The second time he went out, he saw her pull aside the square of cotton an' look out. It was nigh mornin' then and the lamp still burnin'. 'Bout half after five he crept out in his stockin' feet, milked, an' turned the cows out; then he come back, laid down, an' just after daybreak shet his eyes fer the first time.

"When he woke it was 'bout eight o'clock, an' still nary a sound in the house, fer Keziah had n't nothin' on her mind, 'cause mother took it all off. Again he slipped out of doors an' see a dull red spot on the curtain; it looked as if the light was burnin'. He thought she 'd fallen asleep. On thet, he creeps up the back stairs an' looks inter the chamber. There was mother stretched out on the cot unconscious, her face as white an' drawn as the square of cotton beside it. Job was breathin' heavy in the bed; the lamp was smellin' with the vilest smell and—Happy was gone."

"Gone!" Jamie echoed.

"Yes, gone fer good—an' ter this day I can't quite make up my mind whether I 've fergiven her or not.

"Mother come to in something less than half an hour and before the doctor got there. We braced her up with a pint of strong coffee, an', natcherly, she could n't remember nothing after she 'd took the catnip tea—*and* the laudanum.

"George rode right an' left, to get track of her, or rather them, fer we all knew there was a man in the case after what we see. He telegraphed ter them big cities, an' hired detectives fer the dirty work; but they could n't get no clew. The folks at the Crick House said there 'd been a man there sketching but they had n't seen him sence Sunday night, when he left on foot. The gal, they said, had n't been near the house, an' Seth White told mother, it was he give her the brandy himself; so you can make what you can of it.

"'I 'm her husband, an' she belongs ter me,' was all George would say, when we tried to make him give her up an' git a bill of divorce.

"Wal," said Cale sententiously, looking hard at the Doctor, "there 's two ways of lookin' at thet, but it took him some time ter see it; an' it war n't till he 'd travelled fer four months, east, north, south, an' west as fur as the Rockies, thet he come home an' settled down to farmin' again; but it would n't work. He war n't the same man; lost his interest, an' was lettin' things go ter the dogs. He never took ter drink, thet I know of. But there war n't no use talking ter him. He was his own master an' would n't be interfered with.

"It might have been nine months after he 'd come home, mebbe 't was a year, I don't remember, when he come to me one day with a telegram in his hand—it had come up on the

stage—an' handed it to me with the face of a man ready ter face death or of a dead man jest come ter life, I could n't say which.

"'Read it,' says he, shakin' like a man in drink; 'I can't.' An' I read:

"'I am dyin' and alone among strangers; will you come to me fer the sake of my child.' There was an address thet made George groan, fer he 'd been all over thet great Babel of New York, an' knew jest the kind of place she was in.

"Wal, he went; an' three days afterwards he come home with the dead body of the woman, as was his wife an' yet was n't—jest accordin' as you look at it—an' a live child thet was hers an' not his 'n, whichever way you look at it.

"Sech things ain't nothin' new to you, I s'pose?" Cale turned to the Doctor.

"What became of the man?" said the Doctor, without answering his question. During this recital his eyes never left Cale's face.

"Dunno."

"You don't know! What do you mean by that, Cale?" said Jamie.

"I mean," he answered slowly, "thet George Jackson never did nothin' by halves. He come ter me one day—the day after the funeral—an' said he was goin' away. An' he did; sold out an' went away."

"Did the child live?" Doctor Rugvie's voice broke the silence somewhat sharply. I caught the flight of his thought; I am sure Jamie did also.

"Yes, lived ter be a blessing ter all she come nigh. She war n't more 'n three days old when he brought her home to Keziah. Happy was dead when he found her; more 'n thet he never told us. He left something for them with Lawyer Green—he told me he should do it. They lived on thet in part; it helped ter support 'em, fer they was in a tight place. Thet was how Job's luck came at last, poor soul—little enough it was. He kept on fer years, I heard, but was always weak-minded after he was told what had happened. They said he always used ter call the baby 'Happy', an' could n't bear her out of his sight. Then, when she was 'bout fourteen, he turned against her, an' kept thinkin' it was Happy herself; kept harpin' on her marriage to George, an' flingin' of what she 'd done inter her face, till the child could n't stand it no more. She never knew the whole truth, they said, till she was fifteen; then somebody was willin' ter tell her"—Cale smiled grimly—"as *they* see it, an' it 'bout finished what Job begun. I heard she never tasted a morsel of food for two days. The last I heard about her was, she was keepin' the district school. It's been most ten years now sence I heard anything; you don't often meet a man from our way up in Manitoba or the river basin of British Columbia, an' I never was no hand at writin'. Sometime I mean ter look her up. I ain't been able ter do fer her as I 'd ought ter, fer I had bad luck fer too many years—them pesky western wildcat banks cleaned me out twice."

"By what name was the child christened?" asked the Doctor.

"Never was christened thet I know of."

"Oh, Cale, if only they had been happier!" It was Jamie who spoke with almost a groan.

"Wal, thet's the mystery of it," was his quiet answer. Gathering his loose-jointed frame together, he rose. "Guess I 'll go an' look after the hosses; it's goin' ter be a skinner of a night." At the door he turned.

"I know I ain't told you nothin' livenin', but it's life, an' I could n't tell it no other way. It ain't jest the thing ter air fam'ly troubles, but it's all past; an' what I 've told, I 've told ter my friends, an' I 'll thank *you* ter let what I 've said be 'twixt us four."

We sat in silence for a while after he had left the room. I was wondering how I could make excuse to get away from them all, get away by myself and have it out with myself, when Jamie broke the silence:

"Doctor Rugvie, I 've been putting two and two together. You know what you told us the last time you were here about that New York episode? Do you suppose Cale's story is the key to that?"

"Possibly it might be, if those episodes were not of common occurrence—there are so many all the time."

"I know; but this fitted in almost every detail. I would n't ask him how long ago all this happened."

"Nor I," was the Doctor's reply, and his answer gave a glimpse of his thought. "I will when it comes right."

"Dear old Cale," I murmured. I felt it incumbent on me to say something, lest my

unresponsiveness be noticed.

The Doctor rose and took a cigar from the box on the mantel, saying almost to himself:

> "'There may be heaven, there must be hell,
> Meantime there is our earth here—well!'

"Good night, Mrs. Macleod, good night, Boy—Marcia, good night."

He spoke in his usual voice, but with noticeable abruptness.

XXI

So Cale knew. This was my first thought when I found myself alone in my room. Cale, then, was the husband of my mother's sister, Jemima Morey, who died before I was born, whose name I had heard but two or three times. My Aunt Keziah's mind grew dull in the strain of circumstance; she was never given a full supply of brains, and her memory weakened as she aged. Had she lived,—I shuddered at the thought,—she would have been imbecile like my grandfather and, doubtless, have lived to his age, ninety. In that case there would have been no life for me here.

"But I *am* here. I am going to remain here till I am sent away. Nothing that Cale has said shall influence me in this. All that is past—a part of another generation. I have put it all out of my life, once and for all. I live now and here, in Lamoral. I am not my mother; I am Marcia Farrell. I have not her life to answer for, and her life—oh, what she must have suffered!—shall no longer influence mine.

"I am free! I declare myself free from the bondage of past memories, free, and I will to remain so."'

This was my declaration of independence—independence of heredity and its accredited influence; of memories that control the mentality which governs life; freedom from the actuality of past environment. I drew a long free breath. My individual womanhood, this "I" of me, Marcia Farrell, not a composite of ancestral inheritance, asserted itself.

What if my nose resembles my great-grandmother's? I asked, unfurling my revolutionary flag over the moat—untechnically "ditch"—of the stronghold, considered by some impregnable, of present day scientific discovery.

What if I happen to have a temper like my maternal great-aunt's? What if I have a fighting instinct like my paternal ancestors, who may have come over with William the Conqueror as swordsmen or cooks—I don't care which?

What if I handle my crochet needle in a manner very like the brandished spear of Goths, Vandals, and Huns, from all of whom it is perfectly possible that I may count my descent?

What if I show distinctive animal characteristics? Jamie declares I run like a doe and look like a greyhound!

What do I care if, millions of years ago when things on this earth were stickier and hotter than the worst dog-day in New York, this thing that has, in the end, become Marcia Farrell, this half-perfected mechanism of body and mind, had gills like a fish? What do I care if it had?

This "I" of me is distinct from every other "I" on this inhabited globe. This "I" of me has its special work to do, not another's, not my ancestors'. Humble enough it is. It has to feed and clothe my body by labor, the brain regulating the handicraft. It has eyes to see all the beauty, all the ugliness of Life; ears to hear all its harmonies, all its discords; a mind to comprehend how some detail of chaos may find rebirth in order. This "I" of me, my soul, receives through the instruments of the senses, impressions of infinite chaos ordered into laws, not necessarily final, laws beneficial to man and his universe.—Am I to deny the existence of what is called the strange unknown ether, simply because, for ages, the instrument of the wireless was not on hand to give expression to its transmitting power?

I repeated to myself, that I had my own life to live, not my mother's—oh God, forbid! Not my grandfather's—oh, in mercy not! Not my myriad of ancestors' lives; were this so, the mechanism of the brain would give under the strain. But just my own, mine, Marcia Farrell's, here, from day to day in Lamoral; a life lived in thankfulness of spirit for a shelter that is a home; in thankfulness for the modicum of intellect—with its accompanying physical fitness—that enables me to earn my living; in thankfulness for friends; in thankfulness—yes, I dare say it, even in the shadow of Cale's story of my mother's short life—that I love, that I can love.

This is the full text of my declaration of independence, made at twelve of the clock,—I heard

it striking in the kitchen below,—on the night of the twentieth of February, nineteen hundred and ten.

From that hour, I lost all desire to know my parentage, to question Doctor Rugvie, to see the papers; all desire to establish the fact that I was a legitimate child. And I lost it because a greater interest, the dominating interest of love, was claiming all my thoughts, ruling my desires, regulating my wishes. My hour had struck and, knowing it, I regulated my clock by Mr. Ewart's timepiece, which is another way of saying I lived, henceforth, not only in his home, but in him and his interests.

All that Cale told us I had known in part, but never had I known the circumstances in detail, freed from the accumulation of gossip. Now, with Delia Beaseley's relation of my birth and its attendant circumstances, the account, except on two points, seemed complete. On one, I intended to ask explanation from Cale, when an opportunity offered; in the second matter, the identity of my father, I took no interest. But to Cale I would speak. Dear old Cale! Had he known me all these months? Why had n't he spoken to me and told me?

As I thought it over, I saw that I had given him no opportunity to question me, or to speak to me, concerning his surmise. He should have it soon—and again look me squarely in the eyes. Dear old Cale!

It was noticeable the next day, that the Doctor was fairly well occupied with his own thoughts. During the hour in which I took my first lesson with skis, I caught him, more than once, looking at me as if searching for enlightenment on some subject, or object, projected, obscure and undefined, from his consciousness. My own high spirits were seemingly inexplicable to him. How could he know that my elation was due to the fact, that the express from Montreal would arrive in eight hours!

"Cale," he said abruptly, while helping me out of some particularly awkward floundering, "when does the mail leave the house for the south bound trains?"

"We cal'late ter get it off 'bout noon; little Pete takes it over."

The Doctor looked at his watch. "Sorry, Marcia, to cut short this fun, especially after my urgent invitation, but I must get some letters off by that mail. We 'll try it again to-morrow."

"Don't mind me, but I don't want to go in; it's great sport, the best yet. Cale, you can stay a little longer, can't you?"

"To be sure; I ain't nothing special on hand fer the rest of the forenoon."

"Then I 'll cut and run," said the Doctor, without ceremony and evidently pressed for time. He "cut" accordingly, his skis carrying him down the incline with what seemed to me dubious velocity.

I turned to Cale and gave him my mittened hand. He guided me well and carefully. I landed, rather to my own surprise, right side up. I was well pleased with this progress; in all conditions of my partial equilibrium, I found the sport exciting.

"You don't look like the same gal I drove up from the steamboat landing thet night four months ago." He looked down at me admiringly from his great height. "Your cheeks are clear pink and white, and your eyes shine; who 'd ever think they was the faded out brown ones, with great black hollers under 'em, thet I see lookin' 'round to find out what kind of a God's country you was in?"

"I like your compliments. Tell me, Cale,"—I smiled straight up into his rugged face, in order to get a look at the small keen gray eyes beneath the bushy eyebrows—"how did you come to think it was I? Tell me."

The tanned cheeks above the whiskers looked suddenly rather yellow. I could n't see his mouth for the frosted beard, but I saw his eyes fill. The hand that was still holding mine to help me up the incline, tightened its clasp. He hesitated a moment before he could answer:

"I did n't know, Marcia, not for plumb sure; an' yet I *felt* sure, for you was the livin' image of Happy Morey."

"Am I so very like her—in all ways?"

"Like her in looks, all but the eyes; they 're different. But you ain't much like her in your ways —she was what you might call winnin'er; you have ways of your own."

"Did you open the windows of your life so wide for us last night, Cale, just to entice me to fly in and find refuge with you?"

"Marcia," his voice trembled slightly, "I stood it jest as long as I could. I knew *you* did n't know me from Adam; but I felt as if I could n't live another day in the house with you, 'thout makin' myself known ter you; an' I took thet way ter do it an', meanwhile, satisfy somebody's curiosity 'bout me, fer Jamie can't be beat by any woman for *thet*. I did n't go off half-cock

though, last night, you may bet your life on thet."

"I know you did n't, Cale—and can't we keep this between ourselves?"

"Jest as you say, Marcia. What you say ter me won't go no further. There ain't no one nigher to me than you in all this world—

"Nor than—" I began. I was about to say, "than you to me"; but I cut short the words that would have perjured the new joy in my heart.

Cale apparently took no notice of the unfinished sentence.

"Sometime I want ter know 'bout your life these last ten years—I can't sorter rest easy till I know."

"There is so little to tell. Aunt Keziah died eight years ago; then I went down to New York to earn my living, and worked there till I came here—on a venture."

"It's the best you ever made," he said emphatically. "Get sick of it there?"

"Yes, I should have died if I 'd stayed in that city any longer; it was too much for me."

I felt his hand grasp mine still more closely.

"So 'twas, so 'twas," he said to himself; then to me:

"Guess we won't lose track of one 'nother again, Marcia."

"Not if I can help it, Cale; it is n't my fault that we see each other for the first time in twenty-six years."

"So 't ain't, so 't ain't, poor little soul." I heard a catch in his voice, but I did not spare him.

"How old was I when you left home?"

"'Bout three months, if I remember right."

"Did you ever see me—then?"

"No."

"You did n't have any interest in me?"

"Not much, I 'll own up." Then he added weakly, for he wanted to spare me the truth by gently lying out of it, "I 've heard men don't take to new-born babies as women do; they 're kinder soft ter handle."

"And you saw me for the first time in my life at the steamboat landing?"

"Yes—an' my knees fairly give way beneath me, for I saw Happy standin' before me an' speakin' in the voice I remember so well."

"A long while, twenty-six years, Cale?"

"Don't, Marcia, don't rub it in so!" He was half resentful; and I, having brought him to this point, was satisfied to relent.

"Cale," I said, withdrawing my hand and facing him, as well as I could with my new foot appendages to steer, "I 'll forgive you for not paying any attention to me for twenty-six years, on one condition—"

"What is thet?" His eagerness was almost pathetic.

"That you 'll take me for just what I am, who I am, Marcia Farrell—not Happy Morey; if you don't I shall be unhappy. And you 're to love me for myself, do you hear? Just for myself, and not because I 'm the living image of my mother. Now don't you forget. I give you warning, I shall be insanely jealous if you love me for anybody but myself—and I take it for granted you *do* love me, don't you, Cale?"

"You know I do, Marcia."

I had him at my mercy and I was merciful.

"Well, then, if I did n't have all this paraphernalia on my feet, I would venture to throw my arms around your neck and give you a good hug—Uncle Cale. As it is I might flop suddenly and fall upon your breast."

"Guess I could stand it if you did,"—he smiled happily, the creases around his eyes deepening to wrinkles,—"but 'twixt you and me, this ain't exactly the place nor the weather for any

palaverin'—"

"Palavering! Well, you are ungallant, Cale; I don't dare to call you 'Uncle' now, for fear I might make a slip before the entire family, and that would complicate matters, would n't it?"

"Guess 't would," he replied earnestly; "complicate 'em in a way 't would take more 'n a lawyer's wits ter uncomplicate."

"Then let's go home and see what the Doctor is doing."

"He 's great!"

"Wait till I tell you sometime a secret about him—and me: you 'll think he is greater."

"You don't mean thet, Marcia!"

"Mean what?" I asked a little shortly, for I felt annoyed at his tone of protest and resentment.

"Mean? Wal, thet the Doctor 's sweet on you—"

"Silas C. Marstin, I am angry with you, yes, angry! Do you want to spoil all my fun,—yes, and my happiness,—by just mentioning such an impossible thing?"

"God knows I don't." He spoke, as it seemed, almost on the verge of tears.

"Then never, never—do you hear?—think or mention such a thing again. Promise me."

"I won't, so help me—"

"That 'll do; that's right. Now be sensible and get these skis off, so I can walk to the house like a woman instead of a penguin."

"You ain't goin' to lay it up against me?" he pleaded, as we neared the house.

"No, of course not; only, remember, you 're under oath. I mean all this." I nodded at him gravely.

"An' I mean it too; you won't have nothing to complain of so fur as I 'm concerned."

"Dear old Cale!" I whispered to him as I entered the house, where I found Jamie in a state of suppressed excitement for I had given him no opportunity to advance his theories about what he had heard the night before from Cale.

"I say, Marcia, come on into the office and let's talk; the Doctor is in the living-room, writing for all he is worth."

"I can't; I 'm busy." At which he went off in a huff.

XXII

"Let me take your mail out to little Pete," I said to the Doctor, who was superscribing his last letter, when I came in from the morning's sport.

"Thanks, very much."

He spoke abstractedly; ran over the addresses on several envelopes and handed them to me. I could not help seeing that the one on top was addressed to Delia Beaseley. I fancy he intended I should see it. I felt sure he had written to her for some of the forgotten details of that night in December more than twenty-six years ago.

"He's on the track of that child—me! Cale's story has given him the clew," I said to myself, on noticing his absorption in his own thoughts during dinner and his preoccupation in the afternoon. In the evening he drove over with Cale to meet Mr. Ewart.

I rather enjoyed the course events were taking; it would interest me to watch developments of the Doctor's detective work. In a way, it had all the fascination of a drama of which I felt myself no longer to be an actor, but a spectator.

Jamie cornered me, after the Doctor and Cale drove off to the junction.

"No, you don't!" he said, laughing, as he extended his long arms across the doorway of the living-room to bar my exit. "You will act like a Christian and love your neighbor as yourself this time. Sit down and talk—or I sha'n't be able to finish my last chapter."

Of course I sat down, knowing perfectly well what I was about to hear—at least, I thought I did.

"Marcia—"

"Yes?"

"The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that what Cale told us, and what Doctor Rugvie told us, are two acts in a long drama—tragedy, if you like."

"Well?"

"You *are* cool, I must say!" He spoke with irritation. "Do you mean to tell me that life, presented in such a manner as those two men—opposite as the poles in standing—presented it, does n't interest you?"

"I have n't the imagination of genius, Jamie."

"Now you know perfectly well there is no imagination about it. It's life, just as Cale said; and it's my belief the Doctor will, in the end, get some track of that girl. If he does, it will be all up with the farm. Did you think of that?"

"No!" I spoke the truth. I was amazed. It never occurred to me to connect the farm project with anything Cale had said.

"I 'll wager he 'll compare notes with Cale on the way over to the station, and I 'm going to refer to the farm plan, if I have the chance after they get back, to see what he 'll say."

"He won't think you 're interfering, will he?"

"He can't." He spoke decidedly. "The farm project affects *me*, don't you see?"

"Not exactly; how?"

"Why, if—of course it's only an 'if'—the Doctor should find this girl, he would n't for a moment think of taking that money, which in justice if not in the law belongs to her, to further any of his plans. He is n't that kind of a man."

"Of course not; but I don't see how—"

"That's where you are obtuse. Look here, Marcia, how long do you suppose I can stand it to vegetate here in Canada? It's healthy, I agree to that, and doing me no end of good; but I can't see myself living here—existing, yes; but living, no! I'm better, stronger; and even if I were n't, I would n't play the coward either in life or death. As it is, I want to live my life full in my own way, among my own. I want to be in the thick of the fray, even if by being there I should go under a little sooner. I want to mingle with the multitude of men—see into their lives, give them something of mine in reality and through the imagination, and get their point of view into my life. I can't stay on indefinitely here in Canada; and if—if—"

"If what?"

"If the girl should be found, the farm project would amount to nothing. The Doctor sees, just as you and I see, that Ewart is not enthusiastic about it, and he is n't going to settle on Ewart's land with an unwelcome philanthropic scheme. And then—"

"What?" I was becoming impatient.

"Why, then, if it should fall through,—and I 'm selfishly hoping it may,—I'm not in the least bound, don't you know, to stay on here as Ewart's guest. I can go home."

"Home!" I echoed. The thought of losing Jamie had never occurred to me. And if he went, then his mother, also, would go. If they both went, I should have necessarily to leave Lamoral, for I was merely an entail of their presence. Leave Lamoral! I sickened at the thought.

"Oh, no, no, Jamie!" I cried out, rebelling against the prospect of a new upheaval in my life. "I can't spare you—I can't live here without you—"

With every thought centered in Mr. Ewart at that moment, and comprehending as I did the logical result of Mrs. Macleod's leaving the manor and all that it would mean to me, I did not realize what impression my impulsive words might make on her son. In the silence that followed my protest, I had time to realize what I had said.

"I did n't for a moment suppose you felt like this, Marcia."

In a flash I understood the twist in his interpretation of my words and feeling.

"You don't understand—" I began vehemently, then found myself hesitating like a schoolgirl who does not know her lesson. I was ashamed of myself, for Jamie was on the wrong track and must be put right at all costs.

"I think I do." He spoke gently, almost pityingly as it seemed to me then. I boiled inwardly.

"No, you don't; but there 's no time to explain now—I hear the bells—"

"You have good ears; I don't."

"They 're coming! Where 's Mrs. Macleod?"

"Well, they 're not returning from an ocean voyage, even if they are coming; there is no need to run up the Union Jack— Hold on a minute!" He barred the door again with his long arms.

"Let me out—they 're at the door—"

"What if they are?"

I slipped quickly under his arm into the passageway. The dogs were frantic with joy. I wanted to show mine as plainly, perhaps then Jamie might understand! I flung open the door, and, as it happened my voice was the only one to welcome them.

"You 're back so soon!"

"You may well say that," said the Doctor, running up the steps and seeming to bring the whole Arctic region of cold in with him; "I drove over and made good time, I thought; but Ewart took the reins on the way back, and we came home at a clip—nine miles in fifty-two minutes! That's a record. Now, Ewart," he turned to speak to his friend who had stopped to give some order to Cale, "see how well I have heeded your injunction to 'look out' for Miss Farrell."

"And the horses did n't bolt," I said, as I put my hand into his outstretched one.

"Have you gotten over the effects of the aurora?"

The hearty gladness in his voice was reward enough for the restraint I put on myself. I wanted to give him both hands and tell him in so many words that, with his coming, I was "at home" again.

"No, and never shall," I responded joyfully.

"Nor I either.— Where 's Jamie? Oh, Mrs. Macleod," he said, spying her on the upper landing, "I 've taken you unawares for the first time.—Down, comrades, down!—Jamie Macleod, is this the way you welcome a wanderer to his own hearth?"

Jamie's hand grasped his and pumped it well.

"It's queer, Gordon, but you seem to look at your three days of absence from the same point of view that Marcia does."

"How 's that?" he asked quickly, turning to me.

"Just Jamie's nonsense; it's only that I was on the lookout for you, and heard the bells when he failed to."

I knew I was growing reckless, but I did not care—why should I?—if he knew I was glad to see him at home again. I did not care if they all knew it—I must put Jamie right somehow. And what was there to hide? Not my gladness, not my joy, the new elements in my new life—this something I had never before experienced. Somehow, all my resolutions to keep this joy "to myself" went to the winds.

Mr. Ewart made no reply, but I knew I added to his evident pleasure in his return, by my ready and frankly expressed acknowledgement that I was "on the lookout" for him.

That evening was one never to be forgotten. It was a time when the friendship of the four men, Mr. Ewart, Cale, Doctor Rugvie, and Jamie Macleod, towards me, found expression both in jest and earnest; a time when Mrs. Macleod's kindly, if always a little remote interest in me was doubly grateful, for sure of it and its protection I could let the new life, that shortly before had awakened in me, flood my whole being and expand heart, soul and mind with its vital flux. I felt that I made my own place in this household; that I pleased them all; that they liked my speech, whether merry or grave; that they liked my ways because mine, whether I was lighting cigars and pipes for them, or frying griddlecakes at ten o'clock at night on the top of the soapstone stove, in redemption of my promise made months past. The truth is I felt at home, wholly, completely; and they, recognizing it, were glad for me.

With Cale, that evening, I was tender, teasing, arrogant by turns; I had him at my mercy—and his lips were sealed! With Jamie I was absolutely nonsensical, as I dared to be in view of his twisted interpretation of my apparently sentimental, "I can't live without you here etc." I bothered and puzzled him, much to the others' amusement. Into the Doctor's spirit of banter I entered with the enjoyment of a not very "old" girl. I caught him looking at me with the same perplexed expression that he wore when I first smiled at him three months before—and I kept on

smiling, as I had cause, hoping the message, oft repeated, would carry in time to his consciousness the recognition that I was, indeed, the daughter of her whom he had befriended more than a quarter of a century ago. The emphatic statement made by Cale and Delia Beaseley that I was her "living image", encouraged me in this line of procedure. To the Master of Lamoral I gave willing service, frying for him delectable griddlecakes, turning them till a golden brown, flapping them over skilfully on his warm plate, and deluging them with incomparable maple syrup from his own sugar "bush". He received this service in the spirit in which I gave it, and the cakes with the appreciation of a man and connoisseur. Mrs. Macleod seconded my efforts in this special line of cooking and enjoyed the fun as much as any one of us.

"There 's no use, I 'm 'full up'," said Jamie with a sigh of exhaustion; he dropped into the sofa corner.

"I kept tally for you, Boy," said the Doctor.

"How many?"

"Eighteen! Apply to me if you 're in trouble at one-thirty to-night." He looked at his watch.

"You scored seventeen fully ten minutes ago, mon vieux," said Mr. Ewart laughing.

"Slander, Marcia! Don't believe it. Three of mine would make only one of yours, Gordon Ewart;—I 've camped enough with you to know your 'capacity', as the freight cars have it. Marcia Farrell, your last 'batch' has been 'petering out', as we say at home. You dropped only one small spoonful for each of the last twenty cakes; the ones you made for Ewart had a complement of two big spoonfuls—they were corkers, no mistake. Hold up your head, Boy!" he admonished the collapsed object on the sofa. "Never say die—here are just four more for us four, amen."

A dismal groan was his only answer. Mr. Ewart, taking turner and bowl from me, declared a truce. The Doctor set the plates on the table. When all was clear about the hearth, on which Cale laid a pine log for a treat, Mr. Ewart announced that he had a surprise in his pocket.

"Jamie, your birthday falls on the twelfth of August, does n't it?"

"Yes; how did you remember that, Gordon?"

"You had a birthday when I was in Crieff with you seventeen years ago—and we celebrated. Have you forgotten?"

"Forgotten!" Jamie came bolt upright, the cakes were as naught, the remembrance of them faded. "Do you think I could ever forget that? You took, or rather trotted me for a long walk over the moors—oh, the pink and the purple heather of them, the black blackness of their bogs, the green greenery of their bracken higher than my head!—to the 'Keltie'; and you held me over the pool to see the whirl and dash of the plunging torrent. I remember the spray made me catch my breath. Then you took me down to the bank of the 'burnie', and found a place to camp—my first camp with you—under a big elm; and there you discovered a flat stone, and two crooked branches for crotches. You took from your mysterious game-basket a gypsy kettle and, filling it at the 'burnie' with the water that tastes like no other in the world, you hung it from the crotch over the flat stone that was our hearth. You made heaven on that spot for a seven-year-old boy, because you let him touch off the fagots. You boiled the water, made tea—such tea!—and brought out of that same basket bannocks and fresh gooseberry jam— Oh, don't, don't mention that birthday! You make me homesick for it; even Marcia's griddlecakes can't help me!"

"We 'll celebrate again this year in the wilds of the Upper Saguenay." Mr. Ewart took from his pocket a paper and, unfolding it, read the terms of a lease of a fish and game preserve in the northern wilderness.

"And the Andrés, father and son, shall be our guides, our cooks, our factotums. The son is half Montagnais; his mother was of that tribe."

"Oh, Ewart!" Jamie's eyes glistened, but his volubility was checked; he felt his friend's thought of him too deeply.

"I secured it while I was away; I have wanted it for the last five years. The Doctor has promised us six weeks, and the camp will be more attractive"—he looked at Mrs. Macleod—"and keep us longer, if you and Miss Farrell will be my guests, and make a home for us in the wilderness. Will you?"

For once in her life Mrs. Macleod did not balk at this direct question involving a decision. I record it to her credit.

"And you?" He turned to me without apparent eagerness, but I caught the flash of pleasure in his eyes when I answered promptly, with enthusiasm:

"It will be something to dream of till it is a reality. I 'll begin making my camp outfit to-morrow; and André père shall teach me to fish and paddle a canoe; his son shall teach me woodcraft, and some Montagnais squaw shall show me how to weave baskets. In those same

baskets I will gather the mountain berries for such of the family as may crave them, and—and that wilderness shall be made to blossom like the rose and prove to us, at least, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Mr. Ewart's question about a "home in the wilderness" was the motor power for my flight.

"Amen and amen," cried the Doctor, approving of my soaring. "We 'll return to the Arcadia of the woodsman's simple life."

"Humph!" said Cale. "You'd better add all them contraptions of veils, an' nettin's, and smudge kettles, an' ointments, an' forty kinds of made-up bait—so made-up thet I 've seen a trout, a three pounder, wink at me when he see some of it and wag away up stream as sassy as you please—an' a gross of joss sticks. By George, I 've seen mosquitoes as big as mice—"

"Cale," I made protest; "you spoil all."

"Better wait till you are there, Marcia, before you rhapsodize any more; you did it well, though, I 'll admit," said Jamie, with his most patronizing air.

"So did you rhapsodize over Scotland," I retorted; "and I 'll rhapsodize if I never go; and you 're not to quench my enthusiasm with any of your Scotch mist that I am told is nothing less than a downpour."

"By the way, when is your birthday, Marcia?" said the Doctor, carefully, oh, so carefully, knocking the ash from his cigar into the fireplace. The act was so very cautious that it betrayed to me his restrained expectancy of my answer! "I have an idea it's the last of June."

How light I was of heart in answering him, in giving him the clew he was seeking as I would have made him a gift, fully, freely—for what was it to me now, whether he knew or not?

"Next December, when the north wind blows over the Canada snows, you may remember me, if you will."

"What date?"

I waited intentionally for him to ask that question. I felt that Cale was holding his breath; but I did n't care, and replied without hesitation:

"The third—twenty-seven years. What an age!"

They laughed at me, one and all, the Doctor perhaps a little more heartily than the others. After that he sat, with one exception, silent; but Jamie spoke half impatiently:

"Why did n't you give us a chance to celebrate last December?"

"Nobody asked me about it."

The Doctor spoke for the only time then. "I 'll make a mem of it," he said gayly, taking out his notebook and writing in it. And I saw through his every move—the dear man!

"You might have given us the pleasure of remembering it," said Mrs. Macleod reproachfully.

"Oh, I celebrated it in my own way—and for the first time in my life," I replied, treasuring in my heart that hour in the office with Mr. Ewart when he took my gift of service "gratis".

"Might a common mortal, who has both eyes and ears and generally can see through a barn door if it is wide open, ask in what manner you celebrated that you escaped notice of every member of this household?" Jamie spoke ironically.

"Jamie, I outwitted even you that time. Of course I 'll tell you: I made a gift to some one, which was a good deal more satisfactory than to receive one myself."

"The deuce you did! Perhaps you 'll tell me what it was and who was the man? I was n't aware of any extra purchases in the village."

"Not now." I spoke decidedly. "Let's talk about the camp. I can't wait for the spring. When can we go?" I asked Mr. Ewart.

"Not before the first of July, but we can remain until into September."

The words were commonplace enough; but the tone in which they were spoken belonged to another day, another hour, to that moment when he accepted my gift of service "gratis". He, at least, knew how I celebrated that third of December!

Content, satisfied, I began to jest with Jamie. We made and enlarged upon the most ideal plans it ever befell mortals to make. The others listened to our chaffing and found amusement in it, for we tried to outdo each other in camp-hyperbole. The Doctor, Mr. Ewart and Cale, whose presence Mr. Ewart insisted upon having the entire evening, smoked in silence. I knew where the Doctor's thoughts were. I would have given a half-hour of that evening's enjoyment—at least I

think I would—to have read Mr. Ewart's.

Late, very late, Cale rose, put a chunk into the soapstone, and said good night. I followed him into the kitchen. I wanted to speak with him, for I saw something was out of gear.

"What's the matter, Cale?" I whispered, as he fumbled about for the candle somewhere on the kitchen dresser.

"Marcia," he whispered in turn, "I 've pretty nigh lied myself inter hell for you ter-night. On the way over ter the junction the Doctor put his probe inter what's 'twixt you an' me mighty deep; but I was a match fer him! An' then I come home jest ter hear you give yourself all away! What in thun—"

"Sh, Cale! Somebody 's coming—"

"Wal, a gal's 'bout the limit when—" I heard him say in a tone of utter disgust, and, laughing to myself, I ran up stairs.

XXIII

After the Doctor's departure on the Saturday of that week, I wrote to Delia Beaseley, telling her how far I had ventured upon the disclosure of the fact that I was the daughter of her whom she had helped to save, and that she was now free to tell him whatever he might ask in regard to me, as far as she could answer; but that on no consideration was she to speak of the papers in his possession; and if he spoke to her of them, she was to say that he must settle that with me; that on no account was she to learn anything of their contents. I wrote her this as a precautionary measure only, for I was convinced the Doctor would not mention those papers. They belonged to me, to me alone. It was a matter of business.

She wrote in answer that she would do as I requested.

The spring was both long and late in coming. Day after day, week after week the wind held steadily from the east or northeast. When, at last, it turned right about face, and the sun, climbing high in the north, warmed the breast of mother-earth, already swelling with its hidden abundance, the waters were loosened and the great river and all its tributaries were in ice-throes, travailling for deliverance.

Then it was that the plank sidewalks throughout the length and breadth of Richelieu-en-Bas were securely chained to each householder's fence or tree, to prevent them from sailing away on the rising flood. Then it was that rowboats were in evidence in many a front yard. The creek was impassable; the high-road bridge was threatened. Cale and Mr. Ewart seemed to live in rubber boots, both by day and by night. Pierre called frantically on all the protecting saints to withhold rain at the time of the "débâcle": the breaking up of the river. His son came in twice a day, on an average, with soaked stockings and knickerbockers wet through and through; was duly castigated—lightly, I say to his father's credit—and as regularly comforted by Angélique with flagons of spiced hot milk or very sweet ginger tea. It finally dawned upon us that the youngster deliberately waded through slush to obtain the creature comforts. After that, they were withheld.

Cale looked grim and Mr. Ewart anxious for one twenty-four hours. All night they were out on horseback with lanterns and ropes. Then the heavy rainclouds dispersed without the dreaded deluge; the sun shone clear and warm; the small ice jams gave way, and the great floes went charging down on the black waters towards the sea.

During this time of east wind, rain and snow, Jamie often chafed inwardly, for the weather kept him housed; but he busied himself with his work and soon became wholly absorbed, lost to what went on around him.

And what was going on around him? Just this: two lives, a man's and a woman's, long bound by the frost of circumstance, like the ice-bound river in full view from the manor, were in the process of being warmed through and through, thawed out; the ice obstructing each channel was beginning to move, that the courses of their lives, under the power of love's rays, might, at last, flow unhindered each into the other. So it seemed to me, at least, during those weeks of waiting for the spring.

Did I know he loved me? Yes, I knew it; was sure of it; but no word was spoken, for no word was needed then. We understood each other. We were man and woman, not boy and girl. We recognized what each of us was becoming to the other in the daily intimate household ways of life—an enduring test; in the community of our human interests, in the common wealth of our friends, of our books. His best friends were mine; mine were his—all except Delia Beaseley; sometime I intended he should know her.

I thought at first that would come about through the farm project; but Mrs. Macleod, Jamie and I had to acknowledge, soon after the Doctor returned, that the development of this plan was at a standstill. Naturally this pleased both mother and son. For them it meant the prospect of a return in the near future to their home in Scotland; finally to England, and London. Jamie confided to me he should cast anchor there for a time, his second book having been accepted by a good publisher in that city.

He found opportunity in my presence to ask Doctor Rugvie, just before he left us, about his further plans for the farm scheme, and was told rather brusquely that certain complications had arisen, which must be cleared up before he could proceed to develop them. Not once did he drive over to the farm on his last visit. As for Mr. Ewart, he never mentioned the subject. Jamie was wise enough to refrain from asking questions of him.

The Doctor's announcement kept Jamie guessing for weeks, his curiosity being unsatisfied; but as for me—I laughed in my sleeve, for I knew how that "third of December" birthday on my innocent part, had disarranged the good Doctor's philanthropic scheme, for the present at least. I was curious to know how he would proceed to "clear away" those complications.

The fear of leaving Lamoral for good was diminishing; I knew that what held me there, held Mr. Ewart also. I rested content in this knowledge.

XXIV

It was the second week in May when the seigniory farmers began to arrive and closet themselves with Mr. Ewart in the office. The "going" was atrocious, and the appearance at the side door of the clay-clogged cariole, buggy, *calèche* and farm-cart, bore witness to this fact.

Jamie and I were on the watch for each arrival. We knew nearly all of these habitant-farmers. They hitched their "team", and spent hours with Mr. Ewart. Sometimes, when we were in the living-room, we could hear voices from the office in lively and earnest discussion. We remarked the air of pride and satisfaction with which each one unhitched his horse, climbed into his special conveyance, slapped the reins on his animal's back and was off with a merry "Bonnes nouvelles!" to his habitant-wife who, while waiting for her husband, had been in the kitchen exchanging courtesies with Angélique, and feasting on freshly fried doughnuts and hot coffee. The notary from Richelieu-en-Bas, as well as the county surveyor, were also closeted with Mr. Ewart; they arrived after breakfast and left before supper. At dinner they were our guests, but no business topics were mentioned.

By Saturday, the routine of visitation was concluded. The notary departed with his green baize bag apparently bursting with documents. It was Angélique who informed us after his departure that the seignior had been receiving the seignioral rents with his own hand.

The next morning at the breakfast table, Mr. Ewart asked me if I would help him to audit some accounts, the farmers having just paid their half-yearly rents.

"At what hour?" I asked.

"I shall need your help for the entire forenoon and probably for an hour or two after dinner. Shall we say at nine?"

"Can't I help?" said Jamie, rather half-heartedly I must confess.

Mr. Ewart took in the situation by the tone, and smiled as he answered:

"No; you 're too busy with your work; the prose of figures would n't appeal to you just now."

"Would n't they though! Try me on a check from my publisher."

"It's the point of view, after all, that changes proportions, is n't it? Are you going to work in here?"

"Yes; I need about four by eight feet of surface to keep my ideas from jostling one another, and this dining-room table is about the right fit when I 'm comparing pages of manuscript with first galley proofs."

"Good luck, then; we 'll not disturb you till dinner."

An hour later when I went into the office, I found Mr. Ewart at his desk. Beside him was a large tin box, twice as large as a bread-box. On top lay two pairs of his thick driving-gloves. I must have looked my surprise, for he laughed as he rose to place two chairs, one on each side of the only table in the room—a fine old square one of ancient curly birch, generally bare, but now

covered with a square of oil cloth.

"What next? I can't wait for developments to explain all this paraphernalia," I said; my curiosity was thoroughly roused.

"These." He held out a pair of the driving-gloves. "You are to put them on, please, and not to take them off till I give you permission."

Mystified, I obeyed. He set down the tin box on the table between us; opened wide both windows to let in the tonic air, that began to hint of real spring, and, drawing on the other pair of gloves, took his seat opposite me at the table. I could not help laughing.

"How does this performance strike you?" he asked, amused at my amusement.

"Like the prelude to some absolutely ridiculous rite, unknown to me."

"That is just what it is." He spoke so emphatically, so earnestly, that I was still further mystified. "You have hit the bull's-eye. It is a ridiculous rite, and, thank God, it's for the last time that I am chief mummer in it. Here in this box, Miss Farrell," he went on unlocking it and displaying a conglomerate mass of silver and soiled paper money, "are rents, seigniorial rents, paid by men who farm it on the seigniory, whose fathers and fathers' fathers have worked this ground before them, men who should own this land, to a man who should not own it in the existing conditions—conditions that have no place in the body politic, here or anywhere else. It's a left-over from medievalism—and I am about to do away with this order of things, to prove myself a man."

"You believe, then, in the ownership of the land by the many?" I asked eagerly. I was glad to get his point of view. The discussions between him, Doctor Rugvie and Jamie, were always of great interest to me. Although I knew something of his plans from the other two, he had never mentioned them to me. I saw he was speaking with great feeling.

"Believe in it! It's the first article in my political and sociological creed. I 've come back here to Canada, where I was born, to incorporate it in action.— And you 're wondering where you come in, in this experiment, I 'll wager," he said gayly.

I answered him in the same vein: "I confess, I fail to see the connection between your driving-gloves on my hands, your strong box between us—and the first article of your creed."

"Of course you don't!" He laughed aloud at my mental plight and his own manner of announcing his special tenet. "I 'll begin at the beginning and present the matter by the handle. I want you to grasp it right in the first place."

"Thank you," I said meekly; "not being a feminine John Stuart Mill, I need all the enlightenment I can have on the presence of this worldly dross that lies between us. Facts contradict theories."

With a sudden, almost passionate movement, he shoved the box to one side on the table; it was no longer between us. I knew there was significance in his impulsive action, but I failed to understand what it indicated.

"It's taking rather a mean advantage of a woman, I own, to ask her on the spur of the moment to share a man's political and sociological views—but I want you to share mine, and enlightenment is your due."

"And in the meantime am I to keep on the gloves?"

He laughed again. "Yes; keep them on and help me out of this scrape—I have never felt so humiliated in my life as I have taking this money. Now I 'll be rational. You see, smallpox roams at times through Canada. This money has been stored in stockings, instead of banks, after having been hoarded, handled, greased, soiled by a generation or more. You 'll find dates of issue on these notes that are a good deal older than you, and silver minted in the early sixties. Now I want your help in counting over—auditing, we 'll call it—this mass of corruption. And I don't intend you shall run any risk in handling even a small part of it—hence the gloves and the fresh air. After we 're through with it, we will pack the filthy lucre in the box and express it to a Montreal bank. It is n't mine—at least I do not consider it so."

"Why not?"

"Because I am going to apply these half-yearly rents in reducing the interest on the money I am loaning these farmers, in order to enable them to buy the best implements and cultivate their land more intelligently. This I may say to you, but to no one else."

"You are going to sell them the land?"

"The greater part of it. The forest I keep, because I love that work and hope in time to make a sufficient income from it, in case of actual need. In fact, I 've been working all the week with the notary to get the deeds in order."

"So that was their 'bonnes nouvelles'?"

"You heard them?"

"Yes. They looked so happy—"

"Oh, I am glad; glad too, that you could see something of their pleasure in this special work of mine. Do you know,"—he leaned towards me over the table,—"that I have asked you to help me with this as a matter of pure sentiment?"

His eyes sought mine, but I am sure they found only an enquiring turn of mind in them, for I could not imagine where the sentiment was in evidence.

"I see I 'll have to explain," he said smiling. "I want you, an American with all the free inheritance of the American, to share with me in this last rite of mediævalism, in order that in the future we may look back to it—and mark our own progress."

Oh, that word "our"! Used so freely, it rejoiced me. He intended this affair to mark some epoch in his life and mine. I waited for him to say something further. But, instead, he turned to the business in hand and we set to work. To be sure the "auditing" on my part was a mere farce; for not only did Mr. Ewart do most of the counting, and making into bundles of a hundred, but he insisted on my not bending close over the currency to watch him. As I told him, "After asking me to help you, you keep me at arm's distance."

Whereupon he smiled in an amused way, and said engagingly, but firmly:

"There is no question of my keeping you at a distance. Don't mind my crotchets, Miss Farrell, I have a fancy to have you here with me at the obsequies of all this sixteenth-in-the-twentieth century nonsense. At forty-six, I still have my dreams. You 'll be good enough to indulge me, won't you?"

"If that's all, I think I can indulge you. But is there nothing I can do to be of some real help?"

"Nothing but to lend me your companionship during this trying ordeal. You might fill out some labels—you 'll find them in that handy-box on the desk—with the words 'hundred' and 'fifty', and I 'll gum them on to these slips for the money rolls."

For a few minutes I busied myself with the labels. After that, I watched his swift counting of bills and silver, and his ordering them into neat packages and rolls. Before long, however, I took matters into my own gloved hand and, without so much as "by your leave", began the recount, labelling as I went on. Within an hour the work was finished and a smaller tin box packed.

"How much did you make it?" he asked, before locking the box.

"Three thousand four hundred and twenty-two, just."

"The rate of interest I charge them is two per cent, and this amount will reduce that greatly."

"Do you mean that you are letting them have the land, supplying money to help them cultivate it, and charging only two per cent interest?"

"Why should I charge more? They are the ones who are doing the land good. You see, the use of this rent-accumulation to reduce their interest rate for the first year or two, is a part of my general scheme. They are to apply their half-yearly rents as purchase money for their land; this is in the deeds. Within a comparatively short period, this assures to each of them a freehold. The valuation I have put on their land is regulated by the amount of work they have put out on it, and the time they have lived on it.

"Take old Mère Guillardeau, for instance. She has an 'arpent' now of her very own. She, and her father, and her father's father have lived on these seigniory lands for nearly two hundred years. I value that land by discounting the value of the service rendered to it in four generations. Her little 'cabane' is her own, having been built by her father. The land is worth to her all the accumulated value of those generations of toil; to me, who have never done anything for it, neither I nor my fathers, it is worth exactly ten dollars—now, don't laugh!—her yearly rent."

"And that buys it!" I exclaimed, wondering what kind of finance this might be, frenzied or sane.

"It is hers—and I have the pleasure of knowing it is hers while I am living. She and her old daughter of seventy drove out here the other day in Farmer Boucher's cart, and when she went home she carried the deed with her to have it registered. Old André's sister is a hundred years old in January—a hundred years, the product of one piece of land, for, practically they have lived from it with a yearly pig, a cow, a few hens and a garden. Ninety years of toil she has spent upon it. Would you, in the circumstances, have dared to make the time of purchase one year, six months even, and she nearly a centenarian?"

"No." I was beginning to understand.

"And take old Jo Latour. You know him well, for I hear from him how many times you have been there on snow-shoes to take him something 'comforting and warming', as he says. Jo has rheumatism, the kind that catches him when he is sitting in his chair or stooping, and prevents his getting up; and at last, when he manages to stand upright, it won't let him bend or sit down again until after painful effort. What can he do? Boil maple syrup once a year, or chop a cord or two of wood at a dollar a cord? He is seventy-two and has no family as you know. What is he going to do when the pinch becomes too hard? He has a small woodlot, a little garden, a patch of tobacco—is happy all day long with his dog and pipe, despite that rheumatic crippling. I have valued his lot at twenty dollars, and a year's rent will pay for it—with the help of this," he added, touching the box.

"I am learning how to take hold of the matter by the handle. Enlighten me some more, please."

"I could go on for hours into more detail, but I am going to mention only two other families, to show how my plan works. There are Dominique Montferrand and Maxime Longeman, men of thirty or thereabouts, fine strong men with their broods of six and eight. They marry young; work hard and faithfully; shun the cabarets; save their surplus earnings. They were born on the land; they love it and give it of their best toil; it responds to good treatment. Their dairy is one of the best; their stock superior. They have seventy-five acres each. I asked them to value it themselves. They showed they appreciated the worth of the land by the price they set: four thousand dollars—four thousand 'pièces'. They would not cheapen it—not even for the sake of getting it more quickly. A man appreciates that spirit. I have set the period for half-yearly payments at ten years—and I will help out with improved farm implements at the rate of interest I mentioned.

"In less than ten years, if the crops are good, it is theirs. If the crops are poor, they can still pay for it in the period set. They are young. They have something to work for during the best years of their lives."

"But how do you feel about parting with all this land that was your ancestors? Are n't you, too, bound to it by ties of value given?"

"Me? My ancestors!" he exclaimed. "Where did you get that idea? Who told you that this was ancestral land of mine?"

"Mrs. Macleod, or Jamie, intimated it was yours by inheritance."

"Hm—I must undeceive them. But *you* are not to harbor such a thought for a moment."

"I won't if you say so—but I would like to know how things stand." I grew bold to ask, at the thought of his expressed confidence in me.

"Why, it's all so simple—"

"More simple, I hope, than all that matter of seigniorial rights and transferences I read upon, in the Library before I came—and was no wiser than before."

"And you thought— Oh, this is rich!" he said, thoroughly amused.

I nodded. "Yes; I thought you were a seignior. I dreamed dreams, before coming here of course, of retainers and ancestral halls, and then—I was met by Cale at the boat landing!"

Mr. Ewart fairly shouted as he sensed my disappointment on the romantic side upon discovering Cale.

"And the first thing you did, poor girl, was to lay a rag carpet strip in the passageway for my seigniorial boots—spurred, of course, in your imagination—to make wet snow tracks on! Oh, go on, go on; tell me some more. I would n't miss this for anything."

Before I could speak there was a decided rap on the door.

"That's Jamie," I said; "he has come for the fun."

"Come in," cried Mr. Ewart. Jamie intruded his head; his rueful face caused an outburst on my part.

"I say, Ewart, is it playing fair to a man to have all this unwonted hilarity in business hours, and keep me out?"

"No more it is n't, mon vieux. Come in and hear about Miss Farrell's seigniorial romancing."

"Go on, Marcia," said Jamie, sitting down by me.

"You 've misled me, Jamie. Did n't you, or Mrs. Macleod, tell me when I first came that this Seigniory of Lamoral was Mr. Ewart's by inheritance?"

"Well, it was in a way, was n't it, Gordon? It was a Ewart's?"

"Not in a way, even. I never thought enough about your view of the matter to speak of it. Let's have a cigar, if Miss Farrell does n't object, and I 'll tell what there is to tell—there 's so little!"

Jamie looked at me when Mr. Ewart rose to get the cigars—and looked unutterable things. I read his thought: "Now is our time to find out the truth of things heard and rumored."

"I was born in Canada, Miss Farrell," he said, between puffs, "as Jamie knows, and educated in England. My mother's great-uncle, on her mother's side, was a Ewart of Stoke Charity, a little place in the south of England. While I was there, I was much with this great-uncle; I bear his name. He owned this estate of Lamoral in Canada, that is, two-thirds of the original seigniory; the other third belongs to the present seignior and seigniores in Richelieu-en-Bas. He purchased it from a Culbertson who inherited it from his grandfather, an officer of prominence in the French and Indian wars. At that time, many of the old French seigniories fell into the conqueror's hands, and, by the power of a might that makes right, were allotted to various English officers for distinguished services. The original Culbertson never lived here. His grandson, my great-uncle's friend, never cared enough for it to manage it himself; he left all to an agent and found it paid him but little—so little that he was willing enough to sell two-thirds of it, the neglected two-thirds, to my great-uncle.

"On my great-uncle's death, his grandson, my contemporary, inherited it. I bought it of him ten years ago; but I have used it only as a camping-place when I have been over from England or the Island Continent. I paid for it with a part of what I earned on my sheep ranch in Australia—so linking two parts of the Empire in my small way—and I have never regretted it. That's all there is to tell of the 'inheritance' romance, Miss Farrell."

"Gordon—" Jamie stopped short; blew the smoke vigorously from his lips, and began again. "Would you mind telling me how you came to want to settle here?"

"Why? Because I am a Canadian, not an Englishman."

"Why do you always take pains to make that distinction?"

"That's easy to explain. Because a Canadian is never an Englishman; he is Canadian heart and soul. You can't make him over into an Englishman, no matter if you plant him in Oxford and train him in Australia. I 've been enough in England to know that we are looked upon for what we are—colonials, Canadians, just the other side of the English pale although within the bounds of the British Empire. You feel it in the air, social, political and economic. No drawing-room in England accepts me as an Englishman—and I enter no drawing-room with any wish to be other than a Canadian of the purest brand. We 're not even English in our political rights over there. We are English only in the law, as is the pariah of India. We want to be just Canadians, inheritors of a land unequalled in its possibilities for human growth, for human progress, for the carrying out of just, wise laws, for a far-reaching economical largesse undreamed of in other lands—not excepting yours," he said, turning to me.

"And would you mind telling me," I asked, emboldened by Jamie's personal question, "how it has come about that you look upon your special land ownership with such a broad human outlook?"

"And this really interests you?" He asked me in some surprise.

"It really interests me—why should n't it when I have my own livelihood to earn? The economic question, so-called, seems to me to resolve itself into the question: How are we, I and my brothers and sisters, who work in one way and another, going to feed and clothe ourselves—and yet not live by bread alone? But, I don't suppose you know that side of it, only theoretically?"

"Yes, and no. I got all my inspiration about this land question in England."

"In England!" Jamie repeated, showing his surprise. "That would seem the last place for the advancement of such theories about land as I have heard you explain more than once."

"In this way. The object lesson came from England—but was upside down on my national retina. I had to re-adjust it in Canada. It's just here; the condition of England is this—I have seen it with both bodily and spiritual eyes:—That snug little, tight little island is what you might call in athletic parlance 'muscle bound'. I 'll explain. For more than a century she has colonized. What is left now? Her land owned by the few; her population, that which is left, rapidly pauperizing. England, with a land for the sustenance of millions, is powerless to help, to succor her own. She has too much unused land, as the muscle-bound athlete has too much muscle. It handicaps her in all progress. Her classes are now two: the very poor, and the poor who have no land; the rich who have practically all the land. In this condition of things her economical and political system is drained of it best.

"Scotch, English, Irish—the clearest brains, the best muscle, the highest hearts, are coming over here to Canada. This land is the great free land for the many. In settling here, I wanted to add my quota of effort in the right direction. And I cannot see but that this little piece of earth, three thousand acres in all, on which, for two hundred years, men, women and children have succeeded one another, multiplying as generation after generation, have gone on caring for the

land, living from it,—but never owning a foot of it,—is the best kind of an experiment station for working out my principles. I am about to apply the result of my English object lesson here in Lamoral. I have been telling Miss Farrell about the disposition I intend to make of it, gradually, of course. Perhaps you would like to hear sometime."

"Will you tell me about it in detail?" Jamie asked eagerly.

"I am only too pleased to find a listener, an interested one. Miss Farrell has proven a good one—I've kept you already two hours." He rose.

"Is it possible!" I was genuinely surprised. "The time had seemed so short. I must go now and help Angélique with her new cake recipe—a cake we eat only in the States, and a good object lesson on the economic side." I rose and laid the gloves on the table. I had kept them on just a little longer than was necessary—because they were his! Foolish? Oh, yes, I knew it to be; but it was such a pleasure to indulge myself in foolishness that concerned nobody's pleasure but my own.

"Sometime I want to ask you a few questions, Miss Farrell," said Mr. Ewart, as I turned to the door.

"What about?" I was a little on the defensive.

"I want to know how you came to have any such economic ideas in your thinking-box?"

I turned again from the door to face him. "Have you ever lived in New York?"

"No."

"Have you ever been there?" There was a moment's hesitancy before he replied, thoughtfully:

"Yes; I have been through it several times."

"Then you must know something of the economic conditions of those four millions?"

"Yes."

"Do I answer you, when I tell you I was one four-millionth for seven years? That I struggled for my daily bread with the other four millions; that after seven years I found myself going under in the struggle, poor, alone, ill, with just twenty-two dollars to show for the seven years of work? Can you wonder that I am interested in your work after *my* object lesson?"

For a moment there was silence in the office. I broke it.

"My two friends," I said lightly, "I have upstairs in my purse a little sum of fourteen dollars that I received from Mrs. Macleod when I was in New York; that was my passage money to Lamoral. I was too proud to owe anything to any one unknown to me, so took fourteen dollars of my twenty-two—all I possessed after the seven years' struggle—and paid my own passage. I 've wondered again and again to whom I should return this money. I have never had the courage to ask. Will you tell me now?"

"I knew nothing of the money, Miss Farrell, or of you." Mr. Ewart spoke at last in a steady, but strained voice. Jamie's eyes were reddened. He held out his hand and I put mine into it.

"That was n't friendly of you, Marcia—you should have told us."

"Whose money is it, Jamie?"

"It's the Doctor's."

"His own?"

"His very own; he told me. Why?"

"Because I am so thankful to know that it is not from that accumulated sum; you know what he said. I would not like to touch it, coming from such an unknown source, besides—"

"Pardon me," said Mr. Ewart rising abruptly. Going to the side door he called to Cale who was passing round the house. "I have to speak with Cale."

He left the room, and Jamie and I stared at each other, an interrogation point in the eyes of each.

The tin box still stood on the table.

"What's in that?" Jamie demanded.

"Filthy lucre," I said, turning for the second time to leave the room.

"Well, if Ewart's queer sometimes, as witness his abrupt departure, you 're queerer with your

ideas of money."

I laughed back at him as I went out of the office:

"I can pay the Doctor now, Jamie. I 'm rich, you know."

XXV

We saw little, if anything, of Mr. Ewart for the next week. His time was wholly occupied with the land business. He took his breakfast early, at five or thereabout, and rarely came home for dinner or supper. His return at night was also uncertain. Sometimes a telephone message informed us he was starting for Montreal, or Quebec. I think I saw him but once in the week that followed that morning in the office. Then it was late in the evening, on his return from Montreal. He seemed both tired and preoccupied. We were not at table with him during those seven days. I wondered, and Jamie guessed in vain, whether anything might be worrying him. It seemed natural that something should be the trouble during such a wholesale transference of land.

Mrs. Macleod and I were busy all day in getting ready the camp outfit for the four of us. Cale was not to go, as his work was at home. It surprised me that he had so little to say about Mr. Ewart to whom he was devoted. Whenever, in the intimacy of our half-relation bond, I felt at liberty to question him about his employer, he always put me off in a manner far from satisfying and wholly irritating.

I asked him once if he knew whether Mr. Ewart was a bachelor or a widower.

He stared at me for a moment.

"He ain't said one word ter me sence I come here as ter whether he is one or t'other," he answered, sharply for him.

"That's all right, Cale; I bear you no grudge. But, in justice, you 'll have to admit that when you live month after month in the same house with a man and his friends, you can't help wanting to know all there is to know about him and them."

"Wal, if you look at it thet way, I ain't nothing ter say. How 'bout yourself?" With that he deliberately turned his back on me, and left me wondering if by any incautious word, by my manner, by any small act, I might have betrayed the source of my new joy in life.

By the first of June the Seigniory of Lamoral was a wonderfully active place. The farmers were making greater and more intelligent efforts in cultivating their lands than ever before. Mr. Ewart had established the beginning of a small school of agriculture and forestry.

He used one of the vacant outbuildings for the classes. It was open to all the farmers and their families; and twice a week there were lectures by experts, hired by Mr. Ewart, with practical demonstration on soil-testing, selection of seed, hybridizing, and irrigation methods. They were well attended. The women turned out in full force when it was known that there would be three lectures on bee-culture, and the industry threatened to become a rage with the farmers' wives; I found from personal observation that the flower gardens were increased in number and enlarged as to acreage. Mr. Ewart said afterward, when the blossoming time was come, that the land reminded him of the wonderful flower gardens around Erfurt in Germany where honey is a staple of the country. It was proposed to hold a seigniory exhibition of fruits, vegetables and cereals, the last of September.

The Canadian spring seems to lead directly in to summer's wide open door. In June, Jamie and I were often on horseback—I learning to ride a good Kentucky saddle horse that Mr. Ewart had added to the stables. We were much in the woods, picking our way along the rough beginnings of roads that Cale, with the help of a gang of Canuck workmen, was making at right angles through the heavy timber. He had been at work in this portion throughout the winter in order to bring the logs out on sledges over the encrusted snow.

One afternoon in the middle of June, Mr. Ewart, whose continual flittings ceased with the first of the month, asked me to ride with him to the seigniory boundaries on the north—something I had expressed a wish to see before we left for camp, that I might note the progress on our return in September. He said it was a personally conducted tour of inspection of Cale's roads and trails.

My old panama skirt had to serve me for riding-habit. A habitant's straw hat covered my head. Mr. Ewart rode hatless. I was anticipating this hour or two with him in the June green of the forest. I had not been alone in his presence since those hours in the office—and now there was added the intimacy of the woodsy solitude.

"I am beginning to be impatient to show you the trails through that real wilderness on the

Upper Saguenay; but those, of course, we take without horses," he said, as he held his hand for my foot and lifted me easily to the saddle.

"I 've been marking off the days in the calendar for the last three weeks. It will be another new life for me in those wilds."

"I hope so."

"Have you decided which way to go?"

"I think it will be the better way to go by train to Lake St. John—to Roberval. We can cross the lake there and reach our camp about as easily as by way of Chicoutimi. We shall have a lot of camp paraphernalia for so long a camping-out, and, besides, that route will show you and Jamie something of a wonderful country. Of course, we shall come back by the Saguenay; I 'm saving the best for the last."

We forded our creek about a mile above the manor and entered the heavy timber.

"And to think it is I, Marcia Farrell, who is going to enjoy all this!" I was joyful in the anticipation of spending eight weeks, at least, in the presence of this man; eight untrammelled weeks in this special wilderness to which he asked me in order that it might seem something of a home to him!

"And why should n't it be you?"

"I don't know of any reason why it should n't, except that it might so easily have been some one else. But I must n't think of that."

"That is sensible; although I confess I don't like to think that you might so easily have been some one else. Hark! Hear that cuckoo—"

We drew rein for a few minutes, there beneath the great trees. The western light was strong, for the sun was still two hours high. Then we rode on slowly over the wide rough clearings which Cale had run at right angles, north and south, east and west through the woods.

"These are all to be grassed down next fall; in another year, if the grass catches well, they will make fine going for horses or for carriages, as well as good fire-lanes for which I have had them cut. In the second season I can turn some of the prize Swiss cattle in here to graze for extra feeding. They know so well how to do all this in Europe, and we can learn so much from those older countries! I am sure, too, if you knew France, you would say that these river counties in French Canada are so like the north of France—like Normandy! When I drive over the country hereabout, I can fancy myself there. I find the same expanse and quiet flow of the river, the highroads bordered by tall poplars, the villages sheltered from the north by a wood break—forest wood. Even the backwater of the river, like our creek, recalls those ancestral lands of my French brothers' forefathers:—the clear dark of the still surface, the lindens, their leaves as big as a palm-leaf fan, coming down to the water's edge, and a wood-scow poling along beneath them. I love every feature of this country!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "and I want you to." He turned in his saddle to look directly at me.

"I do love it, what I know of it—and I wish I might sometime see those other countries you have spoken of, especially those flower gardens of Erfurt." I smiled at my thought.

His words conjured in my imagination enticing pictures of travel—such as I had planned when in New York, when my ten years' savings should permit me to indulge myself in a little roaming. My dream that was! I was tempted to tell him of it then and there.

"You know, Mr. Ewart, I spoke very freely to you and Jamie that morning in the office."

"Yes; I am thankful you felt you could—at last. I have been waiting for some opportune hour when I could ask you a few personal questions, if you permit."

"Well, that was one of my day dreams—at twenty-six," I said, wondering what his was, still unexpressed, at "forty-six". "The truth is, I wanted to break with every association in New York and with my past life—

"Why, Miss Farrell? You are so young to say that; at your age you should have no past."

I hesitated to answer. Thoughts followed one another with rapidity: "Shall I tell him? Lay before him what threatened to embitter my whole life? Shall I make known to him the weight of the burden that rested for so many years on my young shoulders—even before I went down into that great city to earn my livelihood? Shall I tell him that? How can he understand, not having had such experience? What, after all, is that to him, now?

"Young?" I repeated, looking away from him westwards into the illumined perspective of forest greens. "When you were young, very young in years, was there never a time when you felt old, as if youth had never passed your way?"

I heard a sudden, sharp-drawn breath. I turned to him on the instant, and in the quivering

nostril, the frowning brows, the hard lines about the well-controlled lips, I read the confirmation of my intuition, expressed to Jamie so many months ago, that he had suffered. My question had probed, unintentionally, to the quick.

With a woman's sympathetic insight, I saw that this man had never recovered from his past, never broken with it as, so recently, I had broken with mine. I felt that until he should make the effort, should gain that point of view, he could never feel free to love me as I loved him. The barrier of that past was between us. What it was I hardly cared to know. I was intent only upon helping him to free himself from the serfdom of memories.

"Don't answer me—I don't want any," I said hastily, leaning over to lay my hand on the pommel of his saddle. It was the only demonstration I dared to make to express my understanding, my sympathy.

In an instant his right hand closed hard upon mine; held it, hard pressed, on the pommel.

"I think I want to answer you," he said, speaking slowly, deliberately, without the slightest trace of excitement in his passionless voice.

He was looking into the woods—not at me—as he spoke, and I knew that at that moment his soul was wandering afar from mine; it was with some one in the past. Suddenly, a hot, unreasonable wave of jealousy overwhelmed me; I yielded to the impulse to pull my hand from under his.

"It is not my hand he is clasping, and pressing with the strength of a press-block on the pommel; it's that other woman's!" I said to myself, making a second determined effort to release my hand.

He whirled about in his saddle, looking me directly in the eyes. He read my thought of him.

"Let your hand lie there, quietly, under mine," he said sternly; "it's *your* hand, remember, not another's."

The tense muscles of my hand relaxed. It lay passive under the pressure of his. I waited, quiescent. I realized that the Past had been roused from its lair. I must wait until it should seek covert again of its own accord, before speaking one word.

"I want to answer you—and answer as you alone should be answered: Yes, I have felt old—centuries old—"

He caught the bridle rein under the thumb of his right hand as it lay over mine. The left he thrust into his pocket; drew out a match-safe, a wax-taper. I, meanwhile, was wondering what it all meant; dreading developments, yet longing to know.

He reached for an overhanging branch of birch and broke off a small twig of tender young green. To do so, he removed his hand from mine which I kept on the pommel. I saw that the Past was still prowling, and it behooved me not to irritate, not to enrage by any show of distrust; nor did I feel any.

He struck the taper. "This is against forest rules," he said, "but for this once I shall break them."

He held the fresh green of the tiny birch twig in the flame. The young life dried within leaf and leaf-bud. The living green hung limp, blackened.

"Such was my life when I was young," he said, calmly enough; but, suddenly, a dull red flush showed beneath the clear brown of his cheeks. It mounted to temples, forehead, even to the roots of his hair where a fine sweat broke out.

And, seeing that, I dared—I could bear the sight no longer:—I took my hand from the pommel and laid it over the poor blackened twig, crushing it in my palm; hiding it from his sight, from mine.

I believe he understood the entire significance of my action; for he turned his hand instantly, palm upwards, and caught mine in it. The limp bit of foliage lay between the two palms. He looked at me steadily; not a flickering of the eye, not a twitch of the eyelid.

"I lost the woman I loved—how I lost her I need not say. That's all. But I have answered you."

"Yes—but—"

"What? Speak out—you must," he said hastily, with the first outward sign of nervous irritation.

"Is—is she dead?"

I felt my whole future was at stake when I put that question.

"Yes!"—a pause,—"are you answered fully now?"

"Fully.—Let me have the twig."

He released my hand. I looked at the bit of birch closely, scrutinizingly. I found what I was hoping to find: a tiny sign of life, a wee nub of green; something ready, unseared, for another year.

"I think I 'll take it home," I said, as if interested only in botany; "I find there is life left in it—a tiny bud that may be a shoot in time. I 'll see what I can do with it; the experiment is worth trying."

He smiled for answer. He understood. The beast of the Past was again in its lair. I regained my usual good spirits and proposed that we see Mrs. Boucher's flower gardens before we turned homewards.

"I like to hear you use that word—it is a new one for me."

"For me, too; and if you don't object I would like you to know why it means so much to me. You see I am anticipating the personal questions."

"I want to know—all that I may."

"It is your right, now that I am in your home. Shall I find you in the office this evening?"

"Yes; but rather late. Shall we say ten? I shall not be at home for porridge."

"Any time will do."

We rode out into the open, where the horses cantered quickly along the highroad to Farmeress Boucher's. There I dismounted to visit her gardens and bee-hives and share her enthusiasm over the new industry.

We gave our horses the rein on the homeward way and rode in silence, except for one remark from Mr. Ewart.

"We have not been over the roads, and Cale will be disappointed. We will go another time."

"That will do just as well; I only want to be able to mark the progress in September when we return from camp."

It was supper time when we reached the manor, but Mr. Ewart did not stay for any. He was off again—"on business" he said.

XXVI

"What shall I tell him? How shall I tell him? Shall what I tell him be all, or garbled? Is there any need to mention my mother? Shall I confess to non-knowledge of my father's name? What is it, after all, to him, who and what they were? It is I, Marcia Farrell, in whom his interest centres."

I thought hard and thought long when I found myself alone after nine in my room. I came at last to the conclusion that there was no need to bring in my mother's name into anything I might have to say to him—not yet. I regretted that he was not present that evening when Cale told the terrible story of her short life. It would have been all sufficient for me to say to him after that, "I am her daughter." Only once, on the occasion of making myself known, had I mentioned her to Cale; not once referred to her, or her desperate course since that narration. And Cale, moreover, had sealed our lips—the four of us. I had no wish to speak of what was so long past. But, sometime, I intended to ask Cale if George Jackson ever obtained a divorce from my mother, and when. In a way, what people are apt to consider a birthright depended on his answer.

Again and again during that hour of concentrated thought, there surged up into consciousness, like a repeating wave of undertone, the realization that all that belonged to a quarter of a century ago, all, all past; done with; their accounts settled. They were forgotten, mostly, by everyone; forgiven, perhaps, by the few, including Cale. Why should what my mother did, or did not do, figure as a factor in my present and future life? I determined to take my stand with Mr. Ewart on this, and this alone.

I was sitting by the open window in the soft June dark and, while thinking, deliberating, weighing facts, choosing them, defining my position to myself, I was aware that I was listening to catch the first distant thud of a horse's hoofs approaching the manor from—somewhere. The night was clear but dark. There was no wind. I rose from my chair and leaned out, stemming both hands on the window ledge. Far away, somewhere on the highroad above the bridge, I heard the

long drawn note of an automobile horn, and for the first time since my coming to Lamoral! I listened intently; the machine was coming nearer. At last, I could hear voices in the still night. There was another note of warning, sweet, mellow, far-reaching. I leaned still farther out in order to see if I could catch a glimpse of the light, for I knew it was coming towards the manor. It was a curious thing—but just that sound of an automobile, that action of mine in the dark warmth of a summer night, reacted in consciousness. The motor power invoked the perceptive—and I saw myself as I was nine months before, leaning out from my "old Chelsea" attic window into the sickening sultry heat of mid-September, and shaking my puny fist at the great city around me!

For a moment I relived that hour and the six following. Then, in a flash of comprehension, I saw my way to tell the master of Lamoral something of any very self—of myself alone: I would put into his hand the journal in which I wrote for the last time on that memorable night, when the course of my life was altered, its channel deepened and widened by my acceptance of the place "at service" in Lamoral—the Seigniory of Lamoral.

The automobile was coming up the driveway. Underbrush and undergrowth having been removed by Cale, I caught through the opening the bright gleam of its acetylene lamps. It stopped at the door; I could not distinguish the voices, for the throb of its engine continued. A moment—it was off again. I heard the front door open and close. He was at home and alone.

I lighted my lamp; opened my trunk and took from the bottom the journal, the two blank books. I waited a few minutes till I heard the clock in the kitchen strike ten; then, softly opening my door, I went down the corridor, down stairs into the living-room, now wholly dark, and moved cautiously, in order not to stumble against the furniture, to the office door which was dosed. I rapped softly. It was flung wide open. The Master of Lamoral was standing on the threshold of the brilliantly lighted room, with both hands extended to welcome me.

"I was waiting for you."

But I did not give him mine. Instead, I laid the two blank books in his outstretched palms.

"What's this?" he said, surprised and, it seemed, not wholly pleased.

"Something of me I want you to give your whole attention to when it is convenient; it is my way of answering those personal unput questions. Good night."

He looked at me strangely for a moment, then at the books in his two hands, as if doubtful about accepting them without further explanation on my part.

"Good night," I said again, smiling at his perplexity.

"I suppose it must be good night to one part of you, the corporal, at least; but not to this other," he said, with an answering smile. "Who knows but that I may say good morning to this?"—indicating the journal—"I shall not sleep until I have read it. So good night to this part of you standing before me—and thanks for giving this other part of yourself into my hands."

For the fraction of a minute I hesitated to go. It was so pleasant standing there on the threshold of the room I had furnished for him—the room that found favor with every one who entered it; so pleasant to know that he and I were alone there together with the intimate recollection of the afternoon in the forest between us. I had to exercise all my fortitude of common sense to rescue me from overdoing things, from lingering or entering.

I beat a hurried retreat through the living-room. I knew that he was still standing on the threshold, for the flood of light from the office was undimmed. The door must have been open when I reached the upper landing on the stairs; then, in the perfect quiet of the darkened house, I heard him shut it—so shutting himself in with that other part of me.

I wondered what he would think of that intangible presence? Long after I was in bed I could not sleep. Was he reading it through by course, or dipping into it here and there as I did on that night nine months ago? Would he, could he, placed as he was, understand something of my struggle?

I lost myself in conjecture. I opened my door a little way, for a "cross draft", I said to myself, so lying gently; in reality it was to enable me to hear when Mr. Ewart should come up to his room. I listened for some sound. I heard nothing but the indefinite murmur of summer-night woodsy whisperings. The kitchen clock struck the time for four successive hours—and then there was a faint heralding of dawn. At three the woods showed dark against the sky. My straining ears caught the sound of a door closing somewhere about the house. I heard the soft pattering of the dogs running to and fro without it—then silence, broken only by a cock crowing lustily out beyond the barns.

He had gone out, and he had not come upstairs.

Of the latter I made sure when I rose, sleepy and heavy-eyed, at seven that June morning, and looked into the wide open door of his room in passing. He had not used it.

For weeks, yes, for months, he never mentioned that night or the journal. He never spoke of

keeping or returning it. So far as I actually knew he might not have read it; but I was aware of a change in his manner to me. His kindness and thoughtfulness for his household were universal; they included me. From that day, however, when he made his appearance at breakfast, immaculate and seemingly as fresh as if from a good sleep, I became the object of his special thought, his special solicitude.

I was sure Cale noticed this at once. It dawned upon Jamie slowly but surely, and a more bewildered youth I have never seen. I knew he was trying to rhyme ever present facts with my sentiment about leaving Lamoral as expressed to him so recently. Mrs. Macleod, if she perceived the change in Mr. Ewart's manner towards me, gave no sign that she did—and I was grateful to her. She and I were much together, for we were busy getting ready for the camp outing. We were to start within ten days. The Doctor wrote me that he envied me the extra four weeks; he promised his friend to be with him the first of August.

When all was in readiness, Mr. Ewart, with the load of camp belongings, left three days in advance of us. We were to meet him at Roberval.

XXVII

In the wilds of the Upper Saguenay! By the lake that, in this narration at least, shall have no name. It is long, narrow, winding at its southern extremity; at its northern, it is expanded pool-like among forest-covered heights the reflection of which darkens and apparently deepens it where its waters touch the marginal wilderness! In camp by the margin of the lake, beneath some ancient pines, rare in that region, and surrounded by the spicy fragrance of balsam, spruce and cedar, that came to us warm from the depths of the seemingly illimitable forest behind us!

What a day, that one of our arrival! We journeyed by steamer across Lake St. John. We came by canoe on the river, by portage; and again by canoe on river or lake, as it happened. We camped for one night in the open. On the second day there were several portages; many of our camp belongings were borne on the backs of sturdy Montagnais, friends of old André, and led by André the Second, a strapping youth of sixty. There followed a journey of nine miles up the lake, our lake; and, then, at last, in the glow of sunset, we had sight of old André coming to welcome us in his canoe that floated, a "brown leaf", on the golden waters! I heard the soft grating of the seven keels on the clear shining yellow sands of a tiny cove—and Mr. Ewart was first ashore, helping each of us out, welcoming each to this special bit of his beloved Canadian earth.

"Our home for ten weeks, Miss Farrell," he exclaimed, giving me both hands. "Steady with your foot—you must learn to know the caprices of your own canoe—"

"My own?"

"Yes, this is yours for the season; we don't poach much on one another's canoe preserves here in Canada. This is our fleet."

"The whole seven?"

"Yes; André the First and André the Second have three between them, big ones; you, Jamie and I have one each, and there is one for Mrs. Macleod if she will do me the honor of allowing me to teach her to paddle."

"This is great, mother!" said Jamie who had not ceased to wring old André's hand since the two found firm footing. "But first I must teach her to swim, Ewart."

Poor Mrs. Macleod! I doubt if her idea of camping out was wholly rose-colored at that moment, for she was tired with the excitement, and constant travel in canoe and on foot of the last two days.

"The camp will be the safest place for me at present," she said, trying to appear cheerful, but glancing ruefully at the three rough board huts, gray and weather beaten.

"You 've done nobly, Mrs. Macleod, I appreciate your effort; and if you 'll take immediate possession of the right hand camp—it's yours and Miss Farrell's—I hope you will find a little comfort even in this wilderness. I 'll just settle with these Montagnais comrades, for after supper they will be on their way back to Roberval." Jamie interrupted him to say:

"Mother, here 's André, André, mon vieux camarade. This is my mother, André; I told you about her last year."

Old André's hand, apparently as steady as her own, was extended to meet Mrs. Macleod's. I saw how expressive was that handclasp. The only words she spoke were in her rather halting French:

"My son's comrade—he is mine, I hope, André."

What a smile illumined that parchment face! It was good to see in the wilderness; it was humanly comprehensive of the entire situation.

"This is Miss Farrell," said Jamie; "she lives with us, André, in Lamoral."

Never shall I forget the look, the voice, the words with which he made me welcome.

"I have waited many years for you to come. I am content, *moi*."

He heaved a long sigh of satisfaction. I think only Mrs. Macleod heard the words, for Jamie had run up to the camp. André took our special suit cases and carried them to the hut.

We took possession and found everything needed for our comfort. Tired as we were, we could not rest until we had unpacked and settled ourselves with something like regularity for the night. And, oh, that first supper in the open! The sun was setting behind the forest; the lake waters, touched with faint color on the farther shore, were without a ripple; the ancient pines above us quiet. And, oh, that first deep sleep on my bed of balsam spruce! Oh, that first awakening in the early morning, the glory of sunrise, the sparkle and dance of the lake waters in my eyes!

Oh, that joy of living! I experienced it then in its fulness for the first time; and my sleep was more refreshing, my awakening more joyful, because of the near presence of the man I loved with all my heart.

It was a new heaven for me—because it was a new earth!

While dressing that first morning, André's welcoming words came back to me: "I have waited many years for you to come." And the look on his face. What did he mean? I recalled that Jamie quoted him, almost in those very words, when he told us of that episode of "forest love" which bore fruit in the wilderness of the Upper Saguenay.

Why should he welcome me with just those words? How many years had he "waited"? Had there been no woman in camp since then? It was hardly possible. I determined to ask Mr. Ewart, as soon as I should have the opportunity, if there had been women here before us, and to question André, also, as to what he meant by his words, but not until I should know him better. He would tell me.

And André told me, but it was after long weeks of intimate acquaintance with the forest and with each other; after the fact that I was becoming all in all to the master of Lamoral, was patent to each of my friends in camp. I saw no attempt on Mr. Ewart's part to hide this fact. I believe I should have despised him if he had. Yet never once during those first five weeks did he mention my journal. Rarely was I alone with him; twice only on the trails through the forest; once in the canoe to the lower end of the lake and on the return; that was all. Never a word of love crossed his lips—but his thought of me, his manner, his care of me, his provision for my enjoyment of each day, his delight in my delight in his "camp", his pleasure in the fact that I was not only regaining what I had lost by the fearful illness of the year before—Doctor Rugvie told him of that—but storing up within my not over powerful body, balm, sunshine, ozone, and health abundant for the future.

And what did I not learn from him! And from André with whom I spent hours out of every day! What forest lore; what ways of cunning from the shy forest dwellers; what tricks of line and bait for the capricious trout, the pugnacious *ouananiche*, the lazy pickerel! What haunts of beaver I was shown! How I watched them by the hour, lying prone in my Khaki suit of drilling,—short skirt, high laced-boots,—my feminine "bottes sauvages" as André called them,—and bloomers,—from some cedar covert.

Those five weeks were one long dream-reality of forest life, and this was despite flies and mosquitoes which we treated in a scientific manner.

One of the Montagnais brought us the mail once a week from Roberval. The first of August he brought up a telegram that announced the Doctor would be with us the next day. Mr. Ewart decided to meet him at the last portage. André the Second went with him. They would be back just after dark that same day, he said. André the First was left to reign supreme in camp during his absence.

"I am only as old as my heart, mademoiselle; you know that is young, and you make it younger while you are here," he said that afternoon, when he and I were trimming the camp with forest greens for the Doctor's coming, and Jamie was laying a beacon pile near the shore, just north of the camp where there was no underbrush or trees. André told us its light could be seen far down the lake.

After supper I lay down in my hammock-couch, swung beneath the pines at the back of the camp. As I rocked there in the twilight, counting off the minutes of waiting by my heartbeats, I heard Jamie and André talking as they smoked together, and rested after the exertions of the day.

"How came you to think of it, André?"

"How came le bon Dieu to give me eyes—and sight like a hawk?"

"But why are you so sure?"

"Why? Because what I see, I see. What I hear, I hear. It is the same voice I hear in the forest; the same laugh like the little forest brook; the same face that used to look at itself in the pool and smile at what it saw there; the same eyes—non, they are different. I found those others in the wood violets; these match the young chestnuts just breaking from the burrs after the first frost."

"But, André, it was so many years ago."

"To me it is as yesterday, when I see her paddling the canoe and swaying like a reed in the gentle wind."

"And you never knew her name?"

"No. She was his 'little bird', his 'wood-dove' to him; and to her he was 'mon maître', always that—'my master' you say in English which I have forgotten, so long I am in the woods. They were so happy—it was always so with them."

There was a few minutes of silence, then Jamie spoke.

"Has Mr. Ewart ever spoken to you about what you told us that night in camp, André—about that 'forest love'?"

"No, the seignior has never spoken, but,"—he puffed vigorously at his pipe,—"he has no need to speak of it; he thinks it now."

"Why, now?" There was eager curiosity in Jamie's voice, and I knew well in what direction his thoughts were headed. I smiled to myself, and listened as eagerly as he for André's answer.

"I have eyes that see; it is again the 'forest love' with him—"

"Again?" Jamie interrupted him; his voice was suddenly a sharp staccato. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean what I say. The forest knows its own. She has come again; and my old eyes, that still see like the hawk, are glad at the sight of her—and of him. Have I not prayed all these years that Our Lady of the Snows might bless her—and *her child*?" There was no mistaking the emphasis on the last words.

"André,"—Jamie's voice dropped to an excited whisper, but I caught it,—"you mean that?"

"I mean *that*," he said.

I heard him rise; I heard his steps soft on the cedar-strewn path. Jamie must have followed him, for in a moment I heard him calling from the shore:

"Mother, Marcia, come on! André says it's time to light the beacon."

I joined Mrs. Macleod, and in the dusk we made our way over to the pile of wood.

"You are to light it, mademoiselle," said André, handing me the flaming pine knot. I obeyed mechanically, for André's words were filling all the night with confusing sounds that seemed to echo conflictingly from shore to shore.

"Just here, by the birch bark, mademoiselle."

The beacon caught; there was no wind. The bark snapped, curled and shrivelled; the branches crackled; the little flames leaped, the fire crept higher and higher till it lighted our faces and the waters in the foreground. We waited and watched till we heard a faint "hurrah", and soon, in the distance, a calcium light burned red and long. We went down again to the cove. Jamie was with his mother; I walked behind with André.

"André," I whispered to him, "when you first saw me you said, 'I have waited many years for you to come'. Why did you say that?"

"Why? Because I desired to speak the truth."

"Am I like some one you have seen before? Tell me."

"Yes."

"Who was she?"

"I do not know."

"Will you tell me sometime what you do know of her?"

"Yes, I will tell you."

"Soon?"

"When you will?"

"To-morrow?"

"As you please. I will take you to the tree, my tree—and to hers; you shall see for yourself."

"Thank you, André."

"I must watch the fire," he said, and retraced his steps. Dear old André! It was such a pleasure to be able to talk with him in his own tongue.

We heard the dip of the paddles, a call—our camp call. In a few minutes the Doctor was with us.

I made excuse the next afternoon to go fishing with André. I kept saying to myself:

"This thing is impossible; there can be no connection between me and any woman who may have been here in camp, and Mr. Ewart says several have been here to his knowledge. What if I do look like some other woman who, years ago, lived and loved here in this wilderness? What have I to do with her? I 'll settle this matter once for all and to my satisfaction; André will tell me. He is romantic; and that girl made a deep impression on him, especially in those circumstances. Now the thought of her has become a fixed idea."

The Doctor sulked a little because he was not of my party.

"I don't approve of your *solitude à deux* parties; they 're against camp rules."

"Just for this once. André is going to show me something I have wanted to see ever since I came."

He was still growling after I was in the canoe.

"Only this once!" I cried, waving my hand to him before we dipped the paddles.

"She used to wave her hand like that," said André, paddling slowly until I got well regulated to his—what I called—rhythm.

I stared at him. Was this an obsession with him? It began to look like it.

We landed on the north shore of the lake. I followed him along a trail, that led through a depression between two heights, upwards to a heavily wooded small plateau overlooking the lake. I followed his lead for another quarter of a mile through these woods. I could see no trail. Then we came into a path, a good one. I remarked on it.

"Yes: I have made it these many years. I come here every year."

We heard the rush of a near-by torrent. The air swept cool over through the woods and struck full on our faces. In a few minutes we were facing it—a singing mass of water pouring down the smooth face of a rock like the apron of a dam; the face was inclined at an angle of fifty degrees. The torrent plunged into a basin set deep among rocks. Above this pool, above the surrounding trees, towered one great pine. André led me to it.

"I have been coming here so many years—count," he said, pointing to the notches from the butt upwards to a height beyond my reach.

This was the tree about which Jamie had sung, notched year after year by André, since he was ten, that he might know his age. And what an age! I counted: "Eighty notches."

"Oh, André, all those years?"

"But yes—and so many more." He held up his ten fingers.

"And Mère Guillardeau will be a hundred her next birthday?"

He nodded. "Yes; my sister is no longer in her first youth."

He began to count backwards and downwards. I counted after him: "Twenty-seven." By the last notch there was a deep gash.

"What is this?"

"Twenty-seven years ago she was here, she whom you are like. I have waited twenty-seven years."

"Tell me about it; I am ready to hear."

"Come here." He beckoned to me from a group of trees, tamaracks, on the other side of the path. He went behind one. I followed him.

"Read," he said. And I read with difficulty, although the lettering was cut deep, one word "Heureuse", and a date "1883. 9. 10."

"'Heureuse'," I repeated. "Happy—happy; oh, I know how happy!"

He looked at me significantly for a moment, and I knew that his "fixed idea" had possession of him. He regarded me, Marcia Farrell, as the child of that "forest love" of nearly twenty-seven years ago.

"You say true; they were happy." Without preliminaries he told me the story he had related to Mr. Ewart and Jamie last year.

"Has Mr. Ewart or Jamie ever seen this tree, André?"

"No. I have told them both of my tree and the notches—but never of this other. You are the first to see it since her blue eyes watched him cut those letters. I have shown it to neither my young comrade nor to the seignior."

"And you say I am so like her?"

"As like as if you were her own child?"

He put up his hand suddenly to "feel the wind". There was a sudden strange movement among the tree tops.

"Come, come quickly, mademoiselle; we must get back. The wind is shifting to the southwest. It is blowing hot. I know the sign. The seignior will not want you to be out even with old André with this wind on the lake."

I looked at the pool; it was black. The singing waters of the torrent showed unearthly white against the intensified green. The sky became suddenly overcast with swiftly moving clouds. In a moment the wind was all about us; the sound of its going through the forest filled the air with a confused roar. The great trees were already swaying, as we ran down the trail to the lake—and found Mr. Ewart just drawing his canoe and ours high up and away from the already uneasy water. He was breathing quickly.

"There 's a storm coming, André—we saw it from the other side of the lake; coming hard, too, from the southwest. The lake will not be safe till it is over. We will stay here in the open even if we get wet. It is not safe in the woods; the trees are already breaking. I hear the crash of the branches."

"And the seignior did not trust mademoiselle with me?" Evidently he was disgruntled. "True, I am no longer in my first youth" (I saw Mr. Ewart suppress a smile), "but years give caution, seignior—and I have many more than you."

Mr. Ewart laughed pleasantly. The sound of it dissipated André's anger—the quick resentment of old age.

"True, mon vieux camarade, you have the years; but I stand between you and mademoiselle when it comes to a matter of years. I must care for you both."

"I am content that it should be so, *moi*." He squatted by the canoes which he lashed to a small boulder.

No rain fell, but the wind was terrific in its force. We were obliged to lie flat on the sand. The air was filled with confused torrents of sound, so deafening that we could not make ourselves heard one to the other. It was over in ten minutes. The sky cleared, the sun shone; the lake waters subsided; the sounds died away, and very suddenly. In the minute's calm that followed it seemed as if, in all that land, there were no stirring of a leaf, a twig, or fin of fish, or wing of fowl. There was again a sudden change of wind, and we knew the very moment when the upper air currents, cool and crisp with a touch of Arctic frost, swept down upon the earth and brought refreshment. In another quarter of an hour there was no trace of the storm on the lake; but behind us, on each side of the trail, we saw great trees uprooted.

"I can leave you and André now, and with a clear conscience, to your fishing," he said, as he ran down his canoe.

I felt positively grateful to him for not insisting on taking me back with him; it would have hurt old André's pride as well as feelings.

"We 'll bring home fish enough for supper," I said with fine amateur assurance.

"I warn you 'We are seven' plus the two Montagnais; they stay to-night."

"If I don't make good, André will." And André smiled in what I thought a particularly

significant way.

We watched the swift course of his canoe over the lake. Just as he was about to round a small promontory, that would hide him from our sight, he stood up, and swung the dripping paddle high above his head. I waved my hand in answering greeting.

André turned to me with a smile. "The seignior has a look of that other—but he is not the same."

What an obsession it was with this man of ninety! I watched him preparing lines and bait. The canoe had passed from sight.

"André," I said, speaking on the impulse of the moment, "I want to go back to camp."

"As you please, mademoiselle. I can fish on that side as well as this." Upon that he put up his pipe,—I verily believe it was still alive and his pockets must have been lined with asbestos,—and we embarked on our little voyage.

I used my paddle mechanically, for I was thinking: "Is it for one moment probable I have any connection with that girl? Is that past, I am trying so hard to eliminate from my life, to present itself here as a quantity with which I must reckon—here in my life in this wilderness? Is there no avoiding it? André is so sure. Jamie knows he is sure; Mr. Ewart knows this too. They can say nothing to me about it—it is a matter of such delicacy; and they do not know who I am; even my journal does not tell that, and I knew this when I gave it into his hands.

"But the Doctor—he knows. He knows from Cale and Delia Beaseley. He knows who I am; in all probability knows this very day, from those papers in his possession, my father's name; but he knows nothing of this new complication that André has brought about by his insistence that I am like some woman who camped here many years ago—

"Twenty-seven years! That must have been just before I was born—and the date—and that word 'heureuse' with a queer capital H—oh—"

Perhaps it was a groan that escaped my lips, for, like a searchlight, the logic of events illumined each factor in that tragedy in which my mother—

My paddle fouled—the canoe careened—

"Sit still, for the love of God, sit still!" André fairly shrieked at me.

"It's all right, André," I said quietly, to calm him.

"They say the lake has no bottom just here, mademoiselle—and if I had lost you for him—" he muttered, and continued to mutter, easing himself of his fright by swearing softly. He soon regained his composure; but was still frowning when I glanced behind me.

What had this searchlight shown me?

Just this:—that "heureuse" is French for happy—and the capital made it a proper name, "Happy". This word told me its own story. According to what Cale had said—and I had all detailed information from him—no trace of my mother was found although detectives had been put to work. She had simply dropped out of sight, not to come to the surface until that night in December when she tried to end her young life from the North River pier. Was she not for a part of that year and three months here in these wilds?

Oh, what a far, far cry it must have been from this Canadian wilderness not made by man, to that other hundreds of miles away—that great metropolis, man made!

We paddled for the rest of the way in silence.

That evening we sat late around the camp fire, and before we separated for the night Mr. Ewart said, turning to me:

"I want a promise from you, Miss Farrell."

"What is it?"

"Caution, caution!" said the Doctor.

"That you will make no more *solitude à deux* excursions, as John calls them, with old André. He is old, despite his seeming strength, and his age is beginning to tell on him. I see that he has failed much since last year."

"You 're right there, Gordon; she should not risk it with him," said Jamie, emphatically. "I 've noticed the change from last year when I have been out with him on the trails. Why, he fell asleep only the other day with his line in his hand and his bait in the water!"

"Did you see that?" said Mr. Ewart. "It happened, too, the other day with me. I was amazed, but not so much as I was last week when we were in the woods making the north trail. He sat down to smoke and, actually, his pipe dropped from his hand. I trod out the fire or there would have been a blaze. Apparently he was asleep. I watched him for an hour, when he seemed to come to himself. It was not a sleep; it was a lethargy. You say it is often so, John—the beginning of the end. We must not let him know anything of this—dear old André!"

"He is already immortalized in that Odyssey of yours, Jamie. People won't forget him, for he lives again in that." The Doctor spoke with deep feeling.

"And your promise, Miss Farrell?"

"Since you insist, yes. But it is hard to give it; we have had so much pleasure together André and I; we have been great chums—dear old André!" Unconsciously I echoed Mr. Ewart's words.

I am sure that was the thought of all of us; our good nights were not the merry ones of the last two months. We were saddened at the thought that he might not be with us again.

For a moment or two Mr. Ewart and I stood alone by the embers of the camp fire; he was covering them with ashes.

"Thank you for your promise. I don't care about experiencing another hour like that when I was crossing the lake this afternoon, with a young cyclone on its way. I have lost so much of life—I cannot lose you."

His speech was abrupt; his voice low, but tense with emotion.

"There will be no need of losing me. I will keep my promise." I spoke lightly, but I knew he knew the significance of my words, as I knew that of his, for with those words I gave myself to him. I felt intuitively that he would not speak of love to me, until he had broken completely with that past to which in thought he was still, in part, a slave. I was willing to wait patiently for his entire emancipation.

XXVIII

"Marcia," said the Doctor one morning, after he had been enjoying, apparently, every minute of his vacation-life in the open, "will you come with me over the north trail as far as Ewart and André have made it? I want to show you something I found there the other day."

Before I could answer, Jamie spoke:

"How about your *solitude à deux* principle, Doctor?"

"It is wise to forget sometimes, Boy. Will you come this morning, Marcia?"

I promptly said I would. I saw that he was slightly ruffled at Jamie's innocent jest; indeed, ever since his arrival, the Doctor had not been wholly like his genial self. Mrs. Macleod noticed it and spoke of it to me.

"We don't realize, when we see him enjoying everything with the zest of a boy, how much he has on his mind. He told me the other day he must cut his vacation short; he is called to the Pacific coast for some of his special work."

I said nothing at the time, because I could not agree with her. I noticed that, at times, there was a slight constraint in his manner towards me—me who was willing for him to know all there was to know, except the fact that I loved his friend. I was convinced that he wanted to air his special knowledge of me with me alone; that after he had freed his mind to me, there would be no constraint.

Twice I caught him looking at Mr. Ewart, as if he were diagnosing his case, and I laughed inwardly. From time to time I surprised the same expression on his face when he was silent, smoking and, at the same time, watching me weave my baskets under the tutelage of a Montagnaise, the squaw of our postman. Mr. Ewart heard me express the wish to learn this handicraft, and within a week my teacher was provided. She remained in camp five days. Perhaps this opened the Doctor's eyes. Perhaps Jamie had spoken with him about what was evident to all. The Doctor grew more and more silent, more thoughtful, less inclined to jest with me. Added to this was the thought that we must break camp sooner than Mr. Ewart had intended. The "homing sense" was making itself felt, for September was with us. We saw some land birds going over early, and the first frost was a heavy one.

The Doctor and I followed the north trail for half a mile; then the Doctor bade me rest, for it

was rough going.

"Marcia," he said abruptly, sitting down in front of me, his back against a tree, his hands clasping his knees, "let's have it out."

I saw he felt ill at ease and could but wonder, for, after all, it was only I with whom he had to deal.

"I am ready. I 've only been waiting for you all these weeks."

"Do you know that I have been to Delia Beaseley for certain information?"

"Yes; she wrote me. I wrote her to tell you all she knew of me."

He seemed to breathe more freely after my speaking so frankly, as if I really would welcome anything he might have to say.

"Ah—this clears the atmosphere; we can talk. Of course, you know with Cale's story dovetailing so perfectly into what I told you on my first making acquaintance with you, I simply had to put two and two together; besides, your smile was a constant reminder of some one whom I had known or met—but whom I could not recall try as hard as I might. The result of it all was that I went to Delia Beaseley and put a few questions. Now,"—he hesitated a moment; he seemed to brace himself mentally in order to continue,—"do you know positively whether your father is living or dead? Have you ever known?"

"No; but dead to me even if living—that is why I said I was an orphan."

"I understand; but you don't know either the one or the other for a fact?"

"No; I have no idea."

"You never knew his name?"

"No; and none of the family knew it—you know what Cale said. He gave me the details for the first time."

"You do not know, then, that I have in my possession some papers that might give the name?"

"Yes; I know that. But I told Delia Beaseley not to mention that fact to you, or the papers in any way."

"Why?"

"*Why?*"

I think all the bitterness of my past must have been concentrated in the tone in which I uttered that syllable. He did not press for the reason, and I did not offer to give it.

"Did it ever occur to you that your father might be living?"

"I have no father, living or dead," I replied passionately. "I own to no such possession. Does a man, simply because he chooses to pursue his pleasure, unmindful of results, acquire the right to fatherhood when he assumes no responsibility for his act?"

"Marcia, poor child, has life been so hard for you? Has nothing compensated for just living?"

He knew he was searching my very soul. I knew it; and the thought of my joy in life, in just living, because of my love that was filling every minute of the day and part of the night with a happiness so intense that, sometimes, I feared it could not endure from its sheer intensity, brought the tears to my eyes, softened my heart, turned for the moment the bitter to sweet.

I answered, but with lips that trembled in spite of my efforts at control: "Yes, there is compensation, full, free, abundant. For all that life has taken out of me, it has replaced ten thousand fold. Perhaps I never had what we call 'life' till now."

"Oh, child, I have seen this happiness in your face—would to God I might add to it!" His face worked strangely with emotion. "Marcia, dear, I am the friend, but also the surgeon. I have to use the knife—"

"But not on me—not on me!" I cried out in protest. "Don't tell me you know who my father is or was—don't, if you are my friend; don't speak his name to me."

"Why not, Marcia?"

"I must not hear it; I will not hear it—will not, do you understand? I am trying to forget that past, live in my present joy—don't, please don't tell me." I covered my eyes with my hands.

He drew down my hands from before my face.

"Listen, my dear girl. There are rights—your rights I have every reason to believe, and legal, as it seems to me. This whole matter involves a point of honor with me. Let me explain—don't shrink so from hearing me; I won't mention any names. Let me ask you a question:—Did Delia Beaseley tell you there was a marriage certificate among those papers?"

"Yes, but, thank God, she could not remember the name! It has been so many years—and all before I was born."

"But I know it. It stands in black and white, and through that unlying witness you have rights—that money, you know—"

"The 'conscience money'?"

"Yes."

"It is tainted, tainted, and my mother's blood is on it—I will not touch it. I will not have it. I have taken wages in Lamoral because Jamie assured me the money was your own—not one penny of it from that fund."

"Yes, it is my own, and I never made a better investment with so few dollars. But, Marcia—"

He hesitated; his face looked tense; his voice sounded as if strained to breaking. The knife was hurting him almost as much as it hurt me. I looked at him.

"Don't look at me so; I can't do my duty if you do."

"I don't want you to do your duty so far as I am concerned. I want you to show your friendship for me, by not telling me anything that you may know."

"But, Marcia, it is time—"

"But not now—oh, not now! You don't know what I have borne—I can bear no more—" I spoke brokenly.

"My dear girl, what can you tell me that I do not know, I who was with your mother in her last hour—"

I broke down then, sobbing, trying to explain but only half coherently:

"She was here—twenty-seven years ago—with André—he showed me the tree—"

"Marcia, calm yourself. Tell me, if you can, just what you mean."

I struggled to regain my self-control, and when I could speak without sobbing, I explained in a few words my reason for thinking my mother was here long years before me with the man who was my father.

The Doctor listened intently.

"This makes the past clearer to me, Marcia, but at the same time it complicates the present, the future—"

"Oh, don't let's talk about past or future!" I cried, nervously irritated by this constant reappearance of new combinations of my past in my present, and possible future. "Let me enjoy what is given me to enjoy now—it is so much!"

"I must see my way, Marcia. A duty remains a duty, even if the doing of it be postponed. I am your friend. I cannot let you wreck your life—-"

"Wreck my life? What do you mean?" I demanded sharply. "How can I wreck it when for the first time I am in a safe harbor?"

He could not, or would not, answer me directly.

"Marcia, many a time when I have an operation to perform, the issue of which seems to me to be a clear one of death, I grow faint-hearted and say to myself: 'I will let the trouble take its natural course—it is death in the end, and, at least, not under my knife.' Then I get a grip on myself; look my duty squarely in the face—and do the best that lies in my trained hand, in my keen sight, in my knowledge of this frail body in which we dwell for a time. And sometimes it happens, that, instead of the issue death, of which I felt certain, there is life as the desired outcome—and I rejoice. I asked an old soldier once, a veteran of the Civil War, a three years man,—he is still living and now a minister of God's word,—how he felt in battle? Could he describe his feelings to me?

"'Yes,' he said, 'I can. I don't know how it is with other men, but I used to have but one fear, that of being a coward. I prayed not to be.' That is the way I feel now towards you in relation to this matter. But for the present we will drop the subject; we will not discuss it further."

He changed the subject at once, and I was grateful to him. He began to speak of Jamie.

"He is getting very restless. He told me you knew something of his plans. What do you think of them?"

"You mean his returning to England and settling for the winter in London? He told me that before we left Lamoral. I suppose he ought to go. At any rate, he is much stronger, better, is n't he?"

"He is n't the same man. The truth is he was plucked away from the white scourge as a brand from the burning. I really believe he will not go back in the matter of health, although I wish he might remain another year here to clinch the matter for his own sake, and mine—"

"And mine. I shall miss him so!"

The Doctor looked at me rather curiously, but did not comment on what I said. I was wondering if he were at work reasoning to my conclusion about Mrs. Macleod's leaving Lamoral.

"Well, my dear girl, it's a break-up all round. That's the worst of this camping-out business. Jamie is going so soon—

"Soon? Do you mean he is going to leave Lamoral soon?"

"Yes. He had letters last night from his publishers. The book requires his presence in London by September twenty-third. He will have to sail by the sixteenth. Mrs. Macleod is joyful at the prospect. Jamie told me to tell you. I think he hated to himself. He is very fond of you, Marcia."

I smiled at my thoughts.

"No fonder of me than I am of him. He has changed so much in these last nine months."

"You, too, see that?"

"Oh, yes, and his mother sees it. He has matured in every way."

The Doctor smiled. "You talk as if you were his grandmother. I 'm proud of him, I confess. Had my boy lived—" His voice broke.

"Dear Doctor Rugvie, it is all a wilderness, as Jamie said, is n't it? And we 're fortunate to find a trail, like this, that leads to camp—and friends," I said, pointing to the newly made path through the forest.

"Yes, my dear,—and that reminds me I have n't shown you what I brought you here to see. Come."

He penetrated farther into the woods and off the trail to the left. There we found a blasted tree in which was a great hollow.

"It is filled with honey, Marcia, wild honey. I wonder that no track of bear is to be seen about here."

"Who would ever think of finding such a store of sweet in this poor old lightning-blasted tree!" I exclaimed, looking more closely at it. "What a feast Bruin will have some day."

"You see there is honey even in the wilderness, Marcia. I wanted to convince you that there is such—may you, also, find it so." He turned towards the camp, I following his lead.

"By the way," he said, as he walked on rapidly, "do you know anything that could have given old André any physical or nervous shock recently?"

"No—I don't recall anything, at least anything that he might feel physically. It's just possible a fright I gave him unintentionally that day of the storm may have affected him for a time. Why, does he show any effect of shock?"

"Yes, decidedly. What was it?"

I told him of my carelessness with the paddle while crossing the lake; of the careening of the canoe; of André's terrified shriek and his muttered fear of the depth of the lake.

"That must have been it. I felt sure there was some nervous shock."

"Oh, how could I do it! Dear old André—and I of all others!"

"It's his age, Marcia; it was liable to come at any time; this is why Ewart felt so anxious about you that day and required the promise. Old as he is, he is tough as a pine knot, wiry as witch grass, with great powers of endurance, good eyesight, good teeth; he has seemed less than seventy till this year. Now he is breaking up. It would not surprise me if this were his débâcle."

"I can't bear to think of it. Why must all these changes come at once! What am I to do in the midst of this general débâcle?"

"Marcia," he stopped short, turned to face me, "remember that now and hereafter when you need a friend you will find one in me. Don't hesitate to come to me, to call on me whenever there may be need, or when there is no need. I had once, many years ago, not only a son but a darling daughter. She would have been about your age—a year younger."

I could not thank him, grateful as I was, for I was inwardly rebellious that he should feel called upon to offer me the protection of his friendship, when he must see that his friend was the only one to give me the needed shelter—-and that in Lamoral, because he loved me. For a moment his words seemed almost an insult to Mr. Ewart.

Suddenly he laughed out—his hearty kindly laugh. It put new heart into me.

"What is it?" I asked quickly, ready to respond to a little cheer.

"Ewart is having his surprise too, but domestically. He had word in the mail from Cale last night, and according to his account everything is going to the dogs at Lamoral. Angélique has elected to fall in love with Widower Pierre and he with her. They are to postpone the marriage until the seignior returns, but beg he will consider the state of their affections and be considerate."

I laughed with him. There was humor in this situation at Lamoral, for I had warned Cale before I left how this affair would terminate, and he had sniffed at my clairvoyance.

"The truth is, Cale is homesick for the whole household."

"Poor Cale! He is having a hard time. I ought to be at home to help him, to comfort him. Our new relationship means that I have found another friend."

"And a faithful one."

"You think we shall break camp very soon?"

"Yes. I have to be off to-morrow—"

"To-morrow! Why, you were to stay into the second week of September."

"I have to leave sooner than I planned. The Montagnais brought up a telegram with the mail, and my answer goes back with me to-morrow. I 've kept the Montagnais for guide, although I should not fear to risk it alone, now that I have been over the route so many times."

"Then, if Mrs. Macleod and Jamie are to sail soon, I must go, too, I suppose."

"Yes, Cale needs you; the whole household needs you. I proposed to Ewart that we all go together, then there will be no heart-breaking goodbys, except to André."

I bit my lip to keep back any inquiry about Mr. Ewart's going with us, and was thankful I held my peace for the Doctor continued, tramping steadily on ahead of me:

"But now Ewart will remain to the end—"

"But has it come to this?" I cried. I was depressed at the turn of events.

The Doctor stopped, turned and faced me, saying gravely:

"It has, Marcia; I read the signs. We shall know when we get back. I was with him all last night; there is no help. But Ewart and I did not want you and Jamie and Mrs. Macleod to know it —not till morning. You thought he was out fishing when we left; so did Jamie. Ewart asked me to tell you on our way back."

"André—"

I could not speak another word. The old Canadian had so endeared himself to me during the many weeks in the wilds. Added to this was the thought of his probable connection with my mother's short-lived joy. It was all too sudden.

"It *is* the débâcle, no mistake about that," I said stolidly, and set my teeth together that they should not chatter and betray my weakness of spirit.

"Can't I stay and help to nurse him?"

"No, Marcia, that won't do. André lies in a lethargy; his condition may not change for days, for weeks, although I doubt this. His son and Ewart will do all that is necessary. Ewart will never leave the two here alone. You would be an extra care for them. It is now exceptionally cold for the season in this latitude; the fall rains may set in any time. Don't propose such a thing to Ewart, I beg of you. But Ewart remains—that is the kind of friend Ewart is."

The request was too earnest for me not to accede to it with as good a grace as possible.

On our return we found that it was as the Doctor had predicted: the old guide was

unconscious.

Mr. Ewart decided the matter of breaking camp. We were to leave the next morning with the Montagnais and André the Second for guides. André's son was to accompany us only to the fourth portage. The Doctor, with the other Montagnais, was sufficient for the rest of the way. The camp belongings were to follow later with Mr. Ewart, whenever that should be.

I remember that day as one of dreary confusion—packing, sorting, shivering a little in the chill air. The sun shone pale; it failed to warm the earth or our bodies. All the forest stirred at times uneasily. André's son declared it foretold long cold rains followed by sharp frost. And amid all the confusion of the day we could hear the undertone of our thought: "Old André is dying". Mr. Ewart would not permit us to see him.

"It is better to carry with you only the memory of him as he has looked to us during all these weeks—young in his heart, joyful in our companionship."

I saw the relief in Mr. Ewart's face when we were ready. He spoke cheerily to me who failed to respond with anything resembling cheerfulness.

"It's a bad business in camp during the fall rains, and they are setting in early this year. I shall know you are safely housed—and there is so much to look forward to. Home will be a pleasant place for us, won't it?"

"I thought this, also, was home to you—"

"Only so long as you are here; my home henceforth is where you are."

And, hearing those words, despite the chill air, despite the lack of warm sunshine, despite the fact that old André lay dying in his tent just beyond the camp, despite the fact that Jamie and Mrs. Macleod were to leave me alone in Lamoral, that the Doctor was going away for an indefinite time, my happiness was at the flood.

For a moment only, we stood there on the shore of the little cove, together and alone—and glad to be! We stood there, man and woman facing each other, as primeval man and woman may have stood thousands of years ago on this oldest piece of the known earth, there in the heart of the Canadian wilderness. Something primeval entered into the expression of our love for each other; our souls were naked, the one to the other; our eyes promised all, the one to the other; our lips were ready for their seal of sacrament when the time should come that we might give it each to the other without witness.

And no word was spoken, for no word was needed.

The Doctor joined us rather inopportunely and, accounting for the situation, made no end of a pother with his traps and his canoe.

Once more Jamie and I asked if we might not take one look at old André, but the Doctor put his foot down.

"Better not. Remember him as you last saw him; it will be a memory to dwell with—this would not be."

Jamie put on a brave face, but I knew he was ready for a good cry.

"I am not reconciled to say goodby to you here, Gordon," he said.

The two clasped hands.

"Oh, I shall be running over to see you and Mrs. Macleod before long. Be sure, Mrs. Macleod, to have my room ready for me next summer in Crieff—and don't forget the green canopy over my bed. I have n't forgotten it."

She smiled. "I shall never forget your kindness, never; but I can't help the longing for home."

"There, there, no more you can't," said the Doctor brusquely. "No more leave-takings; they don't set well on my breakfast. We shall all be together again soon, please God. The ocean is but a pond and the crossing a five days' picnic now-a-days. You may follow us in a few days, Ewart. Meanwhile, I 'll see that your household is safely landed at Lamoral—if only the rain will hold off, we shall have cause for thankfulness," he added fervently. We all knew the Doctor was talking against time and parting. "Raincoats all in readiness?" And then, not waiting for an answer:

"I shall run up to Lamoral after I get back from San Francisco, Gordon; I 'm not sure I shan't return by the Canadian Pacific."

"Good luck, John, and goodby till then," said Mr. Ewart. "Bon voyage, Mrs. Macleod. Miss Farrell, I give you carte blanche for all wedding preparations. Tell Pierre to order from his tailor, and charge to me. I shall give them away.—Macleod, you full-fledged genius,"—he caught Jamie's hands in his,—"let me hear from you—a wireless will just suit my impatience. Oh, Miss Farrell, may I trouble you to see Mère Guillardeau and tell her of André? I will telegraph you before I

return. Goodby—goodby."

There was a hand-clasp all around again. The Montagnais and André's son took their places; pushed off. Our return voyage was begun.

With the dip of the paddles I heard, as an undertone, old André's little song he used to sing to us in camp, the little French song that Jamie incorporated in his "André's Odyssey":

"I am going over there, over there,
To search for the City of God.
If I find over there, over there,
What I seek—oh afar, oh afar!—
I will sing, when I'm home from afar,
Of the wonders and glory of God."

XXIX

Never, never so long as memory lasts, can I forget the separate stages of that return journey. On the first day we had dull overcast skies that threatened rain; the chill wind roughened the lakes and river, and made dismal crossings of the portages at one of which we bade goodby to André's son. We arrived the next afternoon at Roberval in a veritable deluge, the rain having set in while we were crossing Lake St. John. We left by train that evening for Chicoutimi. I remember our late arrival there, the rain still falling in torrents, and, at last, our fleeing the next morning for shelter to the great Saguenay steamer.

On that third day we made the voyage down the Saguenay. It seemed to me as if I were embarking on some Stygian flood, for we looked into a rain-swept impenetrable perspective. The dark waters were beaten into quiescence, except for the current, by the weight of falling raindrops. That was all we saw at first. Despite the Doctor's assumed cheerfulness and his brave attempts to cheer us, we felt depressed. At last came the cessation of rain; the heavy clouds rolled upwards; the perspective cleared and showed the mighty river narrowed to a gorge with the dark outposts of Capes East and West looming vast, desolate, repellent before us.

And always there continued that darkness around, above, beneath us, till, farther down, we swept into the deeper shadow of Capes Trinity and Eternity. In passing them, the pall of some impending calamity fell upon my spirit. I could not emerge from it, try as I might.

Was anything about to happen to the man I loved, to him who was waiting there in the wilderness to entertain Death as his next guest? Should we four friends, who were making this journey, ever be together in the future?

The Doctor kept a watchful eye on me. When the steamer drew to the landing at Tadoussac, I saw him and Jamie remove their hats and stand so, bareheaded, till the boat moved away. Mrs. Macleod and I, watching them, said to each other that they were thinking of André and his voyage of seventeen years ago, when he set out from Tadoussac to see the "New Jerusalem" by that far western lake.

We were glad to take the Montreal express at Quebec which we saw under lowering skies and in a bitter northeast wind. Jamie had telegraphed to Cale from Roberval; he and little Pete were at the junction to meet us. His joy at our return was unmistakable, but his welcome was unique.

"Wal, Mis' Macleod, I guess 't is 'bout time fer you an' Marcia ter be gettin' back ter the manor. Angélique an' Pete have got tied up already—gone off honey-moonin' to Sorel. I could n't hinder it no longer. Marie 's took a notion to visit her 'feller', as they say here, in Three Rivers, an' me an' Pete is holdin' the fort."

How we laughed; we could not help it at Cale's plight. That laugh did us a world of good. Cale, after shaking hands with each of us, stowed us away in the big coach.

"I 'll come over again fer the traps, Doctor."

"All right, Cale. I can be of some use, even if I don't stay but one night at Lamoral. By the way, just leave these things of mine in the baggage-room; it will save taking them over. I have my handbag."

"We ain't got so much grub as we might have, but I guess we can make out to get along, Marcia," said Cale, anxiously.

"Oh, I 'll manage, Cale; don't worry. We 'll stop in the village for provisions, and it won't take me long to straighten things out."

"Of course you did n't think we were coming down on you like the Assyrians of old," said Jamie, taking his seat beside Cale.

"Why, no. I cal'lated you 'd be here likely enough in ten days. I guess Angélique and Pete would n't have got spliced quite so soon if they 'd thought you 'd come this week. They cal'lated ter be home by the time you got here."

We were glad to find something at which we could laugh without pretence. Cale's description of the wedding in the church, at which he was best man; of his inability to understand a word of the service; of Pete's embracing him instead of Angélique when it was all over, and of little Pete dissolving in tears on his return to empty Lamoral and wetting Cale's starched shirt front before he could be comforted, was something to be remembered.

"I must write this up for Ewart," said Jamie, that evening when we sat once again around a normal hearth.

"He will enjoy it; no one better," said the Doctor who was busy looking up New York sailings. "Look here, Boy, you say you want a week, at least, in New York?"

"Yes. I have never seen the place, and I don't want to go home without knowing something about it."

"Well, in that case, I will make a proposition to you. Suppose you sail from New York instead of Montreal? You can have a week there, sail on the sixteenth and be in London on time, provided you leave here to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night?" I echoed dismally.

"Yes, it will have to be to-morrow night—or leave out New York. Better decide to go, Mrs. Macleod, for then I can entertain you for two days before I leave for San Francisco and, in any case, put my house at your disposal."

Both Mrs. Macleod and Jamie hesitated; I felt they were considering me, not wishing to leave me alone in Lamoral.

"Don't think of me," I said. "The sooner this parting from you and Jamie is over the better it will be for me." I fear I spoke too decidedly.

"Marcia, my dear, I don't see how I can leave you here alone."

"I 'm used to being alone." I answered shortly to hide my emotion.

"Yes, better cut it short," Jamie said with a twitch of his upper lip. "We 'll accept your invitation, Doctor Rugvie—you 're always doing something for us; we 've come to expect it; I hope we shan't end by taking it for granted."

"Nothing would please me better than that, Boy. You are a bit over-tired, to-night; better go to bed now, and do all there is to be done in the morning. I must go then."

"What, can't you wait to go with us?" Jamie demanded.

"No; I must be in New York to-morrow evening. I will meet you at the station the next day."

"I believe I am a bit fagged—and I know mother is. That portage business is a strain on the best legs. But you were game, Marcia, no mistake."

"Help me to be 'game' now—and go to bed. I 'll follow just as soon as I set the bread to rise."

"It's too bad that I must leave you to this, Marcia," said Mrs. Macleod regretfully, as she kissed me good night—for the second time at Lamoral.

"Oh, I can do all there is to be done."

I returned her kiss. I was beginning to love this gentle, reticent Scotchwoman.

"I don't want any good night from you, Marcia," said Jamie gruffly. "Oh, I hate the whole business!" He flung out of the room, and I rose to follow him and Mrs. Macleod.

"Stay with me a little while, Marcia; you are not so tired as they are. Who knows whether I shall see you for a whole month or more?" The Doctor spoke earnestly.

"You expect to be gone so long?"

"Perhaps longer—it depends on what I find awaiting me. You permit another?" He reached for a cigar.

"Let me light it for you."

I performed the little service for him, which he loved to accept from me, and then sat down in

Jamie's corner of the sofa.

The Doctor puffed vigorously for a while. Then he spoke, suddenly looking at me:

"After all, it is Ewart that makes Lamoral, is n't it, Marcia?"

"Yes," I replied promptly. I was so glad to speak his name here in his own home. I was hoping his friend would feel inclined to talk of him.

"I have never had an opportunity to realize this before; it is the first time I have been here without him."

"I remember Jamie said, the night before you came last November, that I should n't know the house after Mr. Ewart took possession."

The Doctor turned to me, smiling almost wistfully, r so it seemed to me.

"His presence makes the difference between the house and the home. Is n't that what Jamie meant?"

"Yes, I am sure it is. Mr. Ewart himself calls the old manor 'home' now." I smiled at my thoughts. Had he not said, "My home is henceforth where you are"?

"And I, for my part, am thankful to hear him use that word. Marcia, Ewart has been, in a way, a homeless man."

"I thought so from the little he has said."

"He was orphaned early in life. Has he ever spoken to you of his wife?" The question was put casually, but I knew intentionally.

"Only once."

"And once only to me, his friend—several years ago. He has suffered. I have known no detail, but whatever it was, it went deep."

I was willing to follow his lead a little further and, although I realized the ice was thin, I ventured.

"I wonder if you have ever heard any gossip—"

"Gossip? What gossip?" The Doctor's words were abrupt, his tone resentful.

"Something Jamie heard here in the village, and because he did not believe it, he told me, when I first came, that if I ever heard it I should not believe it either—"

"About Ewart?" He ceased to puff at his cigar.

"Yes; about his having been married and divorced, and that he has a child living, a boy whom he is educating in England."

"That's all fool-talk about the boy." The Doctor spoke testily. "I don't mind telling you that he was married, as of course you know, and lost his wife. I don't mind telling you that he was divorced from her; I suppose that is a matter of public record somewhere. I don't know who she was—or what she was; he is loyal to that memory. But there is no boy in the case."

He tossed his cigar into the fire and began tapping the floor rapidly with the tip of his boot.

"I inferred, of course, from a remark he made to me then, that there was a child mixed up in the affair—"

"All this must be the foundation for the rumors, then?" I said.

"Yes; but if Ewart has a child, and I am convinced he has—"

"You are?" I asked in amazement, thereby proving to the Doctor that I had never given credence to this part of the report.

He nodded emphatically, looking away from me into the fire. "If he has a child, I know it to be a girl—no boy."

"I had n't thought of that."

"I see you have n't," he said dryly; then, clearing his throat, he turned squarely to me, speaking deliberately, as if hoping every word would carry conviction.

"Marcia, if Ewart has a child, as I am convinced he has, it is a daughter,—" with a quick turn of his head he faced me, speaking distinctly but rapidly,—"and that daughter is you."

It was said, the unheard-of. He had used his knife when I was off my guard. I was powerless to shrink from it, to protest against its use. All I could do was to bear.

I heard one of the dogs whine somewhere about the house. I know I counted the vagrant sparks flying up the chimney. I heard the kitchen clock striking. I counted—ten. I remembered that I had forgotten to wind it, and must do so when I made the bread. I moistened my lips; they were suddenly parched. Then I spoke.

"Why have you told me this?" I failed, curiously, to hear my own voice, and repeated the question.

"Marcia, it had to be said—it was my duty."

"Why?"

"Why?" He turned to me with something like anger flashing in his eyes. "Because I don't choose to have you make a wreck of your life, as I told you only the other day—"

"But if I choose—" I did not know what I was saying. I was merely articulating, but could not tell him so.

"If you choose! Good God—don't you see your situation? Marcia, dear girl, come to yourself—you are not yourself."

Without another word he rose quickly, and went out. I heard him go into the kitchen. He came back with a third of a glass of water.

"Take this, Marcia."

I obeyed. The bitter taste is even now, at times, on my tongue. Soon I was able to hear my own voice.

"Thank you." I felt his finger on my wrist.

"You are better now?"

"Yes." I passed my hand across my eyes to clear my sight. I heard a heavy long-drawn sigh from the man standing in front of me.

"Does he know?" was my first rational question.

"Ewart *know*? Marcia, Marcia—think what you are saying! Ewart is a gentleman—the soul of honor—"

"No, of course, he does n't. I did n't think.— Why have n't you told him instead of me?"

"Why? I tell you because you are a woman; because it is your right to withdraw from a situation that is untenable; you must be the first to know."

"I see; I am beginning to understand."

"Marcia, this is a confession. I blame myself for much of this. I am guilty of procrastinating in a matter of duty. Listen, my dear girl; you remember that night in February when you met me at the junction?"

"Oh, yes, I remember—I wish I could forget." I felt suddenly so tired.

"I heard all this in Ewart's voice when he bade me look out for you. I saw all this in your face when you greeted him on his return. I did not know then of your connection with Cale, with that sad affair of twenty-seven years ago; but, from the moment I knew your birthday, from that night when Cale's story fitted its key to mine, from the moment I learned the truth from Delia Beaseley about you, from the moment I examined those papers in my possession, I should have spoken; should have written you at least; should have warned—but I waited to make more sure."

"*Are* you sure?"

I put that question as a drowning man catches at a floating reed.

"No, I dare not say I am sure until Ewart himself confirms black and white—sees that certificate; but I must warn you just the same. It is my duty."

I drew a longer breath. He was not wholly sure then. There was a reprieve, meanwhile—

What "meanwhile"? I could not think; but I was aware that the Doctor was speaking again, thinking for me. I listened apathetically.

"Marcia, I have to leave to-morrow morning. I must leave you with Cale. Thank God, you have him near you! It has been impressed upon me that you must be told all this before Ewart gets back. You are a woman—and your womanhood will dictate, will show you the way out. Come to

me, come to my home—I shall not be there; come now, with Mrs. Macleod and Jamie. I will wire Ewart that you are with us for a little while. Get time to breathe, to think things out, to conquer, before he comes—"

"No." I spoke with decision. I made a physical effort to speak so. "I shall remain where I am—for a while. I have Cale. When I go, he goes with me; but, oh, don't, don't say any more—I cannot bear it!"

My words were half prayer, half groan. I felt suddenly weak, sick throughout my whole body.

"I wish I might bear this for you, dear girl. I had to say it. I could not let you go on—"

"I know, I know, you did your duty—but don't say anything more."

I held out my hand. "I shall be up in the morning and get your breakfast; it's so early for you to start. The others won't be up."

"I wish you would," he said eagerly. "I must satisfy myself that you are up and about before I go, otherwise—" He hesitated.

"Don't worry. I shall be about just the same—only now—"

"I know; you want to be alone—you can bear no more. Good night." He left the room abruptly.

XXX

Mechanically I covered the dying fire with ashes; lighted my candle; snuffed out those in the sconces, and went out into the kitchen. I wound the clock and set my bread to rise. I heard one of the dogs whining in the dining-room; he had been unintentionally shut in. I let him out. He showed his gratitude in his dog's way and followed me, unbidden, upstairs to my room.

I entered, and shut the door softly not to rouse Jamie and Mrs. Macleod. I heard the dog settle on the threshold. Somehow, the sound helped me to bear. It was something belonging to *him* that was near me in my trouble.

I sat down on the side of my bed—sat there, I think, all night. A round of thought kept turning like a mill-wheel in my head:—"The man I love is my father—Mr. Ewart, my father, is the man I love."

It was maddening.

The mill-wheel turned and turned with terrible rapidity. I held my head in both hands. Towards morning, when the light began to break, I looked about me. At sight of the familiar interior, the wheel in my head turned more slowly—stepped for a moment. In the silence I could think; think another thought: "The Doctor is not *sure*—"

I rose, steadying myself by holding on to the footboard.

"Not sure—not sure." The mill-wheel was at work again. "Not sure—not sure."

"Of course *not*." I spoke aloud. The sound of my own voice gave me poise. The wheel turned slowly. In another moment my whole being was in revolt. I spoke again:

"*It is not true*. Not until he tells me, will I believe. The Doctor is mistaken; black and white can lie—even after twenty-seven years. The man I love—and I cannot help loving him—is not the man who is responsible for me in this world."

All my woman's nature cried out against this blasphemy of circumstances against my love—my love for Gordon Ewart, that was so true, so pure; pure in its depths of passion, true in its patience sanctified through endurance.

"I will go to Cale. He will know. He will tell me. He will see it cannot be true. This love Mr. Ewart feels for me is not, never has been, a father's love. No two human beings could be so drawn the one to the other, as we have been, with *that* tie between them. It is preposterous on the face of it. It is a monstrosity, born of conflicting circumstances."

The energy of life was returning. I undressed. I bathed face and head and arms. I dressed again in fresh garments. I opened the door; the dog rose, wagging his tail. I slipped noiselessly down the back stairs and found that Cale had been before me. The fire was made; the water in the kettle boiling.

I made the coffee; worked over my bread; fried the bacon; broke the eggs for the omelette;

whisked up some "gems" and put them into the oven. The mill-wheel no longer turned. When Cale came in, I sent him upstairs with a pitcher of hot water for the Doctor.

"Seems like home ter see you round again, Marcia," he said, as he took the pitcher.

"It seems good to be at home again." I tried to speak cheerfully.

Doctor Rugvie gave me one long searching look, when he took his place at the breakfast table. Then he paid his attention to the omelette which he ate with evident relish. We talked of this and that. I went out into the hall with him.

"Goodby, Marcia." He put out his hand. "Wire me just a word from time to time—I have left the California address on the library table."

"Goodby—I shall not forget."

That was all. But I drew a long breath of relief when I could no longer see the carriage. I feel sure he, too, drew another.

All the forenoon I was busy packing, helping Mrs. Macleod and Jamie. I gave myself not a moment's rest; I dared not. Only once, just after dinner, and three hours before they were to leave for Montreal, I went up to my room to be alone for a minute or two; to gain strength to go through the rest of the time, before parting with my friends.

I had been there not five minutes when Mrs. Macleod rapped.

"Come in," I said a little wearily.

She entered and came directly to where I sat by the window. She put her arms around me,—motherly-wise as I fancied,—and spoke to me:

"Marcia, my dear, I cannot leave you without telling you I have seen it all. I speak as an older woman to a younger. Dear child, I wish you joy; you deserve all that is in store for you—and there is so much for you, so much here in the old manor. I am so happy for you and with you, my dear."

I lifted my face to hers and she kissed me.

"I don't like to leave you here; it goes against me—there is no woman near you; and you cannot remain in the circumstances, you know, my dear, after Mr. Ewart returns. I only wish you would come with us. But that would never do; Mr. Ewart would be my enemy for life, and I could not blame him."

"Cale will be here," I said. "I have been wanting to tell you something."

I told her of my relation to him; what it meant to me. I told, and to her amazement, of my connection with her of whom both the Doctor and Cale had spoken—and I told it all with a flood of tears, my head on her shoulder, her arms around me.

And she thought I was crying for that Past!

Those tears saved my brain.

When she left me, I had given her my promise that if ever I should need a home, I would make hers mine.

"But you will hardly need it, my dear. Mr. Ewart will make this the one spot on earth for you—and it is right that your future should compensate for your past."

Jamie whistled all day; it got at last on my nerves. When I begged him to stop, he looked at me reproachfully and said never a word, which was unlike Jamie Macleod who has a Scotch tongue—a long and caustic one on occasion.

He steadily refused to say goodby to me, or more than, "I shall see you in Scotland next summer—you and Ewart; give my love to him."

He put his hand from the coach window, and said in a low voice:

"I made such an ass of myself, Marcia, you know how. Forgive me, won't you?"

I forced a smile for answer. There is such a thing as the comedy of irony.

When they drove away, I turned to the empty house—empty except for the dogs—with a sigh of relief. It was good to be alone.

XXXI

The ordering of the house kept me busy the next forenoon, but after dinner I told Cale I was going over to Mère Guillardeau's to tell her about her brother.

"I may go as far as the village, Cale. Don't expect me till just before supper."

"All right."

I told but half of the truth. I determined to carry out a part of what I planned on that voyage down the Saguenay. If there were anything to learn from Mère Guillardeau, that would throw light on that "forest episode" connected with my mother, I wanted to know what it was.

I found the old woman alone, at her loom.

"Ah, mademoiselle, you are come to tell me of André, my brother? You are more than welcome. And how goes it with André and my nephew? Did he send me a pair of moccasins for my old feet, such as he sent by the seignior last year?"

She left her work and, still holding my hand, drew me to the little porch, where we sat down on a bench beneath a mass of wild cucumber vines.

I kept her hand in mine—that old hand, which for nearly one hundred years had wrought and toiled, dug, planted, watered, hoed, milked the cow, cut the wood, woven cloth and carpets, harvested her tobacco! That prehensile thing which, in its youth, clasped the hand of her "mate" at the altar, cooked for him, sewed for him, piecing together the skins from the wilds, when he was at home from the trappers' haunts; and, meanwhile, it had found time to rock the cradle for her seven children and sew the shrouds for six of them!

To me it was a marvellous thing—that hand!

I looked at it, while I was trying to find words to tell her of André. It was thin to emaciation, misshapen from hard work—a frail mechanism, but still powerful because of the life-blood coursing within it. The dark blue veins were veritable bas-reliefs.

"Dear Mère Guillardeau, we have had such a lovely summer with André—dear old André, so young in heart."

"It was ever like that. Is he well, my brother?"

"I hope it may be well with him soon."

The old woman looked at me earnestly with her small deep-set eyes, faded with having looked so long on the sunshine and shadows of life.

"He is dead, my brother?"

"No, not yet. Mr. Ewart wanted me to tell you just as it is." I gave her the details.

She sat quietly, her hand still in mine. Into her faded eyes there crept a shadow of some memory.

"I have not seen him for many years, mademoiselle."

"Was that when he made his voyage to Chicago?"

"Yes. On his return he spent the winter with me. We had comfort together. We could talk of old times; we knew Canada when we were young—that was long ago." She sat quiet, thoughtful. Then she spoke again.

"You will tell me when the seignior sends word?"

"Oh, yes; at once."

"I will pray for him. I will have masses said for his soul."

"Your grandfather was born in the seigniory of Lamoral, so André said."

"Yes; and my father, and I, and my brothers and sisters. My grandfather's seignior was French. Afterwards, the English seigniors had no love for the place. It is our seignior, the Canadian, who cares for it. He carries it on his heart—and us, too, mademoiselle. You know this land is mine now?"

"Yes; I am so glad for you. It should have been yours long ago."

"Yes, it is mine now for a little while; afterwards it will be my daughter's."

"Do you know the old manor well? Have you ever lived there?"

"Yes, I have lived at the manor house."

"When was that, mother?"

"Let me think.—It was ten years, counting by seedtime and harvest, before André spent that winter with me. It was a hard one; he helped me as a brother should. It was then he was shriven. I was in one of the pews in our church, waiting my turn. There were hundreds come for the shriving. The priest stood in the aisle, the great middle aisle, and all the time there were two kneeling besides him, one confessing, the other waiting his turn."

"Did they have no confessional?"

"We confessed in the aisle, mademoiselle, before all the world,—we all knew we were sinners,—and the crowd was so great. André, too, I saw by the side of the priest, whispering in his ear."

"André! What could his simple life show for sin?"

"He is human like the rest of us, mademoiselle."

She took her pipe from her pocket. It reminded me of André. I filled and lighted it for her, and placed it between her still strong teeth.

"André's was the sin of silence, as was mine. I, too, confessed it."

I wondered if she would tell me further. I waited in suspense for her next words.

"You ask me have I ever lived at the manor? I lived there one winter—a cruel winter even for us Canadians. It is so long ago, I may speak of it now. My brother will never speak of it more. It eases me to speak of it. It was Martinmas when an Englishman came to this very door. It was after dark. He said he had permission from the English seignior, who was in England, to stay in the manor as long as he would. The agent of the estate was with him—a hard man. He said it was all right, and showed me a paper which I could not read. My daughter read for me. It was signed by the English seignior; he, too, was a Ewart. The English gentleman asked me if I would come and keep the house for him and his wife; he was here for her health. Would I stay till spring?

"He offered me twenty *pièces* the month, mademoiselle—twenty *pièces*! That meant ease of mind for me and my daughter. I was not to leave the manor to go home, he said. I must stay there on account of his wife.

"I took time to think; but the twenty *pièces*, mademoiselle! My daughter said, 'Go; it will keep us for three years.'

"I went because I was paid twenty *pièces* the month—but, mademoiselle, I would have stayed and worked for her for nothing, for love of her alone. Mademoiselle, look in your mirror when you are at home. You will see her again—so much you are like her; but not in your ways. You remember the first time you came to my daughter to buy the carpets? I said to myself then, 'I have lived to see her again.'"

"How long ago was this, Mère Guillardeau?"

"I have said ten years, counting by seedtime and harvest, before André made that voyage into the west. I loved her—and my brother loved her. She made sunshine in the manor. It was not as it is now; there was little to do with. She made light of everything; made the best of everything. She had a cow, for the warm milk; and hens, for the new-laid eggs—all nourishing and good, mademoiselle. I milked the cow and tended to everything. I was strong. I did all the work. The agent bought provisions in the village and brought them to us. They came, also, from Montreal. The house was full of sunshine, the sunshine of love, mademoiselle.

"They were not married—but how they loved each other! I carried their sin on my soul. I never confessed till André, too, confessed. We confessed the same sin—the sin of silence.

"In the spring I sent them to André, into the wilderness of the northern rivers. My brother loved her too, my poor brother.

"It is long past, mademoiselle, but I can not forget."

"And the present seignior never knew of this?"

"The present seignior? Oh, no; he did not own Lamoral then. Sometimes, it is true, I think I see in him a look of that other; but it is not he. I never knew their names.

"After they left, that agent took that cow from me, mademoiselle, a fine cow she was. He is dead these many years, but he was a hard man; I have not forgotten or forgiven, mademoiselle." She crossed herself. "The cow was mine; he took her, mademoiselle; a fine cow with a bag as pink as thorn blossoms, and seven quarts to the milking—I cannot forget."

I rose to go, for the old woman threatened to become garrulous. Moreover, I had heard enough. The Doctor was mistaken. I had learned what I came to find out. I felt fortified to speak

with Cale.

"Goodby, Mère Guillardeau."

"Goodby, mademoiselle. You will come again and tell me of my brother?"

"Yes; so soon as I have any word."

She stood in the porch to watch me down the road. I went on to the village. As I neared the steamboat landing, I noticed a large river sloop, tacking in the light breeze to the bank. I stopped to watch it. Soon it was abreast of me. I walked rapidly on to keep up with it. It came to anchor nearly opposite the cabaret. Its white hull was filled with apples. There must have been a ton or two—early harvest apples, red, yellow, and green; Astrachan, Porters and early Pippins.

Surely this was the apple-boat which Jamie delighted in and described with such enthusiasm! I walked to the bank. A low trestle, laid in a width of two boards, gave passage to the boat. What a picture it made! The low green bank, the white sloop, the blue lively waters of the St. Lawrence, and, beyond, the islands stacked with the second cutting of hay!

I went on board; bought a few apples; promised to come for a bushel or two the next day, and asked a few questions of the owner and his wife, French both of them.

"How long do you stay?"

"Only a week. This cargo is perishable. We sell here, then we go back for the harvest of winter apples. We come again in October."

She showed me with pride her cabin and the bunk under the companionway, wherein lay her eighteen-months-old baby. "We could not leave him," she said, wiping a bead of perspiration from his forehead. "The others are at home; they take care of themselves."

The little cabin was absolutely neat.

I bade her goodby, made a few purchases in the village, and walked back to Lamoral with a lighter heart than I had carried since I left camp. The old place looked so beautiful in the mellow September sunlight.

I felt less burdened, less restless, less desperate, less doubtful of the future, after that walk. But I determined to wait a few days before speaking to Cale. I wanted to go over the whole matter, collate facts, sort evidence, before speaking.

We had five pleasant days together, Cale and I. We grew confidential, as became relations. We talked of the Macleods; Cale wagered the Doctor would marry Mrs. Macleod in the end. At which I sniffed, and pretended to think he would lose his wager, but deep down in my heart—well, I had my doubts.

I told him of André, of the Doctor's enjoyment of camp life. He did not ask me about Mr. Ewart directly, and I volunteered no information, except that we might expect a telegram from him any day.

On the sixth day word came:

"André has crossed the last portage; return Wednesday."

He would be here in five days! My first thought was of him, not of André.

O André, dear old guide and voyageur! You were only a withered leaf falling from the great Ygdrasil Tree of Empire—falling there in the wilds of the Upper Saguenay. But it is by such as you—and succeeding generations of millions of such—that the great Tree of Empire has thriven, thrives, and still keeps in abundant foliage!

I knew the time had come when I must tell Cale all.

XXXII

"Cale, I want to talk with you."

"All right, Marcia. I see you 've had something on your mind, thet 's been worryin' you, since you 've come home; better get it off. Nothin' like lettin' off a little steam when there 's too many pounds pressure on."

"Cale, you *are* a comfort."

"Am I? Wal, it's 'bout time I was something ter you."

"Cale, have you any idea where my mother fled to when she left her home?"

"No; an' nobody else."

"You said George Jackson could get no trace of her?"

"Tried four months, detectives an' all; 't was n't no use. She was gone."

"But did you have any idea in your own mind, I mean, as to where she might have gone?"

"Wal, I can't say exactly. I *did* think 'bout thet time, thet mebbe they 'd crossed the line inter Canady; but it ain't likely they 'd go north with the winter before 'em. Fact is, George was in such a state, I did n't think nor care much 'bout Happy, if *he* could only keep his head level through it all. An' he did; he had grit, an' no mistake. 'T was an awful blow, Marcia."

"It's my belief she came into Canada."

"'Tis, is it? What makes you think thet?" he asked in genuine surprise.

"Circumstantial evidence that is convincing. I believe she has been in this very house—for months too."

He looked at me suspiciously. (We were in the dining room; one on each side of the table.) I saw his forehead knit; then he spoke in a low voice, but rather anxiously:

"Here in this house? Ain't you got your circumstantial evidence a little mixed, Marcia?"

"No; listen."

I told him all, linking event to event, incident with incident till the chain was complete. I fitted his story into the Doctor's which he heard for the first time from me; I added Delia Beaseley's story, then André's, and, last, Mère Guillardeau's. I made no mention however of the marriage certificate and the Doctor's last talk with me.

"Now, what do you think of it, Cale?"

"I see which way you 're heading, Marcia, but—" he brought his fist down hard on his knee, —"you 're on the wrong track."

"You think so?"

"I know it." He spoke with loud emphasis.

"You have no idea, now, who my father was, or is? Not now, after I have brought in all the evidence available; except—"

"Except what?" He asked quickly.

"Never mind that now. Tell me, have you any idea who he was, or is?"

"No, and nobody else thet I know of. She had high ideas, Happy had. I never believed she took up with any low cuss, not much! She was n't the kind to fall des'pritly in love with anybody like thet. Besides, had n't she had a man that was a man, even if he was only a boy in his years, to love the very ground she trod on? Happy was one of the uncommon kind of gals; she would n't take up with anyone thet come along. Now thet I know all this from you, I guess her love for thet man, whoever he was, or is, went 'bout as deep with her, as George's love for her went with him. Oh, Lord! It makes me sick to think of Happy Morey tryin' to throw herself inter the North River."

"Then,"—I spoke slowly, hesitatingly; I gathered all my strength to ask the crucial question —"you don't think that Mr. Ewart is my father?"

He stared at me as if I had taken leave of my senses. He swallowed hard twice. He leaned forward on the dining-room table, both fists pressed rigidly upon it.

"Do *you* think thet? Have you been thinkin' thet all this time, Marcia Farrell?"

"No. I not only do not think it, I do not believe it. I was told so."

"Who told you?" he demanded. He continued to stare at me; his attitude remained unchanged.

"Doctor Rugvie."

"What the devil does he know about it?"

"He has the certificate—my mother's marriage certificate."

"To which one?"

"To my father."

"An' he says Ewart is your father?"

"He believes he is from the evidence—"

"Evidence be damned. Has he shown you the name?"

"No, I could n't—I would n't let him tell me."

"I glory in your spunk, Marcia."

"Then you do not believe it, Cale?"

"Believe!" He spoke in utter scorn, and I laughed out almost hysterically; the tension was relieved too quickly.

"Look here, Marcia Farrell, or whatever your name happens to be, he is no more your father than I am." He lifted both fists and brought them down on the table with the solidity of a stone-breaker's hammer. "It's God's truth, I am tellin' you."

I laughed again in the face of this statement that so suddenly buttressed, as with adamant, my broken life, my wrecked hopes.

"Can you prove it, Cale?" I, too, leaned across the table, my hands gripping the edge.

"Prove it? Wal, I guess I ain't takin' any chances at jest *this* cross roads. I ain't makin' any statements that I can't take my oath on."

"Prove it, then, Cale—in mercy to me, prove it."

He looked at me with inexpressible pity. His eyes filled.

"You poor child! As if you had n't had enough, 'thout bein' murdered this way. What in thunder was the Doctor thinkin' of?"

"He wanted to save me—"

"Save you, eh? Wal, the next time he wants to save you he 'd better borrow the life-preserver from me. You can tell him thet."

"Prove it, Cale."

He drew a long breath and, reaching over, laid his right hand over mine.

"Marcia, I ain't no right to speak—to break a promise; but, by God, I 'll do it this time to save you—whatever comes! Gordon Ewart ain't no more your father 'n I am, for he was your mother's husband."

"My mother's husband?" I echoed, but weakly. I failed for a few seconds to comprehend.

"Yes, your mother's husband. Gordon Ewart is George Jackson—George Gordon Ewart Jackson, thet is what he was christened, an' I 've known it sence the furst minute I set eyes on him in full lamplight, here in this very house on the fifteenth day of last November. Do you want any more proof?"

There is a limit to human suffering; a time when a surcharge of misery leaves mind and heart and soul numb. It was so with me upon hearing Cale's statement.

"Did he know you?" I asked almost apathetically.

"Yes, but it took him twenty-four hours. I 've changed more 'n he has."

"Why did n't he use his own name?"

"It is his own. He sloughed off thet part of it thet hindered him from cuttin' loose from all thet old life, he said, an' made the new one legal."

"Did he know me?"

"I don't know for sure. He ain't the kind to rake over a heap of dead ashes for the sake of findin' one little spark. But, Marcia, I believe he knew you from the minute he first see you there in the passageway."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because you are the livin' image of your mother, as I told you once before. But you act

different. An' he loved her so, he could n't help but seein' her in you—"

"Oh, my God!"

I think it was a groan rather than an exclamation. My head dropped on Cale's hand, as it lay over mine. The flashlight of intuition showed me the truth: this man, my mother's husband, the man who was dearer to me than life itself, was again loving her, whom he had loved only to lose, in me—her daughter! He was loving me because of her, not because of myself.

Oh, I saw it in every detail! I saw every ugly feature in every act of the whole tragedy; and I saw myself the dupe of that Past from which I had tried so hard to escape.

I raised my head. My decision was made. I looked at Cale defiantly. I think every fibre of me, moral, physical, mental, spiritual, revolted then and there against being made longer a mere shuttlecock for the battledores of Fate.

"Cale, when does the next afternoon train leave the junction—the one that connects with the Southern Quebec for New England?"

"Don't, Marcia, in the name of all that's holy, don't do nothing rash. I meant it for the best—"

"I know you did; but that won't prevent my going."

"But, hear to reason, Marcia; wait till Ewart comes—-hear what he has to say—I 'm placed where I can't speak. Wait a few days."

His hand felt clammy cold under mine. I pulled mine away. I hurt him, but I did not care.

"There is nothing to be said. I am going. When does that train leave?"

"Seven-five. What will Ewart say? You are doing him a bitterer wrong than your mother before you."

I laughed in his face. His voice grew husky as he spoke again:

"Stay for my sake then, Marcia; just five days—I 'm as nigh ter you as any in this world."

"Not so very, Cale."

Out of the numbness of my body, out of my bitterness of heart, out of the depths of my misery, I spoke: "Cale, listen. For twenty-six years I was in this world, and four men—the one people call my father, you, my uncle-in-law who loved your wife, my mother's sister, Doctor Rugvie who brought me into this world and made but two attempts to find me, Mr. Ewart who as George Jackson brought me home in his arms, a baby three days old, and left me for good and all, worse than orphaned—all four of you, how much have you cared for me in reality? Answer me that."

There was silence in the room. I heard Cale draw a heavy breath.

"You don't answer," I went on unmercifully, "and I am going away. I, too, am going to 'cut loose'. I want you to go down to Mère Guillardeau's and tell her André is dead, and the seignior will be here in five days."

"What—now?" He moistened his lips.

"Yes, now."

"But you had n't ought ter be alone."

"I am not alone; the dogs are here and little Pete."

He rose and crossed the room. At the door he turned; his voice trembled excessively, and I saw he was in fear.

"Promise me you won't do nothing rash, Marcia."

I laughed aloud. "I promise—now go."

When I heard him drive away from the house, I went upstairs and began to pack my trunk. The sooner I could get out of Lamoral, the better for all concerned, Mr. Ewart included. Did he think for one moment that I would consent to being loved for my mother's sake? Did he think to make good, through me, the loss of the woman he loved? How had he dared, knowing, yes, *knowing* all, to love me for that other who never loved him! Why did he try to force his love upon her and, by changing the very channels of nature, bring all this devastation of misery upon my life? Why, why?

I packed rapidly. There was not so much to take with me. Then I went through the rooms one after another: the living-room—the office. I looked at the Méryon etchings—the Pont Neuf and Ste. Etienne—on its walls. Upstairs, too, I went; into Jamie's room, into Mrs. Macleod's, then to

Mr. Ewart's. I stopped short on the threshold.

"Why am I going in here?" I asked myself. "What am I doing here?" I stepped in; looked about at my own handiwork—then at the bed. I crossed quickly to it and laid my cheek down upon his pillow. It was only for a moment. I heard wheels on the driveway. Cale was returning.

"I am ready, Cale. You can take us over with the trunk in the light wagon; little Pete can go with us."

The look he gave me was pitiful, but it made no appeal to me.

"You will have to wait good forty minutes if you go now."

"I don't mind it. *You* need not wait. I would rather not say goodby."

"Where are you goin', Marcia?"

"Don't ask me that, Cale; I don't want to lie to you. I shall send my trunk to Spencerville. This is all I will say."

"What must I tell George?"

For a moment I failed to comprehend that he meant Mr. Ewart.

"Tell him what you please."

I set some supper on the kitchen table for him and little Pete, against their return.

Cale reharnessed and brought the wagon to the side door.

We drove those nine miles in silence, except for little Pete who asked several pertinent questions as to the reason of my going. In passing through Richelieu-en-Bas, I looked for the apple-boat. It was still there. Little Pete begged Cale to stop to see it on their way home.

"Not to-night, sonny, it 'll be dark," he said sternly; "we 'll try it another day." I thought the small boy was ready to cry at his friend's abrupt refusal.

Cale left me at the junction, after he had seen me buy a ticket for Spencerville, and the trunk was checked to that place.

He put out his hand. "Marcia, I can't defend myself; all you say is true—but I think you will come to see different, sometime. We 're all human an' liable to make mistakes, big ones, an' I can't see as you 're an exception."

The simple dignity of this speech impressed me even in those circumstances. I put my hand in his.

"'Sometime', Cale? It has always been 'sometime' with me. It is going to be 'never again' now; no more mistakes on my part."

"You *will* write me a word—sometime, won't you, Marcia?"

"I won't promise, Cale. I want to be alone. After all, I am only going away from here as I came—to find work and a livelihood. Goodby."

I think he understood. He did not bid me goodby, but went away down the platform, walking slowly, stooping a little, his head drooping, as if all courage had failed him. And my heart was hardened.

XXXIII

I watched him and little Pete drive away down the highroad; watched them out of sight. Then I sat down on the bench outside the waiting-room to think, "What next?"

I had no intention of going to Spencerville. My trunk would be safe there with the address of a neighbor of my aunt. What I most wanted was to be alone and time to think, time to regain strength for the struggle before me.

I don't know that for ten minutes I thought at all. I suppose I must have, for I remembered that at this hour Jamie and Mrs. Macleod were to sail; that the Doctor was on his way to San Francisco. That Cale could do nothing by telegraphing them. And what would he telegraph?

The ticket-agent and baggage-master locked the office door and came over to me.

"I 'm going up the road a piece; the train is twenty minutes late. You won't mind sitting here alone?"

"Oh, no. It is a lovely evening."

"No frost to-night." He went off on the highroad in the opposite direction from Richelieu-en-Bas.

The evening promised to be fine; the sun set clear in the sky. Somewhere in the distance, I heard a night hawk's harsh cry.

The dusk fell; still I sat there, not thinking much of anything. I had my hand-bag with me and my warm coat. I opened my bag and took out an apple; I had eaten nothing since breakfast and felt faint. The apple was an Astrachan. I found myself calculating what it cost—this one apple. I must begin to count the cost again of every morsel, although I had all my wages with me. But ten weeks of sickness—and where would they be!

I put my teeth into the apple— A thought: the apple-boat—it was to leave soon—the week was up!

I rose from the bench, not stopping to take a second bite; took my hand-bag; threw my coat over my shoulder, and started down the road to Richelieu-en-Bas.

It was rapidly growing dark. One mile, two miles, three miles—the night was there to cover me. I was thankful. Five miles, six miles—I was entering the long street of the village. The lindens and elms made the road black. I strained my eyes to see the lights. That from the cabaret was the first—then a green one above the water, several feet it looked to be. It must be the apple-boat!

It was just the time in the evening when the men flock to the cabaret. As I drew near it, I heard the sound of the graphophone. I listened, not stopping in my walk.

"*O Canada, pays de mon amour!*"

I stopped then; and it seemed as if my heart stopped at the same time.

Oh, it had been "*Canada, land of my love*" in the deepest sense—and now!

I went on to the boat; crossed the trestle. At the sound of my footstep on the deck, the woman put her head up the companionway.

"Who 's there?"

"Some one who wishes to speak with you alone; I was here the other day."

"I know your voice, but I don't know your name. You can talk; my husband is, at present, yonder in the cabaret; he will be in by half-past ten. We sail to-night if the wind holds good."

"To-night?"

"Yes; and what is that to you?" she asked suspiciously.

"May I come into the cabin?"

"But, yes. Come."

I sat down on the stool she placed for me. I was tired with the long walk.

"I have been called away from here, where I have been at service—"

"You—at service?" she asked in surprise.

"Yes; and I am going away to find another place. Will you take me with you in the boat? May I go with you to your home, wherever it is?"

She looked at me suspiciously. "I don't know—my husband—"

"I will pay you well, whatever you ask—"

"It is n't that,"—she hesitated,—"but I don't know who you are."

"I am myself," I said wearily; "I am tired of my place, and they don't want me to leave. I want to go—I am too tired to stay—"

"Too hard, was it?"

"Everything was too hard. I come from Spencerville, just over the line; you know it?"

"Oh, yes. My cousin settled there when the new tannery was built last year."

"All my family lived there. I am now alone in the world. I have sent my trunk on—but I want a complete rest before I go out to service again. I thought I could get it with you. I don't want to let the family know I have gone. The family are all away at present."

"Where have you been at work?"

"At the old manor of Lamoral, three miles away."

"I have heard of it; they bought ten barrels of apples last year." She seemed to be thinking over some matter foreign to me, at that moment.

"Won't you take me? I am so tired."

"You say you can work?"

"Try me."

"We are going back for the second harvest. We live near Iberville. We have orchards there, and help is always scarce at this time. Will you help?"

"Oh, yes; anything. I can do the housework for you, if necessary."

"You don't look tough enough for that."

"Try me."

"I 'll speak to my husband when he comes in."

"All I ask of you is, that you will not let him tell anyone here that I am on the boat."

"He has a tight mouth—a good head; he will do as I say."

"That settles it," I thought.

"If you will stay here with my baby, I 'll just step over to the cabaret and call him out. We can talk better in the road."

"Yes."

She climbed the steps, and I heard her heavy tread on the deck—her steps on the trestle-boards. After that, nothing for a quarter of an hour, except the soft lap of the river running past the boat.

They came back together, the man with a lantern which he hung at the stern.

"He says, my Jean, that you can come with us, if you will hire out for a month."

"Tell him I will hire out to you for that time. And how much shall I pay you for the passage?"

"Jean says that's all right,—you can't leave us unless you can swim,—and we 're more than glad to get the help."

"I can sleep on the deck; I have a warm coat."

"Oh, no; my husband often sleeps on deck when we are at anchor; but to-night he will not sleep at all. We go to Sorel; we must be there by three in the morning. You can sleep in his bunk."

She parted some curtains and showed me a two-and-a-half feet wide bunk beneath the sloping deck. I thanked her.

"If the wind should come up heavy, I shall do the steering," she said. "I will be down after we get under way. I help Jean."

She went up the tiny companionway, and I heard her talking in a low voice to "Jean". Soon there was a noise of trailing ropes, of a sail being hoisted; a sound of pushing and hauling—a soft swaying motion to the boat, then the ripple of the water under her bow.

I lay down in the bunk; the sound of the ever-flowing river soothed me. I was worn out.

BOOK THREE

FINDING THE TRAIL

I

A dream would seem more real to me than the experience of that night.

I listened, half sleeping, half waking, to hear only the ripple of water under the bow. Towards morning the wind freshened. I heard great commotion overhead. Evidently Jean and Madame Jean were taking in sail. I knew we must be near Sorel. I went up on deck to ask if I could be of any help.

"Not now," said Madame Jean who was busy with the gaskets; "but when we come in to Sorel there will be some merchants on the wharf to get the rest of our apples. If you will mind the baby then, I shall not have him on my hands if he wakes up."

"To be sure I will. May I stay here on deck for a little air?"

"But, yes; you cannot sleep in this noise."

The morning stars paled. The light crept out of the east along the pathway of the great river. The sun rose, turning its waters to gold.

We were late in getting into Sorel. While there I remained in the cabin with the baby who was still asleep. By seven o'clock we were off again—the merchants had been willing to lend a hand in unloading. We had a fair brisk wind for our sail up the Richelieu, or Sorel River.

Madame Jean made us coffee, gave us doughnuts, cheese, and thickly buttered bread. The fresh milk for the baby was taken on at Sorel, and the little fellow, who could creep but not walk, gave me plenty to do. Madame Jean laughed at my attempts to confine him in one place; he seemed to be all over the deck at once. She called out merrily from the tiller:

"Eh, mademoiselle, you have never had one, I can see! You have much to learn. Here, take the tiller for a moment, I will show you."

She took a small-sized rope that had a hook at one end and a snap-catch at the other. She caught up the baby and, turning him over flat on her lap, showed me a stout steel ring sewed into the band of his blue denim creeper. Into this she fastened the snap and, hooking the other end into the belt of my skirt, set him down on the deck.

"Voilà!" she said triumphantly. I found the arrangement worked perfectly and relieved me from all anxiety. He was tethered; but he could roam at large, so he thought.

All day we voyaged up the Richelieu between the rich Canadian farm-lands, the mountains, faintly blue on the horizon, rising more and more boldly in the south, as we approached the Champlain country. Just before sunset we glided up to an old wharf at Iberville.

There followed a series of shouts and whistles from the head of it. There was a frantic waving of aprons. A rough farm wagon, drawn by an old pepper-and-salt horse and loaded with children, bore down upon us, rattling over the loose planks like a gun carriage. The old horse was spurred on by flaps and jerks of the reins which were handled by a fine-looking bareheaded girl on the board that served for a seat.

There were answering shouts from Jean and Madame Jean; answering wavings of towels and shirts which had been drying on the rail—all equally frantic. Then the whole cartful tumbled out on the wharf, almost before the horse came to a halt, and, literally, stormed the sloop.

Jean and his wife were lost to my sight in the children's embrace; fourteen arms were trying to smother both at the same time. I was holding the baby when the horde descended on him, and only the fact that I was a stranger prevented me from sharing the fate of their mother.

"They are good children, eh?" said Madame Jean proudly, with a blissful smile. She smoothed her tumbled hair and twisted her apron again to the front of her plump person.

I was properly introduced by my own name which I gave to madame and her husband. The whole family fairly pounced upon the few belongings in the boat and carried them to the great wagon. Madame Jean, holding the baby, sat in the middle enthroned on the pile of bunk cushions; the children crowded in around her. I was asked, as a compliment, to sit beside Monsieur Jean on the board seat which he covered with an old moth-eaten buffalo robe. He took the reins, and amid great rejoicings we jolted up the wharf into the main street of Iberville, the whole family exchanging greetings with every passer by, it seemed to me, just as fervently as if they had but recently returned from an ocean voyage. Our wagon—a chariot of triumph—rattled on through the town and out into the open country. They chatted all together and all at once. I failed to understand what it was about, for several of the children were very young and their French still

far from perfect. Their voices were pitched on A sharp, and the effect was astonishing as well as ear-splitting.

They paid no attention to me. I was grateful. I felt myself again a stranger in the midst of this alien family life.

Two miles out from the town, we came to the roof-tree of the Duchênes,—this was their name,—and within half an hour we sat, eleven of us, around the kitchen table at supper. From beneath it, an old hound protruded his long nose, and caught with a snap the tidbits that were thrown to him. A huge Maltese cat settled herself across my feet. A canary shrilled over all the noise. In the midst of the merry meal—blackberries and milk, hot fried raised bread with maple syrup—the whole family was apparently thrown into convulsions by the appearance in the room of a pet goat and, behind him, the old pepper-and-salt horse that Monsieur Duchêne had turned out in the yard to graze!

There was a general uprising; charge and counter charge, shrieks, laughter. The baby and I were the only ones left at the table. Then, humiliating exodus of the beasts and triumphant entry of the family. The supper proceeded.

And afterwards—never shall I forget that little scene!—after the dishes were washed, the goat fed, the horse bedded and the baby asleep, the seven children placed themselves in a row, the oldest girl of fifteen at the head, and waited for a signal from their father: a long drawn chord on a mouth harmonicum. Together parents and children sang the *Angelus*, sang till the room was filled with melody and, it seemed to me, the soft September night without the open door.

This was my introduction to the family Duchêne. I slept in an unfinished chamber. A sheet was tacked to the rafters over the bed. The window beside it looked into a mass of trees.

Oh, those orchard slopes of Iberville! I made intimate acquaintance with them for the next four weeks. I worked hard. I was up at five to help Madame Jean with the breakfast and the housework, what there was of it; then we were all off to the orchards to pick the wholesome, beautiful fruit—Northern Spies, Greenings, Baldwins and Russets. To use Jamie's expression, their "fragrance is in my nostrils" as I write of them.

At noon we had lunch—bread and butter, with jerked beef, cheese, apples, washed down with the sweetest of sweet cider from the mill. There was no stint of the simple fare. Then at work again—all the children joining, except the baby who roamed at will among the orchard grass with two small pigs that scampered wildly to and fro.

It was work, work—picking, sorting, packing, till the shadows were long on the grass and the apple-cart was piled high with windfalls. The barrels were filled with picked fruit of the choicest. And after supper, regularly every evening, we sang the *Angelus*.

This life was beneficial to me. I made no plans. I was glad to work hard in order to drown thought, to keep my body, as it were, numb. I really dared not think of *what was*, for then I could not sleep; could not be ready for the next day's work. To forget myself; this was my sole desire. Madame Duchêne watched my work with ever increasing admiration. Monsieur Duchêne wanted to engage me for another season.

"But you must not leave us this winter, mademoiselle. We need you," he said one day, after nearly four weeks had passed. He was preparing to set out on his return voyage down the Sorel to Richelieu-en-Bas.

"Others may need me, Monsieur Duchêne. I have been so content in your home; it has done me good."

"Mademoiselle has some sorrow? Can we help, my wife and I?"

"You have helped me by trusting me, by letting me make one of your family all these weeks."

"But you will keep the house till we return?"

"I should like to do this for you, but I cannot stay so late here in the country. I must find employment for the winter."

"We cannot afford to pay you, mademoiselle, but you shall have your keep, if you will, for your help and your company, while you stay." Madame Duchêne spoke earnestly.

"I cannot, dear Madame Duchêne; it is time for me to go."

"May I ask where, Mademoiselle Farrell?" she asked, with such gentle pity audible in her voice, such kindly thoughts visible in her bright blue eyes, that, for a moment, I wavered. This was, at least, a shelter, a "retreat" for both my soul and my body.

"I do not know as yet."

"What can we do for you?" she urged.

"But one thing: say nothing to any one in Richelieu-en-Bas that you have seen me, that I have been with you—that you know me, even."

"As you will."

I remained with the children who declared they should be desolate if I went on the same day that father and mother left them. Together the children and I watched the apple-boat, loaded to the gunwale, sail away from Iberville wharf.

Two days after that, the children drove me to the station. I took the day express to New York.

I decided to go to Delia Beaseley.

II

Not in its aspect of Juggernaut did the great city receive me that hot September night at half-past eight, but as a veritable refuge where I could lose myself among its millions.

I welcomed the roar of its thoroughfares, the noises of its traffic; they deafened my soul. Jamie's voice saying: "We shall see you in Crieff next summer—you and Ewart," grew faint and far away. Cale's voice pleading, Cale's voice warning me: "You are doing him a bitterer wrong than your mother before you," became less distinct.

The flashing electric signs were welcome and the white glaring lights of Broadway. They dazzled me; they helped to blind my inner sight to that vision of Mr. Ewart, standing on the shore of the little cove, far away in that northern wilderness, and looking into my eyes with a look that promised life in full.

I rode down the Bowery oblivious of myself; I was lost in wonder at the multitudes. I knew those multitudes were composed of individuals; that those individuals were distinct the one from the other. Each had his experience, as I was having mine. Life was interpreting itself to each in different terms: to some through drink; to others through prostitution; to a few—thank God, only a few!—through threatened starvation; to a host through the blessing of daily work; to hundreds of unemployed through the misery of suspense. And love, hate, faithfulness, treachery—all were there, hidden in the hearts of those multitudes.

Some lines of William Watson's kept saying themselves over and over to me in thought, as I watched those throngs; as I listened to the glare of street bands, the grinding of hurdy-gurdies, and heard the flow of street life, which is *the* life, of the foreign East Side;

> "Momentous to himself, as I to me,
> Hath each man been that ever woman bore;
> Once, in a lightning-flash of sympathy,
> I *felt* this truth, an instant, and no more."

"Momentous to himself." Oh yes—not a soul among those thousands who was not "momentous to himself", no matter how low soever fallen! "Momentous to himself"—I watched the throngs, and *understood*.

I made my way into V—- Court, unafraid and unmolested. Delia Beaseley opened the door. At sight of her all the pent-up emotion of weeks threatened to find vent.

"Delia, it is I, Marcia Farrell—"

"Oh, my dear, my dear," she cried, as she drew me into the hall under the dim light. "It is good to see you again! But what is it?" she asked anxiously, lifting my hat from my face. "Are you sick?"

I could not answer her. She led me into the back room I remembered so well. There, as once before, she pushed me gently into the rocking-chair. She removed my hat and brought a fan.

"What is it, my dear? Can't you tell me?"

Oh, how many times, during her life of helpfulness, she must have asked that question of homeless girls and despairing women!

"Delia," I began; then I hesitated. Should I tell her, or carry in silence my trouble about with me? Before I could speak again, she had her arms—those motherly arms I had felt before—around me; my head was on her shoulder; my arms about her neck. I sobbed out my story, and she comforted me as only a woman, who has suffered, can comfort.

"Let me stay a little while with you, Delia, till I get work again."

"Stay with me! Bless your heart, I couldn't let you go if you wanted to. Here 's my Jane—she 's out now—ready to drop with the work and the heat; we 've had a long spell of it, and I not knowing where to turn for help just now, for I want her to go away on a vacation; she needs it. Just you stay right here with me, and I 'll pack Jane off to-morrow."

"Have you—is any body with you?" I asked.

"Yes." She nodded significantly. "There 's two of 'em on my hands now. One's got through, and the other is expecting soon. Both of 'em can't see the use of living, and Jane 's about worn out."

"You will let me help? I can do something, if it's only the housework."

"I can tend to that." She spoke decidedly. "What I want is to have you round 'em, comforting 'em, cheerin' 'em—"

"*I* comforting, *I* cheering, Delia?"

She nodded emphatically. "Yes, my dear, just that. Your work is cut out for you right here, for a few weeks anyway. You come upstairs with me now and set with one of 'em, and give her a bowl of gruel—I was just going to come up with one from the kitchen when you rung,—while I get Jane's things together; she 'll be in by ten. She 's over to one of the Settlement Houses helping out to-night."

Somehow, on hearing this account of Jane's activity—tired Jane who could help and rescue at home, and then go out to the Settlement House to give of her best till ten at night—my own life dwindled into insignificance. The true spirit of the great city entered into me. I felt the power of it for good. I felt its altruism; I realized its deepest significance; and I saw wherein lay my own salvation from selfish brooding, from forbidden craving, from morbid thinking.

"Let me have Jane's work," I said.

We talked no more that night of matters that were personal. I gave my whole time and strength to help "bring her through", as Delia defined the state of things in regard to a girl, five years younger than I, "who had missed her footing".

It was an anxious week. There was delirium, despair, suicidal intent; but we "brought her through".

While watching by that girl's bedside, I relived that experience of my mother, the result of which was that I, Marcia Farrell, was there to help. In those night watches I had time for many thoughts. Cale's voice grew insistent, for the roar of the city was subdued at one and two in the morning:

"You are doing him a bitterer wrong than your mother before you."

Over and over again I heard those words. The undertone of metropolitan life, when at its lowest vitality, went on and on.—Two o'clock, three. The girl on the bed grew quiet; delirium ceased. Four—I heard the rattle of the milk-carts and the truck gardeners' wagons coming up from the ferries.

"You are doing him a bitterer wrong than your mother before you." Over and over again I heard it.

Cale's voice was louder now, more and more insistent. All that day I heard it above the push-cart vendors' cries and the hurdy-gurdy's dance music, above the roar of the Second Avenue Elevated and the polyglot street clamor.

Yes, I had to acknowledge it: my mother had wronged him. I visualized that act in her life. I saw her promising to marry him, although she was unwilling. I saw her giving herself in marriage to him in the presence of the minister and her sick father. I saw her young husband creeping out in the night to watch for her shadow on the curtain. I saw him lying down to sleep a little after his vigil—but I could not see my mother when she left the house. Not until she made sunshine in the old manor, where I was conceived, not until she made sunshine in the forest for old André, could I see her again in her youth and beauty, in the enjoyment of her stolen bliss.

But I could see him whom she deserted. I saw him in the pasture among the colts. I saw him raving at being made her dupe; I saw him even raising his hand against Cale. I saw him in his fruitless search, east, west, north, south. I saw him leaving the very house in which I was watching. I saw him broken, changed, "cutting loose" from his old life, determined to relive in other conditions, in other lands. I saw him returning from that far Australian country to that house where my mother's steps had resounded on the old flagging in the passageway at Lamoral,—unknowing of her former presence there, unknowing that her daughter was there awaiting him,—to that place which I, also unknowing, had made home for him. I saw him living again in his love for me who was her daughter!—and he knew this! Knew I was her daughter.

How had he dared? And he her husband—my mother's husband! The thought was staggering.

I looked at the girl on the bed. She was asleep, but her respiration was rapid; she was breathing for two. "What if—"

I dared scarcely formulate my thought. Was he her husband? Did merely the spoken word make Gordon Ewart and my mother, man and wife? What was it Cale said: she had pleaded so with his mother not to be with her husband that first night of her marriage. And there was no second.

I began to see differently, as Cale predicted. Horror, shame, humiliation, despair, jealousy of my own mother—all this that obstructed vision, deflected, distorted it, was being cleared away.

Had Mr. Ewart come to look at this matter in the same light, that he had never been my mother's husband? That words, alone, could never make him that?

"You are doing him a bitterer wrong than your mother before you." Perhaps Cale was right.

"Why was he silent?" I asked myself, and found the answer: he could not have gained my love, had I known. And he wanted my love—wanted me, and me alone of all the world for his mate. But how could he, knowing?

I lost myself in conjecture, but I began to see clearly, differently. My own act, my desertion of him, after what he had mutely promised, was becoming a base thing in my eyes.

I asked Delia Beaseley once, if she had heard any word from Mr. Ewart.

"No, not a word," she said decidedly, "and remembering how he looked when he braced up and walked into this very basement twenty-seven years ago, I don't expect to hear from him. I ain't judgin' you, my dear, but you 've done an awful thing."

"And what of his act?"

"Well, there are two ways of looking at that," was all she would say. She used Cale's very words, when he told his story.

I asked once again, if she had heard from the Doctor?

"No. He was going out to California. He come to see me before he went, and he said he 'd about given up the farm plans; that he could n't see his way clear to carry them out for the present. And I don't mind telling you, that he said he would put half the interest money on that 'conscience fund', as he calls it, that he thinks your father provides to ease his soul, to helping me here in my work."

I remembered what I had advised on that memorable evening in Lamoral—and I wondered at the ways of life.

We "brought the girl through" with help of nurse and doctor. She and her child were saved, saved for good as I have every reason to believe, for I have kept in touch with her ever since. I am her friend, why quite such a friend, I do not feel called upon to explain.

I answered the door bell one day when the baby upstairs was ten days old—and found myself face to face with Cale.

III

When I saw him, I acknowledged to myself my weakness. Deep down in my heart I had been longing, with a desire which was prayer, that I might have some word from Lamoral.

"Cale—Cale, dear, come in." I caught his hand, which was not outstretched to mine, to draw him in. "If we were n't the observed of all in this court I would kiss you on the spot." He continued to stare at me; he did not speak.

"Cale, forgive me for my hardness of heart—say you forgive me, for I can't forgive myself; I was—"

He interrupted me, speaking quietly:

"I know what you was; you can't tell me nothin' 'bout *thet*, Marcia. I ain't laid up nothin' you said to me, nor nothin' you said against nobody; but I ain't fergiven yer fer leavin' me without

knowin' of your whereabouts—

"Cale, I had to be alone—"

"I don't care whether you had to be alone or not," he said testily; "you might have let me know where you was goin'. You was n't fit to go alone, nor be alone. My hair 's turned gray thinkin' what might happen. Where was you?" he demanded sternly.

"I was in Iberville."

I led him unresisting into the back room; it was my turn to place some one in the rocking-chair.

"Iberville! How in thunder did you get to Iberville when you did n't go on the train?"

"How did you know I did n't go on the train?"

"The baggage-master told me. How did you go?"

"In the apple-boat."

"Wal, I 'm stumped. How long did you stay there?"

"Nearly four weeks. Why?"

"Why? Because I 'd been doing detective work on my own account. (How my heart sank at those words; Mr. Ewart had not attempted to find me then!). I 've been doin' it for the last six weeks. This is the third time I 've been in New York."

"But not here?"

"Yes, here—in this very house. I give Mis' Beaseley the credit; she knows how to hold her tongue. I see she ain't told you."

"No. But you have n't been here since I 've been in the house?"

"No, I just got here to-day."

"How did you happen to come this third time, Cale?"

"I come because the Doctor told me to try it again here—"

"The Doctor? Is he at home?"

"Guess he is by this time; I left him at Lamoral yesterday—"

"At Lamoral?" On hearing that word, a trembling I could not control seized upon me. If only Cale would speak of Mr. Ewart!

"Yes, Lamoral. I 've been lyin' right and left to Angélique an' Pierre, an' Marie, an' Mère Guillardeau an' all the folks 'round that's been inquirin'; but I didn't lie to the Doctor—not much!"

"How—how did the Doctor happen to be in Lamoral?"

"Guess you fergot he said he 'd like enough come back by the C.P."

I was silent. I saw that Cale did not intend to speak Mr. Ewart's name first. He was leaving it to me.

"Look here, Marcia, I 'm goin' to talk to you for once in my life like a Dutch uncle. I don't mean to live through another six weeks like those I 've been through, if I should live to be a hundred."

"I am sorry, Cale, to have been the cause of any anxiety, any suffering on your part—but I, too, suffered—and far more than you can ever know." I spoke bitterly.

"I ain't denyin' you suffered—but there 's others to consider; others have suffered, too, I guess, in a way *you* don't know nothin' about, bein' a woman."

"What do you mean, Cale?" I asked, trying to make him speak Mr. Ewart's name.

"Mean? Marcia Farrell, you know what I mean. Ain't you got a woman's heart beatin' somewhere in your bosom?"

"Oh, Cale, don't!"

"I 've got to, Marcia; you 've got to see things different, or you 'll rue the day you ever blinded yourself to facts."

"Is Mr. Ewart ill?"

"Ill?" There was a curious twitch to his mouth as he repeated that word. "Wal, it depends on what you call 'ill'. That's a pretty mild word for some sorts of diseases—"

"Oh, Cale, tell me quick—don't keep me waiting any longer—"

"Any longer for what?"

"You know, Cale, I want to hear of him—know about him—"

"Oh, you do, do you? Wal, it 's pretty late in the day for you to show some feelin'. Look here, Marcia, I ain't goin' to meddle. I meddled once thirty years ago when I tried to persuade your mother she loved George Jackson, an' I 've lived to curse the day I did it. I ain't goin' to fall inter the same trap *this* time, you bet yer life on thet; but I 'm goin' to speak my mind 'fore I leave you here. Will you answer me one plain question, an' answer it straight?"

"I 'll try to."

"*Do* you think different from what you did? Have you come to see things any different from what you put 'em to me?"

"Yes."

"Wal, thet's to the point; now we can talk. The Doctor and Ewart was talkin' this over 'fore I come away; I heard every word. I was right there, and they asked me to be. Gordon Ewart told the Doctor that when he fust see him aboard ship, that was nineteen years ago, he made his acquaintance because he knew he was the man who had brought you inter this world. He never let him go. He kept in touch with him. He come to be his closest friend. An' he never told that he, Gordon Ewart, is the one that puts that money regularly into the Doctor's hands, without his knowin' who it comes from, for the sake of helpin' others—"

"But he did not think of me." I could not help it; I spoke bitterly.

"No. He did n't want to think of you. He wanted to ferget there was anybody or anything in this world to remind him of what he 'd suffered from Happy Morey; an' he tried his best. An' he told the Doctor that when he 'd thought he 'd conquered, when he come to see things different too, he come back to settle in the old manor an' carry out his ideas. An' the very fust night, he found you there. He said he knew then, he couldn't get away from his past; it was livin' right there along with him.

"Marcia, I ain't meddlin', and mebbe I 'm to blame; but when I told you what I did, I done for the best as I thought. The Doctor done for the best as he thought. He believed you were Ewart's daughter, and he see what we all could n't help seein'—"

"What, Cale?" I longed to hear from Cale's lips that he had seen Mr. Ewart's love for me.

"You *know*, Marcia Farrell, I ain't goin' ter tell you. The Doctor said he thought fust along, it was because Ewart knew he was your father; but he said his eyes was opened mighty sudden—an' it 'bout made him sick, for he thinks a sight of you, Marcia. I see from the fust how things was driftin' with George, and as him an' me had recognized one 'nother from the fust, an' as he did n't say he knew you, I kept still. I was n't goin' to meddle, an' I ain't goin' to meddle now—only I 'm goin' straight off to tell him where you are."

"But he has n't tried to find me—"

"No, nor he never will. Your mother 'bout killed him when he was a boy, an' he is n't goin' to run after you who has 'bout killed him again as a man. You don't know nothin' what you 've done. I 've been through hell with him these last six weeks, an' I went through it with him once before twenty-eight years ago, an' that hell compared with this was like a campfire to a forest-roarer.—Now you know."

"Cale—Cale, what have I done?"

"You 've done what will take the rest of your life to undo. I ain't goin' to meddle, I tell you, but I 'm tellin' you just as things stand. My part's done—for I 've found you; an' I 'm goin' to tell him so."

He stood up; as it were, shook himself together, and without any ceremony started for the door.

"Cale, don't go yet—I want to tell you; you don't see my position—"

"Position be hanged. I guess folks that find their lives hangin' by a thread don't stop to argify much 'bout 'position'; they get somewhere where they can *live*—thet 's all they want."

He was at the front door by this time. I grasped his arm and held it tight.

"You will come again, Cale, you must."

"I 'm goin' home to Lamoral as quick as the Montreal express can get me there. I can't breathe here in this hole!"

He loosened his shirt collar and took off his coat. It was an unseasonable day in November—an Indian summer day with the mercury at eighty-four. The life of the East Side was flooding the streets. He turned to me as he stood on the low step. "I hope it won't be goodby for another six weeks, Marcia."

"Cale, oh, Cale—"

He was off down the court with a long stride peculiar to himself. I saw him step over a bunch of babies playing in the mud at the corner of the court. He turned that corner into the street. I went in and shut the door.

Delia Beaseley was out for the entire forenoon, but Jane, who had returned from her two weeks vacation, was upstairs. I had plenty of time to think, to feel. I must have sat there in the back room for an hour or more, then the front door bell rang again.

I answered it—and found Mr. Ewart.

IV

"Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"I wish to see you for a few minutes."

"Come into the back room."

I led the way. I heard him shut the front door.

There was no word of welcome on the part of either, no hand extended. All I could see, as he stood there momentarily on the step, was the set face, the dark hollows beneath his eyes, the utter fatigue in his attitude. He stood with his hand on the door jamb, bracing himself by it. So he must have stood long years before when he came to seek my mother. That was my thought.

He did not sit down; but I—I had to; I had not strength left to stand.

"I 'm going to ask you a few questions."

"Yes." My tongue was dry; my lips parched. It was with difficulty I could articulate.

"What did you think I promised you, even if without words, that last time I saw you in camp?"

"All."

"What did you promise me when you looked into my eyes, there on the shore of the cove?"

"All." I had no other word at my command.

"And what did 'all' mean to you?"

I could not answer.

"Did it mean that you were to be my wife, that I was to be your husband?"

"I thought so."

"And you came to think otherwise—"

"How could it be, oh, how could it be?" I cried out wildly, the dumb misery finding expression at last. "How could it be when you are my mother's husband—"

"Stop! Not here and now. I will not hear that—not here, where I found her dead in this basement; not now, when I have come to find her child. Listen to me. Answer me, as if before the judgment seat of your truest womanhood and our common humanity. Is she a wife who never loves the man who loves her, and is married to her in the law? Answer me."

"No."

"Is he a husband who never receives the pledge of love from the woman he loves, and to whom he is married in the law? Answer me again."

"No."

"Can words merely, the 'I promise', the 'I take', make marriage in its truest sense? Tell me."

"No."

"Was the woman who never loved me, my wife in any true sense for all the spoken words?"

"No," I answered again, but my voice faltered.

"Was the man who loved her, her husband simply by reason of those few spoken words?"

"No—but—"

"Yes, I know what you would say; the words, at least, were spoken that made us before the world man and wife in the law—but how about the 'before God'?"

I could not answer. The man who was cross-questioning me was trying to get at the truth as I saw it.

"The law can be put aside, and I put it aside; I was divorced from her. But what difference, except to you, does that make? Marcia Farrell, I was never your mother's husband. Had I been, had I taken her once in my arms as wife, can you think for one moment that I would have stayed in the manor, continued in your presence—watching, waiting, longing for some sign of love for me on your part? You cannot think it—it is not possible."

His voice shook with passion, with indignation. He bent to me.

"Tell me, in mercy tell me, what stands between us two? Speak out now from the depths of your very soul. Lay aside fear; there is nothing to fear, believe me. I am fighting now not only for my life, but for yours which is dearer to me than my own. Speak."

I took courage. I looked up at him as he bent over me.

"I thought you loved my mother in me—I was afraid it was not I you loved, not Marcia Farrell, but Happy Morey."

"You thought *that*!—And I never knew." He spoke rapidly, with a catch in his voice which sounded like a half laugh or a sob.

He straightened himself suddenly, then, as suddenly, he bent over me again, took my face between his hands and looked into my eyes, as if by looking he could engrave his words on my brain.

"I swear to you by my manhood, that I have loved and love you for yourself, for what you are. I swear to you by my past life, a life that has never known the love of a woman, that the past no longer exists for me; that it no longer existed for me from the moment I saw you coming down stairs that first night at Lamoral. I waited this time to make sure that a woman loved me as I wanted to be loved, as I must be loved—and I waited too long. You are not like your mother, except in looks. You are you—the woman I want to make my wife, the woman I look to, to make life with me. Marcia! Let the past bury its dead—what do we care for it? We are living, you and I—living—loving—"

He drew me up to him—and life in its fulness began for me....

"And now put on your hat, give me your coat, and come with me," he said a half an hour afterwards.

"Where?"

"To the City Hall to get our marriage licence."

"To-day?"

"Yes, now, before luncheon. Tell Jane you will not return—"

"But my bag—shall I take that? And Delia, what will—"

"Delia must look out for herself; you can explain by letter. Tell Jane to have your bag sent this afternoon to this address." He gave me a card on which he scribbled, "Check room of the Grand Central Station". "We can be married at the magistrate's office—"

I must have shown some disappointment at this decision, for he asked quickly:

"What is it, Marcia? Tell me. Remember, I can bear nothing more."

I took a lighter tone with him. I saw that the nervous strain under which he was suffering

must be relieved.

"I am disappointed, yes, downright disappointed. Even if you don't want to make certain promises, I confess I do. I want to say 'I promise'; I want to hear myself saying 'I take you' and 'till death do us part'. I want to say those very words; I would like the whole world to hear. Why, think of it, I am going to be your wife! Do you grasp that fact?" I said, smiling at him.

I won an answering smile.

"Have your own way; I may as well succumb to the inevitable now as at any time, for you will always have it with me."

"Oh, I would n't be so mean as to want it all the time, besides it would be so monotonous; but I do want it this once—the great and only 'once' for me."

"Where do you want to be married? Have you any preference?"

"A decided one. I want to be married in the chapel of St. Luke's, and I want Doctor Rugvie to give me away. As you both came down last night from Lamoral, I don't believe he is away from the city, now is he?"

"He is up at St. Luke's. He said he should be there till five. I was to telephone him there."

"Then at five it shall be," I declared, with an emphasis that made him smile again.

"At five you shall be married; but, remember, I am the party of the second part." He spoke half whimsically; I was so glad to hear that tone in his voice. I welcomed the joy that began to express itself normally in merry give and take.

"No, first, Mr. Ewart—always first—"

"I don't see it so."

"Not at present, but you will when I am Mrs. Ewart. I want to ask you a question."

"Yes, anything."

"Have you ever seen those papers that Doctor Rugvie has in his possession?"

"No, and I never want to. They are yours."

"But I don't want to see them either. You do not know their contents?"

"No; only that there is a marriage certificate among them and a paper or two for you." I noticed he avoided mentioning my mother's name.

"Gordon—" I called him so for the first time, and was rewarded with a kiss, after which intermezzo, I finished what I had to say:

"—You say let the past bury its dead; so long as those papers exist, it will, in a way, live. I would like to know that they do not exist."

"You are sure you do not care to know your parentage?"

"No. Why should I? What is that to me? It is enough that I am to be your wife—and what my mother said, or did not say, could not influence me now. She never could have anticipated *this*. Besides, there might be some mention by her of my parentage."

"You express my own thought, my own desire, Marcia. Shall we ask John to destroy them?"

"Yes, and the sooner the better."

He drew a long breath of relief.

"Then that chapter is closed—and I have you to myself, without knowledge of any other tie. I thank God that I have come into my own through you alone. Come, we must be going."

"I 'll just run up stairs and tell Jane that I shall not come back here, and, Gordon—"

"Yes?"

"I want something else with all my heart."

"What, more? I am growing impatient."

"I want Delia Beaseley and Cale for witnesses—"

"It is wonderful how a man can make plans and a woman undo them when she has her way! I was intending to be married by a magistrate, and then carry you off unbeknown to Cale and

Company, and telephone to them later. Now, of course, they shall be with us."

I left word with Jane to tell her mother to be at St. Luke's chapel promptly that afternoon at five; it was a matter of great importance and that Mr. Ewart would be there. At which Jane looked her amazement, but had the good sense to say nothing.

We left the house together. Together we rode up the Bowery. We procured our licence, and together we rode on the electrics up to the Bronx and, afterwards, had our luncheon at the cafe in the park on the heights. As the short November afternoon drew to a close, we rode down to St. Luke's. It was already five when we entered the chapel.

Delia, Cale and the Doctor were there, waiting for us; but they spoke no word of greeting, nor did we. They followed us in silence to the altar where, with our three friends close about us, we were made man and wife.

At the end of the short service, the two men grasped my husband by the hand. But still no word was spoken. It remained for Cale to break the silence; he turned to me.

"Guess you 've found the trail all right this time, Marcia." His voice trembled; he tried to smile; and I—I just threw my arms around his neck and gave him what he termed the surprise of his life: a hearty kiss. The Doctor, of course, claimed the same favor, and Delia Beaseley dissolved suddenly into tears—poor Delia, I am sure I read her thought at that moment!—only to laugh with the next breath, as did all the rest of us, for Cale spoke out his feelings with no uncertain sound.

"I guess I 'll say goodby till I can see you again in the old manor, Mis' Ewart, an' I hope you 'll be ter home soon as convenient. I ain't had a square meal fer the last six weeks. Angélique has filled the sugar bowl twice with salt by mistake, an' put a lot of celery salt inter her doughnuts three times runnin'—an' all on account of her bein' so taken up with Pete. An' he ain't much better even if he was a widower; he fed the hosses nine quarts of corn meal apiece for three days runnin' ter celebrate, an' the only thing thet saved 'em was, thet he had sense enough left not ter wet it."

My husband assured him that we should be at home soon—perhaps in a day or two.

The Doctor insisted that Cale and Delia should come home with him to dinner, in order that Cale might have one "square meal" before he left on the night train. They accepted promptly. It was an opportunity to talk matters over.

We bade them goodby at the entrance to the hospital; then my husband and I went down and into the great city, the heart of which had been shown to us because we had seen, at last, into our own.

V

I have been his wife for nearly two years. I am sitting by the window in the living-room at Lamoral, while writing these last words. My baby, my little daughter, now four months old, lies in her bassinet beside me.

I believe Gordon's dearest wish was for a son, but I had set my heart on a daughter, and I really think he would have welcomed twins, or even triplets, of the feminine gender, if I had expressed a preference for them! A little daughter it is, however, and her father kneels beside her to worship and adore. Sometimes I detect the traces of tears when his face emerges from her still uncertain embrace.

Our little daughter, born to such a heritage of love! I look at her often when she is asleep and wonder what her life will be. So far as her father and I can make it, it shall be a joy; and yet—and yet! To this little soul, as to every other new-born, life will interpret itself in its own terms, despite father-love, and mother-love and the love of friends—of whom she has already a host!

Cale has constituted himself prime minister of the nursery ever since her advent, and advises me on all occasions. She is sovereign in the house. Angélique and Marie fell out on the subject of which should launder the simple baby dresses, and, in consequence, we had an uncomfortable household for a week. Pete and his son, no longer "little" Pete, are her slaves. And as for the dogs, they guard the room when she takes her frequent naps, three lying outside the threshold, and one within, by the crib, to make known to us when she wakes. Of course, each dog has his day—otherwise there would be no living in the house with them.

Only this morning, Mère Guillardeau, now over a hundred, drove over to see her and brought with her a tiny pair of dainty moccasins that her nephew, André, sent down from the Upper Saguenay. Even the bassinet, in which she is at this moment lying, was woven by our Montagnais

postman's squaw-wife and sent to me in anticipation of her coming. We must try not to spoil her.

Our first summer was spent in Crieff with Jamie and Mrs. Macleod.

Jamie showed me the great Gloire de Dijon roses growing on the stone walls of his home, and the ivy covering the gate that gives passage from the lower side of the garden to the meadows and the bright-glancing Earn. Before you step out through it, it frames the misty blue Grampians beyond the river. Jamie used to describe all this to me that winter in Lamoral; but the reality is more beautiful than any description.

The Doctor was with us for three weeks in August. We celebrated Jamie's birthday by repeating Gordon's celebration of it so long ago. We went over the moors and through the bracken to the "Keltic". We made our fire beneath the same tree, under which Gordon camped to the little boy's delight, nineteen years before, and we swung our gypsy kettle and made refreshing tea. We had a perfect day together.

It was on that occasion Jamie confided in me. He told me his decision to return to England was not wholly influenced by his publishers, but because of his interest in Bess Stanley who, he had heard, was seen a good deal in the company of a distant cousin of my husband's—another Gordon Ewart, named from his father from whom my Gordon bought the manor and seigniory of Lamoral.

He discerned that the only wise thing for him was to be on the spot, "to head the other off" as he put it.

"If I can be only one half day with Bess now and then, I can make her forget every other man," he declared solemnly.

I laughed inwardly, but I knew he spoke the truth. Jamie Macleod is fascination itself when he exerts himself.

"I am going to win, you know, in the end," he said. "Another Ewart shan't cut me out again—" He spoke mischievously, audaciously.

"Oh, you big fraud! It's well I understand you."

"And I, you, Marcia—I 'll cable."

"Do, that's a dear. I shall be so anxious."

Yesterday I received the cablegram; Jamie has won.

I can't help wondering about those other "Gordon Ewarts", distant cousins of my husband. Can it be?—

No, no! I will not even speculate. That past is forever laid, thank God.

I write "forever"—but perhaps that is not possible, for I have lived through a strange experience that makes me doubt at times. When my nestling was on her way to us, when a perfect love enfolded me, a love that protected, guarded, surrounded me with everything that life can yield, then it was that, at times, I felt again a stranger in this world; nor love of husband, nor love of friends, nor my love for them, for my home, nor my very passion of anticipated motherhood, could banish that feeling.

I never told my husband. He will read it here for the first time. I accounted for it by reason of my condition in which every nerve centre was alive for two. It may be my mother felt this before me—I do not know. But when my baby came, when I could touch the little bundle beside me, when I gave her the first nourishment from the fountain of her life, the feeling left me. I have not experienced it since.

During this last winter I have occupied my enforced leisure in writing out these life-lines of mine. I have written them for my daughter. It may be that she, too, sheltered as she now is, may sometime find herself lost in the wilderness we call Life, may read these life-lines and, hearing her mother's cry, may find by means of it the trail—as her mother found it before her.

My husband, entering quietly without my hearing him, leaned over my shoulder, as I was writing those last words, and took my pen from my fingers.

"Not yet, Marcia; you have n't gained your strength."

I seized a pencil, and while I try to finish now, scribbling, he is holding the end of it, ready to lift it from the paper.

"Please, Gordon—just a few more words—only a few about the new farm project, and Delia, and the Doctor and Mrs. Macleod,"—I hear him laugh under his breath when I couple those two names; we are still hoping in that direction,—"and those dear Duchênes—and you, of course—"

The pencil is being lifted—I struggle to write—

"Oh, Gordon, you tyrant!"

BOOKS BY
MARY E. WALLER

THE WOOD-CARVER OF 'LYMPUS
A DAUGHTER OF THE RICH
THE LITTLE CITIZEN
SANNA OF THE ISLAND TOWN
A YEAR OUT OF LIFE
FLAMSTED QUARRIES
A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS
MY RAGPICKER
THROUGH THE GATES OF THE NETHERLANDS
OUR BENNY

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