Rosalie

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FRANK PARKER DAY

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Foreword

Despite having a distinguished academic and military career, Frank Parker Day (1881-1950) is best known, especially in recent years, for his book *Rockbound*. Originally published in 1928, *Rockbound* leapt back onto the national stage in 2005 when it won the Canada Reads book competition on CBC Radio. At the time of original publication, *Rockbound* was both acclaimed and reviled. Day's literary peers and many critics viewed the novel favorably but locals, particularly residents of Ironbound Island, Nova Scotia, the real life island where Day's novel was set, were outraged. They felt betrayed by Day's depiction of them as ignorant, immoral and superstitious. Despite this early notoriety, *Rockbound* remains the most widely read and analyzed of Day's novels and several initial versions of *Rockbound* are available in manuscript form in the Dalhousie University Archives Frank Parker Day fonds. In addition to *Rockbound*, Day published several other important works during his most productive writing period from 1926-1932. These include *River of Strangers* (1926), *Autobiography of a Fisherman* (1927), and *John Paul's Rock* (1932). Manuscript versions of all these novels are also available in the Dalhousie University Archives.

After completing *John Paul's Rock*, Day's health began to deteriorate. In 1933, he retired from his position as President of Union College, NY and returned to Lake Annis, Nova Scotia where he lived until his passing in 1950. During his retirement, Day wrote the unpublished novels that are included in the Dalhousie University Archives collection.

Rosalie is one of these unpublished novels. Day completed *Rosalie* sometime either during or shortly after the Second World War, making it possibly one of the last novels that he worked on. While the plot has several gaps and some unexplained appearances of characters from other manuscripts that Day was working on during the period, it stands apart as the most complete work in

the collection of unpublished novels. The main character is a young Acadian woman, Rosalie, who flees the confines of a small fishing village and an unwanted marriage at the age of nineteen in search of a more personally fulfilling life. Rosalie's character arc is a reflection of the time during which the novel is set. She starts materially with nothing, but charm, good looks, boundless energy and intellectual curiosity take her far. She encounters support from complete strangers and ultimately succeeds by virtue of her ability to navigate a slightly broader set of societal constraints placed on women in Canada in the 1930s and 1940s.

The digital edition of *Rosalie* was transcribed from the most complete version of the typescript (Dalhousie University Archives MS-2-288 Box 10, Folders 7-12) with integration of author notes and shorthand included on the typescript. It also received minor edits for spelling and grammar to make it more readable. Those interested in completing a detailed analysis of the novel, should consult the original manuscript. The intent with this version is to present the story in a legible and accessible format that provides an example of Frank Parker Day's unpublished post-retirement writing.

Geoff Brown
Digital Scholarship Librarian
Dalhousie University Libraries

One

Rosalie stood in the kitchen doorway, her feet upon the threshold—truly for her the threshold—and looked about her, first at the grey grumbling sea, and then at the blue-green, sinister spruce forest. The cleared land was only a narrow strip between these two, though men had been there for a long time, for the soil was thin and sprinkled with granite boulders and quite unfitted for cultivation. As a child she had always felt relief when the in-shore wind brought the fog-to blot out forest and sea, both indifferent to man, always sullen at his conquest. She had on a blue wool beret, a warm blue woollen dress, woollen stockings and stout brown walking shoes. In her hand she had a small deep basket that Jo Charles had woven for her out of coloured maple strips, and for a little while she stood poised on her threshold, smiling rather sadly and quizzically at Hercule, her young husband, who was splitting wood in the yard.

Hercule saw her smile, felt a thrill of pleasure run up and down his spine, and almost dropped his axe to run and embrace her. But it happened that he had balanced on his chopping-block a fine chunk of beech wood, a fat chunk free from knots such as is the woodchopper's delight. He would show Rosalie how strong he was, how skillful with the axe, and night would soon come; he meant to slab all around the edges with quick shrewd strokes, a red and white slab cracked off with each stroke, and then to split it fair through the middle with one final giant blow. He was a simple man, a fisherman who found pleasure in simple things. He liked the smell of fresh split wood, of birch and beech even better than spruce or pine. He liked his woodpile, stacked in a circle, a towering cone in the centre. And he had a great passion for Rosalie. He could hardly wait for night to come to take her in his strong arms. Hercule chopped off the beech blocks with flashing strokes and sent the two halves flying with a blow in dead centre. Then he looked up to win Rosalie's approving smile, but Rosalie was no longer in the doorway.

Remembering the basket in her hand, he thought: “She is hidden by my woodpile, she is gone to pick up kindling chips where I have been hewing the new sill for the barn.” But he was wrong for he never saw Rosalie again. She had vanished as if caught up and translated to Heaven. He continued to split wood until the early dusk drew in—for it was late September—then cleaned his axe, put it away in the woodshed and went into the house to get his supper. Rosalie was not there, no lamp was lit and the kitchen fire burned low. He looked in the front room and called up the stairway. There was no answer. He crossed the field to his neighbor where Rosalie sometimes visited. She was not there and they had seen nothing of her. He ran back to the place where he had been hewing the sill. No chips had been taken from the pile. There was no print of woman’s shoes. He ran up the cow track into the back pasture, and stumbled through patches of blueberry bushes, now reddened by the frost, shouting: “Rosalie! Rosalie!” There was no answer. He turned and crossing the highway dashed down to the seashore, for often in fine weather Rosalie sat there on a kelp-dried rock to look across the sea, and shouted: “Rosalie! Rosalie!” There was no answer, no trace of her, only the grey sea, always glad at man’s disaster, grumbled and sneered at him. Then Hercule was truly frightened, and in panic he ran from house to house along the highway, giving word that Rosalie was lost.

The men turned out with lanterns, and searched the shore and the fringes of the forest. They blew horns, lit fires, and shouted “Rosalie,” and were answered by nothing but echoes. About nine that night, after a heavy shower that spoiled the scent for dogs, the full moon came up round and yellow, and shed her silver light into every glade and clearing, and on the restless waves of the sea. But the moonlight did not aid them. Diana was not on their side. Till dawn they searched and shouted and found and heard nothing. For three weeks they searched seashore and forest. With dogs and skilled half-breed woodsmen, they dragged lake and pond and river and nearby sea. They interrogated every traveller and notified the Mounted Police in the county town. But they found no trace of

Rosalie, no shred of her clothing, no fragment of her basket. Nor did anyone in that district ever know what happened to Rosalie. She became a legend, an oft-repeated tale before the winter's fire.

Two

Rosalie was what is known to biologists as a "sport" for she was unlike anyone in her village and perhaps was a reversion to a type long before her. Her people were poor fisher-folk, but she had good pioneer blood behind, her for her family name had been that of a count of France. She was an unusually pretty girl, tall and slim but strong and wiry, with black curling hair and long black eyelashes that drooped over blue eyes that had a tinge of violet. She had excellent health, and plenty of character was marked in her nose and mouth. Many of the young men desired her for their wife. She was just turned nineteen when she vanished.

For two years before that and her marriage, she had taught the village school. Quick at her books, at sixteen she had easily passed the eleventh grade examination, and in years when there was a shortage of teachers, she had been given a permissive license to teach. She enjoyed teaching children. When she was past eighteen, however, pressure was put upon her to make a decision: she could become a holy nun, or marry, or remain a school teacher. She admired the nuns with the glow of adoration in their faces, but she did not want to be shut off and shielded from the world. She had no great urge for a man and marriage. Nor could she get money from her people, always close to poverty, to attend the Normal College. "Why," she often used to think, "can't I be just Rosalie, a person, an individual, without belonging to anyone or any institution? I want to be just myself." Everyone in the village liked Rosalie because she was so kind and gentle and had such a gay laugh. The women of the village advised her to marry—it was the safest life for a woman they said—and the parish priest for whom she had great reverence, added to their advice. They all told her to marry Hercule. Hercule wanted her and Hercule was the village catch. He was twenty-seven and had inherited one hundred acres and a neat white house and barn from his parents, both dead. He was big and strong—he had

been appropriately named–, he was the luckiest lobster fisherman along the coast and, always a good sign, he had the highest and best piled wood pile. But Hercule was not very tidy in his habits. True, he shaved and put on his best suit for Sunday Mass, but on the other days of the week he was largely rubber boots, oil-skins, fish scales and whiskers. He did not wash very often. He was on rough seas so much that he regarded water as an enemy and once a wise man had told him that hot water applied to a man's body sapped his strength.

Rosalie admired Hercule as a decent hard-working fisherman, but truly she did not like the smell of him very much. Rosalie was instinctively dainty and always escaped out of doors when lobsters were boiling in the great black iron pot. She was only eighteen and she had seen little of the world beyond the confines of her village. Perhaps, she reflected, all strong men were a bit high.

Home conditions had not been easy for Rosalie. She was the second of nine children and she had been the little mother to the seven who had come after her, since Mother was worn and ailing through labour and too frequent childbirth. The oldest, a brother, was already in the boat with Father, and on Sundays or days of storm, he was free, but Rosalie had seldom known a holiday. There were always children to be washed, dressed, got ready for school, put to bed or nursed through those petty diseases, children must endure. Every day there was a string of flapping clothes on the wire clothesline that ran from house corner to wood-shed that entailed endless ironing; every third day a great batch of dough must be stirred, kneaded, raised in pans and baked in the little kitchen oven; often it was after midnight before the last golden brown loaves were emptied from their pans by adroit knife thrusts along the sides. Saturday night was bath night for the whole family of eleven; then indeed the kitchen was a scene of confusion as the wash-tubs steamed before the stove; great black caldrons must be heated, and as there was no pump in the kitchen, many buckets of water carried from the yard where was the well with its great sweep, a community well that served three families. Upstairs there were but three bedrooms; father and mother occupied one, the four boys

the second, the five girls the third and largest with the sloping roof close above their heads. The bedrooms were always close and airless, since in winter and spring the windows swelled and stuck and in summer and autumn one had to make a choice between fresh air and flies and mosquitos. Mother and father were always tired. For Rosalie, Sundays were hardly less busy than weekdays, for meals had still to be cooked, dishes washed and little children cared for. She felt in her heart that there must be some better, some more ordered way of life than this, and she truly longed to escape the domestic confusion. Now that her younger sisters were grown enough to tend the little ones, Rosalie felt that the household might profit by her absence.

So at last Rosalie, moved by circumstance and urged on by older women who knew little more than she, consented, and she was married to Hercule, one early morning of mid-August. After the early Mass everyone in the village came to Rosalie's house for breakfast. There was plenty of food, but of course some had to eat standing in the yard. Everyone was sober at this hour in the morning and the breakfast went off well. Rut Rosalie felt very uneasy inside. Now, she thought, I am tied here for life; now I shall never be the true person called Rosalie. After breakfast Rosalie and Hercule drove to the county town in Hercule's light truck that was adorned with trailing streamers of ribbons and coloured paper, looked in the shop windows, had coffee and sandwiches at a lunch counter and went to an afternoon moving picture. Hercule sat close to her and kept his arm about her. About five they drove home to Hercule's house for the prepared dinner party and dance at the near-by hall. A good many men got drunk even before the dance started, but Hercule was only a little drunk. The dance was somewhat marred by a couple of fist-fights, and shortly after midnight Hercule and Rosalie stole away and returned to Hercule's house. All the marriage feast had been cleared away by friendly women and the house was neat and tidy. Rosalie was very tired but they were no sooner in the great bed than the real racket of the day began. The local boys had decided to give Hercule and Rosalie a proper Chivaree. They were stout

sturdy fellows who confounded noise with amusement. Around and around the house they marched, shouting rustic jests that were none too delicate. There was ding-dong of bells, tooting of horns, clatter of sticks upon dish-pans, clacking of wooden rattles, and the intermittent bangbang of shot guns. Rosalie was much alarmed and wished she were back in her narrow bed at home. The house shook with the continued racket, the cups and saucers rattled in the cupboards. Dogs that love crowds and excitement above all things, gathered, from all over the parish and added their howling and barking to the general uproar. Presently someone fired a rifle shot that knocked some bricks out of Hercule's chimney and down they clattered on the roof, just above the noses of the newly married pair. That damage to his property made Hercule very angry. He sprang out of bed, and naked, rushed down stairs and out of doors. But the local bucks were all afraid of Hercule's great strength, and when they saw the gleam of his naked body, they hooted derisively and ran away and hid in the forest. When Hercule went indoors again, slamming the door, the local boys returned and again began the Chivaree of horns, rattles, dogs, drums and shot guns. Hercule decided to ignore them, and give all his attention to making love to Rosalie. Rosalie was sore, tired, and afraid, but she was submissive, as the older women had taught her. She did not sleep at all that night even when Hercule rose soon after dawn to go out to his boat. She lay alone, wide-eyed; so this was romance; so this was being married; she was sorry she had not become a nun.

For something strange had happened to Rosalie's mind during the two years in which she taught the village school. In the school was a little library, for the most part children's stories. One day someone sent as a contribution to this infant library a small bundle of books, and Rosalie opened this package without consulting either priest or inspector of village schools. She peeped into some of these books, her interest was awakened and she felt an intense desire to read them and learn something of the great world. She hid the package of books in her desk drawer and formed the habit of staying an hour after school to read them. If she heard a step on the doorway

she would drop the book quickly into the desk drawer end go on working at her school register.

First she selected an odd book, full of quaint drawings, a book called "Don Quixote" written by a Spanish man named Cervantes. It was the story of a romantic old fellow, who had read so many high sounding books of chivalry, that he imagined himself a knight of the olden times, and leaving comfort and home behind, set out on his raw-boned nag, accompanied by a greedy peasant as squire, to overcome all the selfish evil in the world, to follow fleeting Romance, and to beat down all injustice. In accordance with the rules of chivalry, he had to have a lady-love for whose dear sake he endured all hardships, and in lieu of somone better he selected as his mistress a village girl whom he had hardly seen, and renamed her with a fair high-sounding name. He had no thought of trying to love her in the ordinary way, he only wanted to do great deeds for her sake and increase the glory of her name. The heated imagination of Don Quixote transmuted his pony nag into a prancing charger, his dull herds-boy into a splendid squire, his homemade lance and rusty shield into pieces of shining steel, windmills into wicked giants, and his slovenly village girl into a romantic and enchanted maiden of great beauty and plenteous possessions. Into this book were woven many romantic stories of gentle shepherds, who had endured the joys and sorrows of love.

Rosalie was so entranced with this book that she read it through three times in the two years in which she taught the village school. Often her interest was so keen that she got up early, came to the schoolhouse an hour before school opened, and while a boy was lighting the fire and sweeping up, Rosalie hidden behind her desk read eagerly until the children arrived. This book lighted something in her heart. There was a strange world, throbbing and stirring and pulsing, beyond the confines of her village.

Then from the hidden bundle she took another book that she read with great delight, Shakespeare's "Tempest" that told the story of the swift wooing of Ferdinand and Miranda on a magic island. How direct and certain was Miranda, how noble in her guileless choice

though she had seen but two men before; one her father, and one the misshapen Callban, who had tried to attack her, and into whose mouth, for some strange reason, the poet had put such lovely nature lines. Rosalie was quite intoxicated with the beauty of words when she read aloud, "The cloud-capp'd towers the gorgeous palaces," and felt a tug at her heart so intense that it was almost pain. Had some of her remote ancestors, she wondered, lived in this world of chivalry and romance? How wonderful it would be, to be wooed by a prince on an island of magic!

The third book which she read with wonder, was called "Typee," and she was attracted to it by its queer title. It was all about the life of savages in the South Seas who knew little of white men and their ways, and was written by a sailor-man named Herman Melville, who had deserted from a New England whaler and lived among the savages. These savages lived without labour, laughed easily, stuck flowers in their hair, bathed in the clear mountain streams, plucked their food from the trees of the forest, and slept peacefully through long hot afternoons. They were happy and clean and loved beautiful things. They knew nothing of books, nothing of the industrial world, nor of science, nor factories. Here was a race free from labour. Rosalie wondered at this, for her life had been spent among, people who were in the boats before dawn. Had these Islanders of the South Seas been free from fears of taboos and witch doctors, their way of living might have approached perfection. As she read, Rosalie became aware of other ways of life beside her own.

Then she went on to another book called "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," a sad, tragic bock by Thomas Hardy, about a poor but lovely girl named Tess who was overcome by fate and the cruel selfishness of the world about her. A strange world in which Tess lived. Rosalie could hardly understand it, but she resolved that she would never be swayed, never be mutely pushed about by men and events as Tess had been.

Last of all, she read a book in French, for Rosalie could read French more easily than English, by a great Frenchman. "Les Miserables" was its name and it was the story of a great-hearted

criminal pushed about by circumstance, and a great priest, truly a saint of God, and his influence upon poor and wretched people. Here was a story of struggle, of beauty and ugliness, of good and evil. This book made a great impression upon Rosalie.

It is beyond doubt true, that if you wish to keep people as they are, you must not permit them to read great books, and all of these books were presented to Rosalie's mind and heart at the most impressionable period of her life.

Three

As Rosalie stood on the threshold, basket in hand, watching Hercule slab off the beech-wood, pieces, something said, “now,” to her, as if she were a runner starting a race. She walked straight towards the pile of hewn chips, keeping the woodpile between her and Hercule. In her basket she had “Don Quixote”, “The Tempest”, “Typee” and “Les Miserables” and “Tess” all borrowed, sine die, from the school library but to be one day faithfully returned, two fat packages of sandwiches, soap and a comb and towel, mathes, needle and thread, a pair of pyjamas, her school certificate, and a purse with fifty-three dollars in it that was all her own. She reached the hewn log and could hear the sharp whacks of Hercule’s axe as he slabbed off the beech log. She sat down on the hewn sill and quickly pulling off shoes and stockings flung them in the basket. Then barefooted, and swift as a deer, she ran up the pasture road till she melted into the screen of alder bushes. She ran a long way on the brown grass of the hillside till she was quite out of breath. Crouching behind a little spruce, she rested and then ran on eagerly, and her feet seemed to beat out a rhythm, “I leave all behind, I want to be myself, I cannot be owned by anyone, I want to be Rosalie.” Then she came to the brook, she lifted her skirt and stepped boldly in. The September hill water was cold and the sand oozed up between her toes. For three hundred yards she waded, then grasping a low hanging bow she swung herself far out on the bank. Had Rosalie known there was to be a shower that night she need not have taken such a precaution. Then after a little distance, she dried her feet on the crisp autumn grass and put on again her shoes and stockings. She took a path that she knew led to the nine-mile forest road that emerged on the highway, and avoided every soft place that might leave a footprint. When she came to the forest road that pioneers had built long ago, before the highway came, and over which ox-carts had plodded for a couple of centuries, she found the going easy for the road was

smooth and grass-grown. Twilight came early in the forest. Behind in the narrow slit of sky she saw a glint of red, and she knew that she was travelling east as she had intended. Eastward toward the sunrise, that was the unknown goal she had chosen.

She had always dreaded the sinister forest but she was not afraid of its furtive inhabitants. Being a country girl, she knew that none of them would harm her, rather they would slink away or stand frozen at the sound of her footsteps. Now darkness was coming on, and she must find some hidden place to spend the night. September nights are cold after midnight, and she would hardly dare to make an open fire. Somewhere beneath a dry thick spruce with branches piled above and below her, she must cower till the first daylight came.

But Rosalie had unexpected good luck. Just as she had decided to stop and camp in the open, she saw by the trail's side a deserted lumberman's camp. In she darted. There was a rusty stove with a rusty stovepipe sticking crazily through the roof, a rough board table and a couple of benches. Nobody, she could tell at a glance, had been there for years. There were plenty of dried chips on the floor and chunks of dried hardwood that would burn without sparking. Rosalie gathered some chips and chunks and made a fire in the stove, after a little she closed the draughts to make a slow steady fire. She drew the table across the doorway as a kind of barricade, and moving the two benches against the wall and near the stove, took off shoes and stockings and toasted her shapely feet. Then she got out a package of sandwiches and ate four, regretting that she had nothing to drink. She gave a pat to her beloved books. She was not in the least afraid but rather exhilarated in her new found freedom. She was warm and dry at any rate, and here in safety she could doze and wake to throw another chunk into the stove. For some little while she sat talking to herself as if she were two persons, and she was two persons, for all of us at times have two or even three distinct personalities.

"Where are you going, Rosalie?"

"I don't know, I haven't the faintest notion."

"Aren't you ashamed that you have run away from Hercule and your father and mother and brothers and sisters?"

"Mother will grieve over the mystery of my going, but the others will have no time for long regret"

"I'm sorry, but I'm not ashamed. Hercule will be sad and the priest and Le Bon Dieu angry, but Mary, the Pure One, will intercede with her Son for me.

Rosalie here reached down and drew the battered volume of "Don Quixote" into her lap.

"He ran away."

"But he was a man and you are only a village girl."

"I'm Rosalie, I want to be Rosalie."

"You stole those books from the schoolhouse, Rosalie."

"No, I only borrowed them. I'll return them someday. Nobody but me would bother to read them anyway, nobody but me knew they were there."

"But if you return them they'll know you're alive and where you are."

"Bother," said Rosalie, "so they will. I'll have to wait a long time and then send money and sign the letter, 'A Friend'."

"Where will you sleep tomorrow night, Rosalie?"

"Somewhere. I'll have to sleep, so I'll sleep wherever I am."

"In the cold woods?"

"I'll be on the highway tomorrow, and I have money in my purse. I think I'll sew some in my shirt."

"Poor Hercule! He'll sleep alone."

"Yes, alone. He'll miss his white heifer. That's what he thought I was, his white heifer. Something inside me said, 'Go now,' and I had to obey."

Then the beginning of mysterious night sounds brought a little sadness and loneliness to Rosalie's heart. In some nearby lake two loons began their call of departure, soft and melancholy, and quite different from their rain call or their spring song of arrival and mating. "Who Wha Who," they called, the "Wha" a halftone or almost a whole tone higher. This sad farewell, "Who Wha Who," broke

the silence of the forest. Yet it was hardly a silence, for as night fell completely all wild things began to move. The owl began his song, a harsh tune unlike anything poets have described. “Hoo hoo hoo hoo,” he shouted with a strong accent on the first “hoo” and a snarling sinister discord on the last. Then came a pattering of hurried tiny footsteps on the roof. Some squirrel or chipmunk was abroad.

These night sounds did not frighten Rosalie for she was country-bred and knew what each meant. The swift night-hawk, with its spot of white, hid shyly by day like the bat and hunted and flew by night. The woodcock was sailing southward on swift whistling wings. He, too, flew by night and would rest for a few days in the alder covers, driving his long bill into the marshy ground to draw strength for his long southern trek. The migration of the woodcock reminded her that she too was migrating, and that all the furtive wild animals in the wide world were forever moving in search of love, food or safety. Only she was fleeing food and safety, and unlike the wise woodcock flying south to warm comfort, she was migrating north and east to she knew not what. The loon with his sad departure song, “I must go, I must go,” touched something within her that made her heart beat in sympathy. The owl with his fierce arrogant call, heard chiefly in August and September, was harder to interpret. He, too, flew by night, clutching by day the topmost bough of some yellow birch, and he seemed to say to the world of men and beasts: “I am proud and wise and fierce and independent and arrogant, and I defy you all.” Certainly, the owl believed in private enterprise in the democracy of the forest.

Only that very morning Rosalie had seen a glorious sight that had perhaps brought to a head her resolve for departure; a great flight of geese winging south, a giant V, perhaps three hundred strong, with a space of a quarter of a mile between the open part of the V; a wavering V, for while she watched, some fell back and the leader who broke the air, gave place to another. High up over the grey sea, they had winged southward with a steady purpose. Great courage was theirs to dare the hurricane and seek a new home. Perhaps

they were cleaner and better than man and monkey. At any rate as Rosalie had watched the V fade into southern specks and at last vanish into the infinite grey distance, some inner voice kept saying; "You must go today, you must migrate like the wild geese, you must seek some home for your spirit, you must go today, you must go today."

She threw two big knotted chunks into the air-tight stove and pushing the benches further back, leaned against the wall. It was hot now in the camp and she soon drifted into sleep, waking only intermittently to tend the fire. Dawn began to glimmer at five-thirty, and with the first grey she was up and alert. The fire had burned down to powdery ash and the stove would soon cool and show no sign of use. She pulled the table back into its original position, upset the benches, and scattered the chips and straw on the floor so that there was no trace of her footprints. She looked around carefully to see that she had left nothing, then again set out swiftly eastward, munching two of her sandwiches as she went. At the first brook she stopped long enough to drink, wash her face and hands and run a comb through her short hair. The smooth morning water gave back Rosalie's face and Rosalie smiled in a friendly fashion. Only a brief pause, and she was off again, brisk on her feet as a hare with the yelp of hounds behind him. She knew she must move quickly for all the settlement would search far and wide for her that day.

By six-thirty she had reached the highway and turned to the left. The cement of the highway seemed hard after the grass-grown nine mile road. She had gone barely a hundred yards when an oil-truck pulled up beside her and halted. Rosalie's heart missed a beat, perhaps they had overtaken her and would carry her back. For one swift second she thought of turning and darting into the woods, but no, the driver was quite unknown to her, a grizzled man of forty with a kindly face. Her quick eye noted that the truck's number plate belonged to an adjoining province.

"Want a lift?"

"Please."

"You're travelling early."

"So are you," said Rosalie, and laughed.

"I have to if I'm goin' to make home tonight."

Rosalie wondered if he would ask her where she was going. It wouldn't do to say she didn't know, and she hated to make up a lie at the very beginning of her travels. All she truly knew was that she wanted to get as far away from home as quickly as possible. But he didn't ask her. He was a decent man by nature, and moreover, he was much interested in his own affairs.

"I had to bring this tank of oil down yesterday in a hurry, there's a shortage. I told my wife and kids I'd be home tonight. That's why I'm on this road early and that's why I'm travellin' fast. Do you mind goin' fast?"

"Not a bit," said Rosalie, "it looks as if we could knock anything off the road."

"She's half empty now, but when she's full, boy, doesn't she carry way. Yes, I got to get home tonight, I got a grand wife."

"That's good."

"She's Scotch, thrifty you know. She wouldn't exactly skin a louse for his hide and tallow, but she's near, pretty near. But she's not mean, she's generous over big things and she never refuses a beggar."

"How come you got a Scotch wife?"

"I'll tell you," said the driver. "It's rather interestin'. I bin a soldier. I guess every able-bodied man bin a soldier sometime or other these days. I was in the Forestry Corps and part of the time I worked lumber mills in Scotland."

"I'd like to see Scotland."

"It's wet, awful wet, wet all the time, mist and fog and rain fact is though, I met her through wetness."

Rosalie laughed, "That's a funny way to meet a girl."

"Ain't it! All through wetness. If I hadn't been soaked, I don't mean drunk, but really soaked in water, I'd never have met her."

Rosalie was rather curious to know how he'd met his wife through wetness, but she didn't ask, because she didn't want any questions

put to her. She only wanted to keep the conversation open and going. But there was no need to give any conversational push to the driver who was apparently burning to reveal his most intimate thoughts.

"It was this way," he said. "I was on leave in Edinburgh, and it was a Sunday night and I was wandering about the streets of the lower town. There was a heavy mist with a slant of drizzle in it, what they calls a fine night in Scotland, and I was alone and not knowin' what to do or where to go. Sunday is a dead day in Edinburgh on leave, and I was dead tired of sittin' in a mean little hotel lobby. I don't like drinkin' and though I like the company of nice women, I've no taste for street-girls, and I didn't want to come home with the pox."

"He's very outspoken," thought Rosalie.

"Just as I was at dead low, the sky opened, and down came the rain cats and dogs, in buckets. I see a little porch with a light shining above it across the road, but before I could make it, my great coat was soaked through and I could feel the wet on the shoulders of my tunic. I stood in the porch-way as the rain pelted down and slithered along the gutters. Then I heard them singin' within, and I see I was standin' in the doorway of a little church. Without thinkin', though I suppose somethin' directed me, I opened the door, went in and set myself down in a pew. They sit down to sing over there, and they sing a whole long psalm right through, maybe that's why they sit, leg-weary if they didn't. There was a girl in the pew, and she pushed over friendly like and offered half her psalm-book. I'm no singer myself, but my wife, she's good. The minister was a fierce lookin' old guy, with black whiskers turning grey and boy he was some long winded when he got on his feet and laid hold on both sides of the brown pulpit. He didn't have no notes nor nothin' written down, for he stared wild-eyed at the people all the time. Boy, he could lay down the law. He knew his stuff all right. He just turned on the tap and let her go. I didn't get the hang of the sermon rightly. It was something about predestination. He praised Mr. John Calvin up to the skies, and when he came to the Pope o' Rome, he gave him a proper blast, a regular out and out blitz.

"My clothes was steamin' as he preached, and I thought some of movin' on and goin' back to my hotel and dryin' out, but the girl encouraged me to stay and I liked the looks of her.

" 'He's past the half way mark now,' she whispered, behind her book, and later, 'He's drawin' to a close now.'

"Well, since she encouraged me, I stuck it out, and after another long, psalm, sittin' down, I started to go. 'Good night,' ses I, 'and thank you for half o' your hymn-book.'

" 'Come up to the house,' says she, 'and I'll brew you a cup of tea, and you can meet my folks and dry your clothes.'

"She looked a nice girl, none too young, twenty-six maybe, and I'd met her in church, so she couldn't be pickin' me up, so I says, 'Good,' and we went along together. The deluge had held up for the moment but there was a rank thick mist. 'It's turned out to be a braw night after all,' ses she. I didn't contradict her, but thinks I to myself, if she thinks this braw what would she call a warm evening where I live in a pleasant river valley?

"It wasn't far to her house, and she opened the door and showed me in. I took off my soaking great coat, hung it on the hall rack and stepped into the parlour as she told me. There sittin' eyeing me was the fierce man who had preached in the pulpit."

"Like a priest," said Rosalie. "Only priests never have wives and children." But the driver paid no attention to Rosalie's observation.

"So this was the minister's house, and the girl must be his daughter, she's too young to be his wife, thinks I. And I was right first time, she was his daughter, his only daughter and her mother dead. 'Father,' said the girl, 'this is a Canadian soldier who came dripping into the kirk and sat in my pew, and I've brought him home to dry his coat and make him a pot of tea.'

" 'Ay,' ses her father, 'and what might your name be?'

" 'Johnny Allen,' ses I, 'And I'm pleased to meet you, Sir.'

" 'Then' he ses, 'I judge from your manner of speakin' that you're from the Americas.'

" 'I am.' ses I. 'I'm a Canadian.'

" 'There are many Scotch there,' ses he.

" 'Yes', ses I, 'but our worst pest is rabbits.' The minute I'd said that I knew I'd made an awful bloomer, and I'd have liked to have bit my tongue off, for there he was a Scotchman himself. I was only trying to be bright and cheerful and funny. That's when you always get in trouble, when you try to be funny. I'd read that joke somewhere in the paper, an Australian talking to a Scotchman on a train, and it seemed pretty smart to me. He looked mad for a minute, and then he put back his head and gave a hoot of laughter. 'They're too smart for the English, Irish and French,' ses he, 'but they get on, they get on. Grand men were Mr. Carnegie and Alexander Graham Bell and Lord Strathcona. Ay, doubtless they must seem pests to them that are thriftless, lazy and incompetent. And you, yourself, have a lowland name, Allen.'

" 'I don't know where the Allens come from,' ses I. 'There's nigh as many Allens as MacDonalds in our valley.'

" 'Then' ses he, 'The MacDonalds are a noble and gifted people, I myself am not ashamed to say I'm a MacDonald.'

" 'Most of them is Catholics where I come from', ses I.

" 'Yes, yes too bad,' ses he. 'Noble men, but alas the Reformation never reached them in the Western Isles.'

" 'They don't look as if they'd missed anything', ses I, and just then Margaret, for that was the girl's name, came in with the tea and scones, and the old man and I set to. He was a hearty eater, and tired from preaching so long and hard. He swilled down about a pint of scalding tea, and then he turned on me again;

" 'Are you a member of the Kirk, Mr. Allen?'

" 'No', ses I, 'I'm a Methodist.' "

Rosalie had never seen a Methodist before, let alone spoken to one. Was it possible that kind simple men like this were going to frizzle in Hell forever. She supposed they must, it was too bad. She knit her brows; this big world was going to be a difficult thing to understand, but if difficult, at least interesting. She was wandering out now, like Don Quixote.

Johnny Allen, quite unconscious of what was going on in Rosalie's mind, went on eagerly with his narrative, that had been oft repeated.

"And then he ses to me, 'A follower of John Wesley: poor man, he meant well, though he did ill to break with an Established Church.' I can remember everythin' about that evenin', and everythin' the old man said though I didn't get the drift of all of his remarks, and they would take too long to tell. We each had five cups of tea and ate up all the biscuits, scones they call them. Margaret didn't eat or drink with us. The women are kept in the background in them parts, not like around here, where the women pounce on everythin'.

" 'I'm here on leave' I ses to him, when we got through lappin' up tea and got our bibs off. 'I'm stoppin' at MacDonald's hotel. I'm in the Forestry Corps, and I'm boss sawyer in a lumber mill beyond the hills.'

" 'Then you're a responsible man,' ses he. 'I am that,' ses I. I smoke but I don't drink, and I don't chase the street-girls.'

" 'I suppose now,' ses he, 'you waste six pence a week on tobacco.'

" 'I do and more,' ses I.

"Then ses he, 'Smokin's an evil and wasteful habit.'

"Margaret carried out the tea things and I could hear her washin' up in the kitchen. I wanted to help her for I'm handy about the house, but I didn't dare leave the minister.

" 'Married or single?' he asked me.

" 'Single', ses I.

" 'Anything saved?' was his next question.

" 'I'll say' ses I. 'I got a truck back home that set me back two thousand iron men.'

" 'Well, well,' ses he, 'You'll have to be careful, laddie!'

" 'How come?' ses I.

"Then he gives me a piece of advice and ses, 'The curse of this Island, countin' in England, is that there are two million more women than men, and even now the men are gettin' killed off like flies. All the lassies can't marry, even the' braw ones, for there aren't enough men to go around. There's terrible competition nowadays. All the women are on the lookout for a man, and they'd wed any poor body. You'd better look out, laddie.'

" 'I'm only twenty-four and I ain't had time to court yet,' ses I.

" 'Court,' ses he, with snort of laughter. 'Court! The men are still under the impression that they do the courtin', but some wise men have quite rightly pointed out that the men have naught to do with the game till they're netted and gaffed.'

" 'But the men have to ask them,' ses I.

" 'True, laddie,' ses he, 'but it's all settled long before the askin'. If you're a decent respectable man with somethin' saved, you'll have to be watchful and wary as a stag hunted by dogs on the Highlands!'

"I took that all in and I saw the old man was warning me off the premises, so after a little I ses good-night, and out I goes in the drizzle back to MacDonald's frousy hotel.

"Well, to make a long story short, I knowed inside, from the minute that girl pushed over and shared her hymn-book with me, that I was goin' to marry her, and marry her I did, though not for sometime till the war was over and she could come out to Canada. Now, you'd never believe the difficulties and the obstacles that old preacher put in my way, and the troubles she had in getting' on boats and off boats, and the conditions the old man made for her safety among the savages. It's too long to tell now 'cause I got to stop and fill up with gas and oil, but later I'll tell you all about it."

Rosalie was quite astonished at this new type of man, and she seemed to look through him as if he were a sheet of glass. He was not in the least interested in her or whence she came or whither she was going. Rosalie was glad and yet perhaps a little piqued, after all she was nineteen and very pretty. He only seemed to want to pour out this intimate story about himself and his affairs. She had been used to people who were very secretive especially about business or family matters. He seemed to have no brakes at all on his thinking. He just opened the tap of his mind and let go. Rather nice, thought Rosalie, if everyone could speak truly and openly, without guile or deceit or hope of secret gain, and perhaps a gentleman is one whose words correspond truly to his inward thought. It was the beginning of Rosalie's education in the world.

Here the driver pulled his truck up at a roadside gas station.

"Fill her up with gas and oil and look at the water," he said to the

grimy attendant. He pulled out his expense book and laid it on his knee ready to mark down the bill.

"I'm a good business man," said he. "I'm drivin' for the oil company now and this is their truck, but I keep exact accounts and never knock down. Margaret would knock my head if I knocked down."

Rosalie did not know what "knock down" meant but she was not going to ask. Instead she produced a packet of sandwiches from her basket, and offered one to the driver. It seemed an opportune moment when he had a free hand.

"Just what I needed," said he taking one and bisecting it with a huge bite. "Tasty, ain't they."

"Of course they are," laughed. Rosalie. "I made them myself!"

"Cook?" asked, the driver.

"I can cook, read and write, scrub, sew and wash, and teach school," said Rosalie.

"Well, well," muttered the driver, his mouth crammed with sandwich, but making no comment on her list of accomplishments.

"Bring, two cokes will you, George." He clipped off neatly the two tin covers on some part of the dashboard and thrust one bottle into Rosalie's hand. With his free hand he fumbled in his hip pocket and produced a stout battered bill-folder. From this, after careful scrutiny, he produced some snapshots which he gave to Rosalie.

"My boys," he said. "Four, nice ain't they?"

"Yes," said Rosalie, after a swallow of coke, "Yes, very nice."

Rosalie did not know that it was a common practice for men to exhibit the-photographs of their children and relations after an hour's acquaintance. Now, that there was no danger of being quizzed, she felt a burning desire to tell something about herself.

"Now guess their names," said the driver. "Two more cokes, George and I guess I'll have another of them sandwiches."

"That'll leave only three for our dinner," said Rosalie.

"I don't make my dinner off no three sandwiches," said the driver. "Boy, when the sun gets straight up overhead, I'm goin' to pull in to an eatin' house and put some real food under my belt, and you, too, Miss. You can't carry on on sandwiches, you're going to have a bowl

of hot chowder and beef, and apple pie to line your ribs. I'll stand you a dinner."

Rosalie laughed, "You're very generous but I've some money. It's enough to give me a free ride, you don't have to feed me."

"Suit yourself," said the driver. "I ain't tryin' to get around you. I ain't no woman chaser. You'll have to be careful, but then if you're too careful you won't learn much. I just like to think of everyone with a full belly at noon-time.

"Full, George? Water, oil, battery, gas, tires all checked? Look smart. All right, here's your loot and sign the expense chit. Here we go."

Rosalie straightened her basket and put it under the seat as they began again to romp along the open highway.

"Now," said the driver, "to come back to the sixty-four dollar question, what are the names of my boys?"

"I suppose one, perhaps the eldest, is named after you," ventured Rosalie.

"Partly right," said the driver. "They're named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, only in reverse order."

"After the Saints," said Rosalie. "Then they may turn out to be fine men. In books it is said that a good name has an effect upon the person."

This was a little too deep for the driver's mind, so ignoring this philosophical speculation, he carried straight on with his theme song.

"And they're just a year and a half apart, almost to a day. Johnny, he's eleven, and Luke's nine and a half, and Mark's eight, and Matthew—we call him Mat—six and a half. When we got four, we said, that's enough, that's all we can bring up good. So we stopped havin' children."

Rosalie wondered how they had managed to achieve this happy conclusion.

"They're smart, all doin' well in school. Me, I never got beyond the seventh grade."

"Every child, if he can, should go through the eleventh grade," said Rosalie, relapsing for the moment into the prim school teacher."

"But I haven't told you yet how I got Margaret out of Scotland. That's a long story, but very Interestin'. You know the Scotch are a very hard, suspicious race, and would you believe it, the last words the old man spoke to me were, 'Now don't debauch my daughter.' "

Rosalie got tired of the story of the adventure of Margaret after a while, for no woman can be interested too long in another woman's career. She began to look about her, at forest or cleared land on her left and at the restless sea that forever made the beach rocks clatter, and at the people in the villages through which they passed. Now she only listened to the driver with half her mind, there was no need for a conversational fillip, a word, a nod, a smile, and he went on and on without a prompter.

"You see, as I was tellin' you, the Scotch are a very close and very suspicious race. They seem, to think that after you subtract the very superior Scotch settlers, Canada, is filled up with savages, descendants of criminals, English crooks and remittance men. But of all the canny Scotch, Margaret's old man seemed the most suspicious of the lot. He never got it out of his head, at least so he pretended, that I was trying to debauch his daughter. So after I'd been out a year and a lot of letters had passed to and fro, he agreed to let Margaret come out under the conditions that I was to go aboard her steamer when she docked, and we were to be married by the Captain before Margaret could set foot on shore. Well, at last the steamer got in and I was on the wharf, and after a lot of argument, I managed to get aboard ..."

Here Rosalie let her mind drift off again from the adventures of Margaret MacDonald and did a little reflection on her own part. She began to compare the villages they passed through with the straggling settlement she had called home. Her own home village, not Hercule's, on a long barren peninsula, had been treeless and windswept, the ground sprinkled everywhere with big granite boulders.

To plough a piece of land with oxen was well nigh impossible,

little gardens could only be made between the rocks with pick and shovel, only a few potatoes planted. Higher up along the coast near Hercule's home had been a few patches of ragged pasture lands that had supported some scrawny cows, but nearly all the milk, when they had milk, was hauled by truck. Rosalie had often wondered what kind of country this milk came from. She knew the phrase, "a land flowing with milk and honey." All the wealth of her people, and small wealth it was, was in fish and lobsters and kelp and Irish moss scraped from the rocks at low water. The families were big, desperately poor, and the houses grey and unpainted. There had been no flower gardens or flowering shrubs for the cold sea wind was a destroying blight. The houses had been set down at any angle in the midst of a whelter of buoys, dories, nets, lobster pots, bits of rope, and canvas, and over all had been a forbidding odour of fish entrails, lobster shells, and tubs of fish gurry.

As the truck at forty-five miles an hour stretched out the distance from the barren land she had known, she began to see a new type of fishing village, where white cottages were trim and neat, doors, windows and finish-boards edged with strips of shining black. Lobster pots and bright-coloured buoys were piled neatly, and the fish-houses, set on stout pilings, were not so ramshackle and higgety-piggety. Churches and schools were well painted and the children upon the street were neat and clean. The land, she noticed, was divided in narrow strips and she learned later that the early settlers had divided their holdings length-wise among their boys and that these again had subdivided until many farms were barely fifty yards wide. Still, it was a very good method, for each farmer had a wood-lot, hay and pasture fields, a garden plot, and a narrow sea front, where he could keep his fishing-boat and gather kelp and rock-weed to enrich his land.

Rosalie liked cleanness, order, and gay colours, and here it seemed to her that the people had achieved more order, and a better way of living than anything she had known. Once when the driver stopped his truck to inquire a direction, she noticed that the man spoke with a lilt and intonation that was new to her ear. He shortened his 'a's'

and softened his 'r's' and Rosalie listened intently to all he said, not for the content but because of the pleasantness of his speech.

As they quickened their pace again, the driver droned on with his unending tale.

"But the Captain said, 'I can't marry you in port, I can only marry on the High Seas. I'm not a parson, I'm a sailor-man that marries in emergencies on the High Seas.'

" 'But this is an emergency', ses I. 'Her old man says she can't land unless she's married to me'

" 'Didn't I tell you, you lunk-head,' ses he, 'that I can only marry on the High Seas. Get a minister aboard if you want to marry the girl. No wonder her old man wanted to protect her from a fellow like you.'

" 'High seas or low seas,' ses I, 'why can't you get a tug to pull your boat away from the wharf, then you'd be out in the stream, and practically on the high seas, and you could do your job. With that he got as red in the face as a boiled lobster, and very mad. I guess it was because I called his ship a boat. They don't like that, she was quite a big liner all painted white. He whistled down a tube and gave some orders, and in come a sizeable chunk of a man with a pug-ugly behind him. 'Get this man off the ship' ses he, 'and don't let him come aboard again unless he's got with him a man in black clothes with his collar on backward. That'll be a minister of some brand to marry this loony to the Scotch girl we've got aboard.'

"Then the real trouble began. Off I goes ashore to get a minister. But on the way the Customs people held, me up, to find, out why this girl didn't get off the boat and have her trunks examined. They begun to think she was a stowaway. Well, I shook them off at last and walked around tryin' to persuade a Presbyterian minister—not Free Church, mind you, but Kirk—to go aboard and marry us. That was one of the old man's stipulations, to make everything as difficult as possible, that she must be married by a minister of the Kirk. But when I got hold of a minister, he said, 'Bring her ashore and we'll marry you decently in the Kirk, a boat is no place for a holy weddin'." When I started the thing, I had no idea it was so hard to marry a

Presbyterian minister's daughter. Margaret now refused to leave the boat because she'd promised her father on a solemn oath that she wouldn't leave the boat until she was married. So she had to cable home to the old man for further orders. After waitin' a couple of days, when I'd just about decided the ship would carry her back, came a long complicated cable from the old man, saying she might go ashore if she could find lodging in a minister's house, against the time I was ready to marry her. Well, at last I got lodgings for her in a parson's house up-country, and carried on an argument with the Customs about how much money she had to have on her to land. I want to tell you, Miss, it's some job getting married to a Scotchman's daughter ..."

But Rosalie was not listening. Now they were entering a new type of country, the like of which she had never seen before. They had left the sea and come into the great flat land of a broad valley bounded north and south by wooded hills, that were almost mountains. Here sandy soil lay in ridges and bars, that some ancient sea had washed long ago, though Rosalie did not know this. There was no longer stunted wind-blown spruce, but lofty oaks with coppery frost-touched leaves, and spreading white pine and lofty melancholy hemlock. The hills and intervening valley were flooded with late September sunshine, and in low places a few swamp maples had turned, scarlet. Through the level green fields where hundreds of red and white cattle were grazing on the aftermath, ran a reddish brown river in a thousand cranks and turns and banked in by low dykes. This, said Rosalie to herself, is the land flowing with milk and honey. On the green sandy plain were set at intervals, far-stretching quincunxes of apple trees, marching in regular formation like soldiers, like something a methodical child might have made in an arrangement of toys on Christmas morning. On some of the trees glistened red winter apples still unpicked. Here was indeed a brave new world, and Rosalie clapped her hands in gladness.

"You may well clap your hands," said the driver, "for in spite of all their opposition, I got her off the boat and lodged her in the house of the Reverend Mr. Mclvor. Then there was all the weddin'

to arrange and the invitin' of all my folks to the weddin' party. They didn't think much of all this fuss I'd had to make about a Scotch girl. Mr. Mclvor, the reverend holy Mclvor, was most as straight-laced as old Reverend MacDonald in Edinburgh. 'No smokin' or drinkin' or gamblin' or excessive laughter or stamping of feet in my house in the event of a weddin',' ses he. He didn't even allow his kids to play Nations. I don't see how he ever managed to bring them into the world. 'All them that indulges in such things as cards and dancin' shall burn in the pit o' Hell forever,' he'd say, and moreover..."

So the Protestants have a Hell, too, thought Rosalie. Too bad they hadn't reformed that away, while they were about it. Then her mind drifted off again to the new and inviting landscape. Now for a little while they ran quite close to the brown river, with its reddish mud banks shining and slippery looking at half-tide. It would be fun to be ten again and toboggan down such a bank on your bare bottom, and land splash-ho in the cold river tidal water. Rosalie had a dainty mind but suddenly a few lines from a schoolbook verse popped out of her memory file:

"She starts, she moves, she seems to feel

A thrill of life along her keel."

Then somehow the reddish-brown mud reminded her of the chocolate blanc-mange puddings her mother used to make for Sunday dinner. Had somebody, she tried to remember, named them Marsh-mud puddings. Anyway, they had the same colour and the same slippery appearance as the mud, and with that memory a little emotional river of homesickness flowed into her heart. Poor mother, she would be sad, she would be much sadder than if Rosalie lay in the churchyard. For a mystery stretches out the sadness over many years. People would come to the door and ask, "Have you heard anything of Rosalie?" Or they would tell how they had heard that a strange woman had been seen wandering the roads in some far distant part of the province, and tears would flood into mother's eyes. Father would not grieve so much for, as he lived on the sea, he would take things as they came. He had ten mouths to feed and had to work too hard to grieve. Every morning he was up by four and

away to the nets or trawls or lobster-pots. As for Hercule, she had never loved him and life with him was impossible. He had had his fill of her by day and night till she could stand no more. It had been a mistake to marry him and she was sorry about that, but he would find another girl of his own kind.

Yet what a strange girl she was, to go and leave no trace behind. Was it God's voice, or the Devil's voice, or merely the remembered honk of the migrating geese, that had said, "Go, Rosalie, go?" Certainly she had not reasoned out the hidden causes of her departure, nor why she felt it to be absolute, as one solves a problem in algebra.

All her bones and blood and nerves and inner being had all through that last day urged her on. "Go, Rosalie, go," the inner voice kept repeating. Now, here she was, dashing along the highway, already far from home—they would never catch her now—with a friendly truck driver who wanted to tell her the story of his life.

In this sunny valley Rosalie noticed that the houses were spacious and had wide shady verandahs over which vines trailed and clung. Even though it was not yet noon, women were sitting on these verandahs, chatting with a neighbour or knitting, sewing or even reading. They have plenty of time on their hands, thought Rosalie. Once they passed close to a group of grown girls and boys, playing a game with racquets and balls that she knew must be tennis. Cattle were everywhere on upland pasture or level dykeland, and in the farmyards were hens, ducks and turkeys. A spacious, happy, leisurely land, it seemed. The barns were big and the churches small, and to Rosalie's amazement they had no crosses capping their spires.

"What kind of churches are these?" asked Rosalie. The driver halted in his serial narrative with the aggrieved look of a dog from whom a bone had been taken. Then he said, "I've heard they're nearly all hard-shell Baptists in these parts, though there may be a scatterin' of United Church among them. The United Church is when the Methodists and Presbyterians joined up, but some o' the stiff-necked ones, like the holy Mclvor, stayed out. We goes to the

United when I ain't too tired and sleepy in the mornin', but Margaret has never dared tell her old man that."

"Then these are not real churches," said Rosalie, "only meeting houses."

"They're real enough," said the driver. "They can damn you to Hell as good as anybody. You got to drop somethin' in the hat or you're plum no account."

"Well, as I was explainin', when we got outside the church the kids peppered us with confetti, and there was the car all tied up with ribbons and tin cans and all kinds of junk, and one tire was right down flat. Well, Tom and me we changed the tire and Margaret sets herself in the front seat, and at last…"

In this lovely valley there was something that interested Rosalie especially, something she had never seen before, tall swaying graceful trees that seemed to touch the sky. They stood in long avenues along the highway, with the lower branches drooping down along their trunks, like the dress of a modest woman. Their lateral upper branches were so long that they stretched out to meet the branches of their fellows with graceful friendly gestures and made the highway into an avenue of mottled shade.

"What are these trees along the side?" asked Rosalie.

"Them, them's elms."

"And what fruit do they bear?"

The driver gave a gruff laugh. "They don't bear no fruit, and their wood's no good for lumber nor for firewood neither, they're just good for shade and looks. They're like women that won't work."

"Now, all the time," continued the driver, "we'd out-smarted them, for the car outside the Kirk wasn't my car at all but Tom's car. Mine was up around the bend. So after we got the tire shifted—that puncture was goin' too far, that was a bit of dirt, but we found out who done it—we shifted Margaret into my clean car, and drove off. We…"

What beautiful trees in this sunny valley, thought Rosalie. People here plant trees that have no use and that bring in no money, their

only value is their looks. This was a new idea for Rosalie and her happiness grew as she looked at the towering elms.

Presently they came to a wayside lunch counter, and the driver pulled in his truck to the side.

"Here's where we eat. I'll tell you the rest of it when we get goin'."

Rosalie had no idea where he had left off for she had been pondering on the stately elms that had no use save looks. Perhaps beauty in itself was sufficient, she reflected.

The proprietor of the roadside restaurant was a good advertisement for his wares since he was enormously fat. He weighed at least three hundred pounds, there were great knobs of fat on his cheeks, and he was the possessor of triple chins. On his head was a tall grimy chef's cap, and his white jacket may have been white at the beginning of the season. Nothing of him was visible from the waist down. He had a broad and amiable grin. His wife, intermittently visible through the half-open kitchen door, was short, meagre, and neatly dressed, with her hair screwed up in a tight knot. She was very thin and sad-looking, and perhaps for these reasons relegated to the kitchen. She listened through the door crack, however, and caught most of the highway news. Her husband was most affable with customers, but very cross to her. Indeed he was the joy of the street, the terror of the home. Rosalie, of course, did not take all this in in one gasp, but her mind registered impressions that were confirmed later by her voluble driver, who had often been over the road before. As she waited she wondered why huge fat men married little skinny women, fat women lean men, and tall mated with short.

"Now, what'll you be havin'?" said the obese proprietor, his elbows bulging on the counter and the palms of his hands supporting the triple chin. The hope of a big order and the thought of food wrought his face into a broad and amiable grin. "I got some fine buckwheat pancakes, with maple syrup, and some well browned Brookfield sausages to lay around the edge of the plate. What would you say to that now?"

"Good by me," said the driver. "How would you like that, Miss?"

"Good," said Rosalie. "I'm right hungry for I had an early breakfast."

“And coffee for two,” said the driver, “and have you got any good apple pie?”

“The very best,” replied he of the grin and triple chin. “Pie made this very morning from Gravenstein apples. They’re the best flavour this time of year.”

“Plenty sugar,” said the driver.

“Ay,” said the proprietor, “a man can’t last long without sweet, it keeps up his strength.”

Poor tired scrawny woman in the kitchen, thought Rosalie, as the proprietor bawled the order through the half open door in a voice that had something of the owl’s snarl. What a dreadful man to have to go to bed with, for he’s only a mass of blubber and he smells like bacon that’s been kept too long in the summer.

But the meagre woman made good buckwheat pancakes, and Rosalie enjoyed them floating in golden brown maple syrup, and the crisp browned sausages crunched pleasantly between her white even teeth. The driver had turned off his talk tap, for one can’t at the same time pour in and pour out of a vessel that has a single spout. Rosalie noticed that he did not chew his food very much, but washed down mouthfuls of sausage and pancakes with great gulps of coffee. That wasn’t in accordance with what the school text book in Hygiene had said. It’s strange, thought Rosalie, that men in the world do not follow what wise men have written in books.

But the driver did pause long enough to say:

“And ice cream on top of the apple pie, Alphonse.”

“Alphonse, Alphonse,” chuckled the fat one, his triple chin trembling. “We kin cook good but we ain’t got no fancy French names. My name’s Frank, as you know, and my wife’s name is Violet. Alphonse! that’s a good one. You know right well our names is Frank and Violet. He’s a great joker, Miss.”

Here the fat one cast upon Rosalie a rather lustful and cunning leer and winked at her with an eye so bounded by fat that the wink was hardly perceptible.

Rosalie did not think it necessary to make any response to the quip, about the “great joker”, and presently she had enough, her

stomach felt quite full. She paid for her own food though the driver offered to pay, but did not insist or make any fuss about it. There was something essentially right about the driver. The fat one goggled, "I always pays for my girls."

"But she ain't my girl, and I'm not takin' her out, I'm only givin' her a lift," explained the driver. Rosalie was pleased with that explanation, and she pushed back and rested comfortably in her chair satisfied and quite happy. No remorse or sorrow seemed to surge up in her, she was over two hundred miles from home and free. It was quite wonderful to be free. Perhaps, she thought, I am now feeling as the robins feel when they gather and swirl in flocks, nervous and undecided for a little before they begin to wing southward. Just now they are flying as I am flying. True she hadn't as yet met any saintly bishops, or happy savages, or seen windmills or giants—unless this fat lunch-counter man could be called a giant—or come to a magic island, though one could hardly expect to find an island on a cement highway. She wondered how Don Quixote or Miranda would have acted at this lunch counter. Would they too have sat back well satisfied with full stomachs? Don Quixote and Miranda both seemed to have something about them that she hadn't got, something that created a new atmosphere wherever they went. Perhaps it was native dignity they had. But then Don Quixote was a gentleman and Miranda, was a king's daughter. Well, though she had come out of poverty she had good blood, far back, behind her. Still, she reflected, rather sadly, certainly the fat lunch-counter man would never have winked at Miranda.

The driver broke her reverie. "Let's get goin'," he said, and in another moment they were in the truck and rolling along the pavement. The driver had apparently concluded for the time the story of his wooing and of his family, though Rosalie who had thought her own thoughts, was rather uncertain about the concluding chapters.

However, he had a store of reserve talk and a variety of conversational items. He had to talk as he drove, and Rosalie was to him a God-sent audience.

"Now what do you think I'm crazy about, a fellow like me? What do you think rides my mind all the time, day and night?"

"I couldn't imagine," said Rosalie.

"I'll give you three guesses," said the driver.

"Food," said Rosalie.

"No, not food. I like food fine but I kin do without it. I kin go on short rations."

"Surely not liquor and gambling."

"I never touches a drop," said the driver, "and cards gives me a pain in the neck. Margaret wouldn't stand for no liquor and she's the master-mind in our family, and besides, I had a good lesson in liquor in watchin' my old man. He was an awful boozer, a real drunk, and he brought mother and all us kids to poverty. No, I never touch liquor, not even beer. One more guess."

"Women," said Rosalie, who with all her native delicacy was by way of being a realist.

"No," laughed the driver, "it ain't women. I got one good woman and that's enough for me. I never did chase skirts even when I was a young fellow, guess I had to work too hard. Now I'll give you an extra guess."

"Trucks and cars," said Rosalie.

"No fear," rejoined the driver. "I got a truck and what would I want to be crazy about that for. I had three trucks already. You're never crazy about what you've got."

"I give up," said Rosalie, "it's hard to know what people want. They all seem to want different things, and they never quite catch what they're chasing."

"Then I'll have to tell you," said the driver. "Look hard at me now." Rosalie looked.

"Horses," said he.

"Horses," laughed Rosalie. "Why they're quite out of date. There's nothing now but cars and trucks and an odd team of oxen. They're too slow for now."

"But I don't dream about slow horses," said the driver. "I dream about fast horses, trotters, pacers, gallopers, horses with shinin'

skins and wild rollin' eyes. I was out in Hot Springs, Arkansas, when I was a young fellow and there they used to hold races in an oval place surrounded with pine trees, and full of sunshine. There the horses would be led out on the track, and the crowd in the grand stand would cheer and the band would begin to play. Then the women, with a baby in one hand and a two dollar bill wavin' in the other, would push and elbow to get near the bettin' counter—wild-eyed they was too, most as much as the horses. That's where I got sold on horses and I used to wish I was light enough to be a jockey and wear a silk cap, and sit on a runnin' horse with my knees drawn up. I'm plumb crazy about horses. I like to see them move, and the muscles wrinkle up on their shoulders. I like to see them walk, and trot, and gallop. Someday when the family gets growed up, I'm going to have a trottin' horse of my own or bust. Old Reverend MacDonald will be dead by that time nd he can look down from Heaven if he likes.

"Now what do you think I am?"

"What?"

"I'm vice-president of the trotting-park association back home, and I go to every horse race when I'm not on the road. I got a free pass."

"I'd like to see running horses," said Rosalie, "especially wild, free running horses."

"There ain't many wild horses now," said the driver, "There ain't one in these parts."

"But the books say there's some still on the prairies. I'd like to see then running wild, snorting and tossing up head and mane, and blowing steam out of their nostrils."

"Yes, runnin', runnin' like the wind," said the driver eagerly, "with their legs twinkling, and lumps of muscle gleaming on hip and shoulder, and steam rising from them."

Rosalie listened now intently and almost forbore to look at the landscape. The driver was much more interesting and showed more enthusiasm on horses than he did on family relations. Here for her was a new type of man who had a passion for something apart from labour and love making,

"Even the farmers' races is fun," went on the driver. "The horses can't trot very fast, but the farmers brush them up, stuff them with oats, train them in the back pastures, and when they step out on the track they're as smart as paint. Every kind of sulky they got and every kind of driver, old men with whiskers and light boys that ain't shaved yet, and sometimes women. They always get a big hand from the crowd, men like a plucky woman. Talk about excitement, the Derby and the Grand National's got nothin' on the farmers' race. I'd like to see one of them big races again like I did when I was soldiering. I'd like to see England just once more. But I never will, I never will, I'm lashed to the wheel of life now."

"You never can tell, you might," said Rosalie. "I never thought I'd get this far."

"Where you goin' to?" asked the driver. "I never thought to ask you."

"I don't know," said Rosalie impetuously, and moved by a sudden confidence she felt in this man, "I don't know. I'm running away but please don't ever tell anyone. I'm just going to see the world and learn. I just had to go."

"You done something bad?" asked the driver.

"No," said Rosalie, "nothing bad except to run away. I think it would, have been wicked, if I'd stayed. Don't tell anyone you've given me this lift or they might follow me."

"No," said, the driver, "I won't tell and I won't ask no more questions but one. Got any money?"

"I've got over four dollars in my purse and forty-nine sewed in my slip."

"Not much," said the driver, "Still it'll carry you along till you can get work. I kin see that you're a nice young woman. I won't ask no more questions, and I won't tell no one you rode on my truck, though Frank and Violet at the hash-house will remember you. They thought you was my pick-up and they spread news up and down the road, but soon they'll be a hundred miles behind us."

"I've got a good start," said Rosalie. "I must be two hundred miles or more from home now."

"More," said the driver. "You've gone nigh three hundred with me and I don't know where you started from."

"Say I started from the moon."

"All right, you started from the moon. You're the Moon Girl and you were born in Moon-town. That all right by you?"

"All right by me," said Rosalie.

"That's settled then," said the driver, "I'll call you Miss Moon. All the girls nowadays is Miss Pasadena, or Miss Miami, or Miss America, or Miss Tatamagouche, so if anyone pins me down, the girl I give the lift to was Miss Moon."

"It's rather a soft loony name," laughed Rosalie. "You see 'luna' means the moon."

"What's that," said the driver.

"Luna, the moon, lunatic, lunacy, lunatic asylum," explained Rosalie. "It's all in the Superseded Speller."

"Oh, Ay," said the driver. "But now to get back to somethin' important, let's talk about horses. Trucks is dead things, you step on the gas and off she goes, always the same, but horses have got minds of their own, and they're just as keen to win a race as the driver."

"I'd like to talk about horses," said Rosalie, "only sometimes give me a chance to look around. You see this is a new road to me."

"That's fair enough," said the driver, "and you always ought to look back, too, when you're travellin' a new trail, so the Indians say. Then when you have to come back you know what the track looks like."

"I'll never travel back this trail," said Rosalie.

"I must tell you about the Farmers' race. Margaret ses I'm quite a talker when I get goin' on horses. You hold up your hand when you need a little recess, like the kids in school."

"I've been a school teacher," said Rosalie, perhaps to establish her respectability with this man, and then added primly as if she were hearing a reading lesson in the school room, "Proceed with the Farmers' race."

"Well, you know," said the driver, "one year the mare out of the milk cart won the big race and the big money. Nobody knowed the mare had any speed for the people had only seen her pokin'

around and standin' still while old Jed Crowder delivered his bottles, and startin' up slow again just before he reached the cart. But Jed knowed she was an Israel colt. He was a sly old bird, and he took her way back on the Savannah and trained her in the evenin's. And old Jed drove her himself on the day of the race, and what a sight that was, the old man with his feet up on the shafts, his knees bent up nigh to his chin, his hair flyin' loose in the wind—he'd lost his cap early in the game—and the mare's tail streamin' back in his face. That mare wanted to win just as much as Jed did because she liked old Jed, and win she did by a handy two lengths, corning up fast along the home stretch, with the crowd hollerin' and yellin', and the sun shinin' on them in a glory of sweat."

"I can see them," Said Rosalie. "The old man, did he have whiskers?"

"A bushel," said the driver.

"Pushing on the reins, and clucking, with his tongue out, 'Go on, Bess, you've got to win,' and the mare's tail switching in his face. Was her name Bess?"

"No," said the driver, "she wasn't called Bess. Jed called her Tamar, though nobody ever knew where he picked that name up."

"That was a good story," said Rosalie, "a real good story. By the way, your name's Johnny Allen, isn't it? At least you called yourself that to the Scotch minister."

"Yes, Johnny Allen."

"That was a good story about horses, Johnny Allen. Tell me another."

"I'll tell you a real funny story about a race," said Johnny Allen.

Rosalie did not fancy the beginning very much, because she knew that if anyone told you a story was funny at the very beginning, it was hard to laugh at the end. Moreover, although her confidence had steadily grown in Johnny Allen, she had no great faith in him as a humourist. He was essentially an honest, serious man. You had to be surprised to get a tickle on the laughing nerve.

"Go on," said Rosalie.

"The seventh race, that day that Jed won the big money with the

mare Tamar out of the milk cart, was a free for all and about twelve horses were entered in it. Say, you ever been on or near a farm?"

"A kind of farm."

"You know what hay-wire is?"

"Yes," said Rosalie, "it's wire that comes off bales of hay, and farmers and fishermen mend everything with it."

"That's right," said Johnny Allen, "and the lazier and shift-lesser they are, the more they use it to tie up chains and harness and Ford engines."

"I know," said Rosalie. "I understand about hay-wire, go on."

"Well," said Johnny, "they had a lot of trouble gettin' that seventh race started. I was one of the officials and wore a big red badge, for you see, I'm vice president of the racing association in our town. It ain't a big town, I'll admit, but just one jump from a village. What a time we had gettin' that race started. The horses was all green and nervy, and there was one long, lanky guy named Pinkus from the backwoods, that had entered a horse called Lightnin'. She was pretty slow Lightnin', she was, but even at that Pinkus always had her two or three lengths out in front before we could pull the starter's bell. About the tenth start when the crowd was gettin' impatient and it looked as if we were goin' to get them off, Pinkus claimed that his harness was broke. That tore it, and the crowd began to guy Pinkus. He led his horse Lightnin' right up in front of the grand stand, to see if he could borrow a strap or a buckle' from someone to mend his harness. He kept fussin' around, shiftin' one strap and then another, and all the time pattin' his horse and sayin', 'Whoa now,Lightnin', stand steady, Lightnin'," till some guy in the stands yells out: 'Get some hay-wire to repair Lightnin'." Well, you know that remark as applied to his horse fair drove Pinkus crazy. He had paid no attention when people yelled, 'Take that hicknag off the track,' or 'It's a moose he's trained to run in a sulky.' He took no account of these jokes. It was 'hay-wire' that got him, and the idea of repairin' Lightnin' with hay-wire set him off. He turned on the stand at the mention of hay-wire, and cursed them up hill and down dale, men, women and children and their parents and grandfathers

and grandmothers before them. He had a fine line of talk. I guess he must have spent a few years in the army or the foc'sle. Anyway, he seemed to know all the words they was, and whenever he paused to get his breath, someone piped up 'hay-wire', and that set him off again. Well, we tried to disqualify Pinkus on the ground of language, but the crowd yelled, 'No, no, let hay-wire Lightnin' run.' So Pinkus drove Lightnin' and came in fifth, so that wasn't so bad."

"Poor Pinkus," said Rosalie.

"Now isn't it funny," said Johnny, "that while I'm a driver and owner of trucks I'm nuts about horses. I see them gallopin' at night across the dark, and half awake, I can hear their hooves going click, clack on the cinder track and the quick catch of their breath."

"You've got it in your blood," said Rosalie, "just as I've got an itching foot."

"My old man before me was good with horses. I remember one of the things he ses to me was, 'Johnny, never give a horse more than fourteen swallows at a time on the road, and water him often to clear nose and mouth of dust.' You can lean over, you know, and count the swallows as the water goes down their throats. People brought sick horses to him for miles around and the old man could take one squint at them and tell what was the matter. You know a horse's got a lot of sense and brains, and a man that's good with horses has got to think like a horse. There was a half silly fellow in our town who used to hang around the livery stables and race track, and all the horses liked him and liked to have him rub them down. He got to look like a horse himself, so that some people called him 'Horse', but his real name was Joey Cramp. One day there was a horse lost in the woods, and nobody could find him, and the owner offered a twenty-dollar reward to the finder. People said as how he'd been et by a bear. But Joey Cramp, the silly fellow, found him, and brought him out of the woods and collected the twenty-dollar reward. I guess that was the most money Joey ever had at one time in his life. And when people ses to Joey, 'How did you find him, Joey?' Joey used to say: 'I just thought where I'd go if I was a horse an' I

went there, an' there he was an' right glad he was to see me. If you want to find a horse you got to think like a horse.' "

At the end of this story they had come to a corssroad and Johnny pulled up his truck. "I got to turn down to Muxos here—ain't that a hell of a name, Muxos—to deliver a couple of hundreds of gallons of gas. You don't want to get down no side roads, you better stick to the highway."

"That's right," said Rosalie.

"Where you goin' to stop tonight?" asked Johnny anxiously.

"I haven't let myself think about that," said Rosalie. "Last night I slept in an old lumber camp. I'll have to sleep somewhere, and that's where I'll sleep."

Johnny shook his head, "You're a game one, but you ought to know where you're goin' to sleep. You see you're only a slip of a girl after all."

Rosalie by this time had dismounted from the truck, and basket in hand was standing on the road's gravelly shoulder.

"You see," said Johnny switching off his engine, "you're a pretty girl and you got a figure and a friendly laugh. You're good company and men will be chasin' after you. Look out for truck drivers!"

"I will," said Rosalie.

"I hate to ask you," mumbled Johnny, "but don't you know where you're goin' to?"

"Not yet," said Rosalie. "Maybe I'll wander all over the world. I'm not a bad one, Johnny Allen, I'd like you to know that. I just had to leave where I was."

"I know, I kin tell," said Johnny, fumbling in his pocket, "but don't put off too long findin' the place you have to sleep in because you're goin' to sleep in it. I've half a mind, to take you home with me."

"No, no," said Rosealie, "that would never do, that's not my destiny, and what would Margaret think of you arriving home at midnight with a strange girl you picked up on the roadside."

"I expect she'd quiz you up to find out who you was, where you come from and where you was goin'," said Johnny, scratching his short grizzled hair.

"Don't worry about me, Johnny Allen, and thanks for driving me so far. Perhaps you were my guardian driver that God sent."

"I don't look much like an angel," said Johnny. "But say, miss, I don't much like that new name you give yourself. I don't like Miss Moon."

"I don't like it much myself," said Rosalie. "You've been so kind to me, I'll tell you a secret. My real name's Rosalie."

"That's right pretty," said Johnny," and say, why not change 'Moon' to 'Star'. Seems to me that would be better." Rosalie laughed and clapped her hands—it was an instinctive gesture with her when she was pleased—"And 'Stella' is the Latin word for star and I'll be Stella Star."

"That's it," said Johnny, "that's fine, though it sounds a little cold like an icicle, but its mighty clean and clear. It's after four now and the sun sets soon after five, so you better step on it and find a night's lodgin'. You travel light, you ain't got no luggage."

"This is it," said Rosalie, waving her basket.

"Well, good-bye, Stella Star. I've helped name kids but I never helped name no grown woman before. Good luck to you. It's not likely I'll be seein' you again. Say, since that race I was tellin' you about, I always carry a bit of hay-wire in my purse for luck. I'll give you a bit to bring you good fortune on the road."

Johnny pushed, over the switch and made his engine roar, waved his hand, and tossed out something crumpled, that fell at Rosalie s feet as he rumbled down the side road. She stooped and picked it up and it was a ten dollar bill clipped in a bit of hay-wire. Rosalie didn't want this money and for a moment she was a little angry at Johnny for having given it to her, with no opportunity to accept or return. But there was no sense in throwing it away, so she stuffed it and the wire into her purse and walked along. She would not accept another pick-up that day, she decided. She would be a farmer's girl going to a neighbor's house with a basket.

Well, she thought, he meant well when he gave me the money,with no hope of return. He was kind, and he wanted me to be safe, no more than that. She thought again of Don Quixote and wondered how he would have felt about her first day's adventure. I can't make

too much of it myself but I now know that a man can get married through wetness, that it's a difficult job getting married to a Scotch girl, that a man loves the sound of his own voice, and that if you talk too much about yourself you're a bore, but also that a bore can be very kind and generous. I've learned quite a lot about horses, I've met a fat man that I wouldn't trust far, and I've got a new name, Stella Star, Stella Star.

"Good evening, Miss Stella Star, this is Rosalie calling. Do you remember Rosalie, the little school teacher in the smelly fishing village? Well, I'm quite a grand person now, I've taken your name, and I'm now walking the roads with money in my purse. I haven't yet met any beautiful shepherd boys who make verses about their sweethearts and weep, but perhaps that will come in time. I'm quite lonesome without Johnny Allen. I hope his Scotch Margaret is as good as he thinks she is. I'll never see him again—in that she was mistaken—but he'll always be a pleasant memory."

She walked along swinging her basket, she was a little tired. Presently she came to a junction where two gravelled roads branched off the highway like the even boughs from a larger branch. Now, thought Rosalie, I have to choose, and I've learned from Johnny Allen's marriage story that a good deal depends on luck and chance. On any of these three roads I'll meet different people. If I go left I may be robbed, if I follow the highway I'll come to a town and work, if I go right I may find good fortune and a pleasant adventure. The highway is the easiest walking, but I'm tired of the highway. The road to the left is the next best, but it leads through the woods. I'll take the right road because it looks friendly and somehow inviting, and perhaps it will lead to the sea. If I hear the surf I'll be sad but not lonely, for the surf was my cradle song.

Sure enough the road to the right did lead, after about two miles of widely scattered houses, to a wall of beach rocks behind which the restless grey sea muttered and growled and rumbled. The sun was getting low behind her and evening was drawing in, but Rosalie felt no inclination to turn in at any of the scattered houses. She

walked along briskly, swinging her basket, and, quite inappropriately, humming to the rumble and rhythm of the sea:

Il'y a longtemp que je t'aime
Jamais je ne t'oublerai

When she was quite past the scattered settlement, she saw before her on the left a half-burned little church. The roof had partly fallen in revealing charred rafters, the windows were broken but the blackened half-burnt walls were standing, and the steeple grilled and twisted, still pointed heavenward like a ghostly finger. Rosalie halted at a distance and looked closely at this half-burnt church. It must have been struck by lightning, she thought. When she reached the church she halted again, to look up across a pasture field at a little yellow house, set far back from the road, with another pasture and wood lot behind it, and alongside a grey barn and woodshed. The little yellow house was pinched and ill-proportioned with its sharp pointed gable, but it had an inviting front porch beside which were trellises for climbing roses, now past their bloom. All along the front and apparently on a level with the floor of the second storey was a row of long narrow oblong windows that stretched from corner to corner. It was indeed a badly shaped house, but it was neat and well painted, certainly the house of an individual. Without any hesitation and without any particular thought, Rosalie unhooked the wide carriage gate at the side of the half-burnt church, and walked up the rough grassy roadway towards the little yellow house. There was a wire boundary fence on her left, and the lane followed close to the boundary.

Four

Humming to herself and swinging her basket, Rosalie marched up the lane, rutted here and there. Though the porch was inviting she did not go to the front door. As she turned the corner towards the back, she was met with a strong and unpleasant smell of skunk, and she saw before her a little brown woman, very old, with a multitude of tiny wrinkles in her face. She was neatly dressed in black and her fine kind eyes twinkled at the sight of Rosalie. She had a hoe in her hand, and on the ground before her lay a dead skunk, whose black and white were so extreme that it looked like the charcoal drawing of a skunk. Had a realistic artist been present he might have got a suggestion for a picture, "Women looking at dead skunk", or perhaps had he been a sentimentalist, he might have named the picture, "Youth, Age and Death."

"Did you do it?" asked Rosalie.

"I hit him behind the ear with the hoe. You gotta be kinda quick," answered the little old lady.

Rosalie laughed, and her laugh was as clear and musical as the ring of a silver bell. Rosalie never forgot that phrase, and often in after life used it in talking to laughing friends, "You gotta be kinda quick, as the little old lady said when she killed the skunk with a hoe." Once she used it when she and a timid girl crept into an air-raid shelter and the girl giggled and all her fear was suddenly gone.

"He's been botherin' me for weeks," explained the little old lady. "He'll kill the chickens and then add insult to injury by sneaking up here and sleeping under the back-door step, and what a strong stink he did make. But I stood still behind the door and watched for the bugger, and I hit him with the hoe behind the ear. You gotta be kinda quick."

Rosalie knew instinctively that this was not the old lady's natural way of speaking, but that she had assumed the role of back-woods woman because she was not quite sure what her auditor was like.

"We'll have to bury him," said Rosalie.

"Not yet, not tonight," said the old lady, and she took her hoe and dragged her skunk down to the edge of the wood pile. "Let him cool off tonight and he won't smell so bad in the morning. We'll bury him then."

"They're quite pretty when you see them close to, aren't they?"

"Yes, pretty enough, but smelly and awful sneak thieves. Now come in, my dear, the night will be nippy, and I've got a good fire and a full wood box, and supper's just ready."

"I'm hungry," said Rosalie, "although I did have a big dinner?

Rosalie followed the little old lady into the kitchen, sat down and set her basket under the table that was laid for two. The lamp was not yet lit, but the fire from the cook-stove gleamed through the open draft and glinted on polished pots and pans hung along the door-side wall. The floor was scrubbed white, the dishes were neatly laid on a red and white cloth, and a tall old clock ticked on a shelf where candles stood. A pole with a pulley hoist was raised above the stove and hung straight with clean dish cloths, the green wood box by the stove was piled high with dry split beech and maple, there was a pump and a gleaming white sink, doors that were closed led, as Rosalie found out later, into a cold pantry and front hall.

"Well," said Rosalie, stretching her feet out toward the fire, "this is cosy."

"Ain't it," said the little old lady.

"You've got a pump, you don't have to carry water."

"Yes, I've got a pump, and a covered in well, and a cesspool and a toilet in front. I made up my mind some years ago that I was through with sitting on cold outdoor seats. It gives you an awful sudden chill to sit down on a frosty seat, so I put in a toilet. There isn't another indoor toilet for twenty miles either way. I haven't got a bathtub yet, but there's always plenty of hot water—I've got a big copper boiler—and you can have all the baths you like in a wash-tub by the kitchen fire."

"The table's laid for two," said Rosalie.

"One place for you and one for me," said the little old lady. "I've been expectin' you. I saw you coming through a narrow woods lane miles and miles away from here. I even saw the basket in your hand. Then I lost you for awhile for you seemed to be whizzing along so fast. I've been expecting you, but I didn't think you'd arrive and catch me killing that skunk. What'll I call you?"

"At first I thought I would be Mary Moon, but then Johnny Allen helped me to decide on Stella Star. Of course those aren't my real names, My real name is Rosalie. You'll be careful not to tell the neighbors won't you? You see, I've run away."

"And quite rightly, too," said the little old lady. "Every woman should run away once in awhile. Mary Moon's no good, that's the name for a fat silly sentimental woman. Stella Star's better, though it's rather hard and brittle. I'm glad your name's Rosalie, I'll call you that, it just suits you."

"All right," said Rosalie, "I'll be glad if you call me Rosalie, but not when any of the neighbors are around."

"The neighbors never come here, only the travelling grocery, and meat and fish men, and men that get my hay and cut my wood and plant my garden. I've got a thoroughbred Jersey cow."

"I can milk a cow," said Rosalie, "though we never had one at home. I learned when I stayed inland for a summer month with my uncle."

"And tend chickens and pigs?"

"Sure," replied Rosalie, "and split fish in a pinch, and what I don't know I can soon learn."

"There's no fish to split here anymore. The folks along this shore are pretty well run out and lazy, and since Captain Ed's shop burnt down and he went out of business, they don't catch any fish to speak of, just a few hundred quintals. I don't know how they live."

"I don't like fish very much," said Rosalie.

"I'm right glad you can milk and tend hens and pigs," said the little old lady. "I was a little afraid you might be a town girl, full of hot air and lipstick. That's the reason I spoke a little rough at first. I had to get a good look at you to see what you were like inside, and the sun

was in my eyes. Now wash up at the sink, there's your clean towel out, and we'll have supper."

Rosalie did as she was bid and sat down at the table. For supper there was fried chicken and baked beans—yellow eyes—, and crisp golden Johnny cake, and apple-sauce and cake and strong tea that had been well steeped.

"You're a good cook," said Rosalie when she had eaten her fill. "I don't believe I ever had such a good meal in all my life."

"It's a little extra tonight because I expected you. I'm pretty rich you know and I can have pretty much what I want. That's the thing, for a woman to do, make the men pay for her comforts, and store some money away."

"I've got forty-nine dollars sewed in my shirt," said Rosalie, "and a little in my purse, and a man gave me ten dollars today."

"Did he kiss you much?"

"He didn't kiss me at all, he never even touched me."

"That's unusual," said the little old lady. "Perhaps he was sick. When I was young they all wanted to kiss me and tickle me. I was a pretty girl like you once."

"You're still pretty," said Rosalie. "You've got kind eyes, and your neat as a pin. I like handsome old people."

"Wrinkles and false teeth," said the little old lady. "Men don't bother me anymore. I've had three of them and they're all in the graveyard now, at least two are and one's at the bottom of the sea. They were all different and had to be handled differently, but every one of them left me some money. You see, I can speak well if I choose, sometimes I drop into country talk for fun."

"The man I rode on the truck with," began Rosalie.

"Ah," said the little old lady, "that's why you were whizzing along and I lost you."

"The man I rode with told me about his family and how he caught a Scotch wife and about racing horses. He was a very nice man. I didn't listen to all he said but I learned quite a lot."

"You were lucky," said the old lady. "Usually they pretend they're

single or that their wives don't understand them. You might have struck a tough guy."

"I'm not afraid of anybody," said Rosalie. "I'm strong, they can't do more than kill me and there's worse things than getting killed."

"Yes, said the old lady, "the death of the spirit is the worst. Have some spunk and learn, that's what gets a woman on. Are you anxious to learn?"

"I must learn, my heart is hungry to learn," said Rosalie.

"Good," said the old lady. "Can you play gin rummy and cribbage?"

"I can play Oklahoma, that's another kind of rummy, and once or twice I've played gin. I don't know cribbage." The little old lady clapped her hands, "Quick then, let's get the dishes washed and we'll play gin rummy and you can teach me Oklahoma. I'm so glad you're not a stupid girl, I've had such dull people visit me at odd times. We can play gin rummy for a nickle a game, and keep our winnings in a cup and in the long run we'll come, out even."

"Rosalie laughed again her silver laugh, "All right," said she.

"And we'll go to bed early, there's two bedrooms in front, and an air-tight stove in the hall between, full of chunks. I don't keep any parlour, I don't believe in parlours; they can lay me out in my bedroom. A cheery kitchen with a fire crackling, is the best country room. You can have a bedroom all to yourself, and with hot-water bottles each, we'll be as snug as two bugs in rugs. We'll get to bed early, we'll only play three games tonight for you must be tired after that long early trek through the woods."

"I can sleep tonight," said Rosalie.

"And say," said the little old lady anxiously, "I'm almost afraid to ask the question, but will you stay awhile?"

"Sure," said Rosalie, "and we'll bury the skunk in the morning." The table was soon cleared, the dishes washed and put away, and the stove stuffed full of wood. Before supper the old lady had lit a shaded Alladin lamp, that threw a warm spot of light on the checkered tablecloth. Rosalie and the old lady then sat down to play gin rummy. At first, Rosalie had rather forgotten about the game, but the old lady spread the first two hands out on the table, so that

both could see. Rosalie learned quickly, they began in earnest, the old lady played with enthusiasm, drawing from pack or kitty without a second of indecision. The room was warm and cosy, the chairs cushioned and comfortable, the fire cracked merrily. Gin rummy is not a difficult game but there are tricks in it, and the old lady was more expert and experienced than Rosalie. "I used to play every evening with my second husband, dead long since," explained the old lady, "and cribbage with Mat at sea." In fact by going out for ten or less and not waiting for a gin the old lady won three straight games from Rosalie, and blitzed her in the second. Rosalie paid over her fifteen cents and the old lady glowed with pleasure.

"You like to gamble?" asked Rosalie.

"I love it," said the old lady. "I used to bet on horses when I was with Mat in foreign ports. It's a good thing I never got to Monte Carlo.

Rosalie laughed, the old lady had a dry humour.

"And yet," she said, "I'm always sorry when other people lose and dissipate their goods. Perhaps you'll win tomorrow night."

"Perhaps," said Rosalie, "Perhaps I'll get better and better. Anyway fifteen cents is a cheap rate for supper, bed and breakfast."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said the old lady, "we'll put our winnings in two cups and buy each other Christmas presents." "Christmas?" said Rosalie.

"Certainly," said the old lady. "Didn't you know that you had come to spend Christmas?"

"It's only late September now, and I'll have to be on my way long before Christmas," said Rosalie with a twinge of alarm. "You wouldn't hold me a prisoner would you?"

"Oh my dear, you'll be as free air. You can take your basket and walk out any day. But I do hope you'll stay. I've waited for you so long and it will be such a treat to have someone smart in the house to play gin with in the evenings or sometimes Oklahoma or checkers."

"But you don't know anything about me," said Rosalie. "I might be a thief or a gold-digger or just a woman tramp."

"I know nothing about you, and yet in one good look everything about you," said the old lady.

"You don't ask questions," said Rosalie.

"I seldom ask questions," said the old lady. "Half the trouble in the world comes from asking questions. I learned that long ago. When the men come to cut my wood or get my hay, I only ask them, 'Can you make hay? Can you cut wood?' That's all I want to know. I don't want to hear that they have cross women, or that their eldest daughter is in the lunatic asylum, or that the baby has measles.

If Mrs-so-and-so wants to have a two-headed baby, that's her business, I've got my own things to think about. Half the trouble in the world comes from prying into other people's business and telling other people what to do. Let everyone mind his own business, and mind it properly."

Rosalie laughed, "I believe you're right, certainly people talked me into a bad position. Then you don't want to know anything about me?"

"Of course I do," said the old lady. "I'm curious, too, but I've learned to conquer curiosity. You'll tell me whatever you want to tell me when the time comes, without questions, when you learn to trust me. I do hope you'll stay for Christmas, Rosalie. I have such lovely plans for things for us to do. I haven't any axe to grind except to be happy. Do you like to read?"

"Oh yes," said Rosalie. "I like to read out loud."

"And I like to listen. We've got plenty of books in the attic.

My first husband, the sea captain, he was a great reader, and my third too, but most of his were holy books. I've got plenty of money, Roselie. I cashed in on every one of my husbands. I could pay you something for helping me with the work. I could pay you anyway, five dollars a week."

Rosalie laughed, "We'll see."

"I keep my real money in a trust company in the town, but I always have plenty of cash in the house."

"Aren't you afraid of being robbed?"

"See that," said the little old lady, pointing to a polished shotgun

that hung above the stove. “I can handle firearms, and you saw how quick I was to hit that skunk behind the ear. I can protect myself. I followed the sea for ten years with Mat, my first husband, the sea captain and once I stood in the companion-way with loaded pistols, hidden but all ready, while he went on deck and handled a mutinous crew.”

“And how do you manage for provisions?” asked the practical Rosalie.

“The travelling grocery man and the travelling fish and meat men get here once a week, when the snow isn’t too deep, and this time of year I stock up with staples. I never let them in the house, I do business on the doorstep.”

“You have your own butter and eggs,” said Rosalie.

“Yes, and half a barrel of salt beef and salt pork, a bucket of shad and a bucket of herring, hay in the loft, short feed in the bins, turnips, potatoes, vegetables and apples in the cellar, plenty of jellies, jams and preserves in the pantry, cake flour, and two barrels of ordinary bread flour,”

“You’re all set for a siege,” laughed Rosalie. “All you need to add to the shotgun is a little heavy artillery.”

The old lady laughed too, “Do stay with me Rosalie, you’re such good company and nobody has made me laugh for years back. Now you must be off to bed, for you’re getting dark rings under your pretty eyes.”

Rosalie was glad to go to bed. Her room was warm, and though it was only late September, the old lady had slipped a hot-water bottle between her sheets. That was a luxury Rosalie had never enjoyed. First she laid it in the curve of her back, where there was a tiny ache from the jouncing of the truck, then against her thighs and at last she kicked it down and rested both feet against it. What a pleasant glow! How much better than a man! She was glad indeed to be alone in a wide bed, with no one to fuss and fumble with her. What a day she had had and how much kindness she had found: no adventures, it was true, like Miranda’s or Don Quixote’s, but still adventures in a simple way.

Like most decent people, she had in her a strong strand of religion, that bound her to some power of goodness, and she felt that she must say a little prayer before she slept, and thank the loving God for all the good fortune she had found on her first day of wandering. So she began with that bit of literature more gracious and beautiful in its simplicity than any other,

Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name!
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven!
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those,
Who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the power and the Kingdom and the glory, Forever and ever, Amen.

She did not rattle off this prayer in any perfunctory fashion, but said it thoughtfully and slowly and sincerely, with the proper emphasis upon each word. "I'm only a poor weak little thing, dear God in your sight, only about as big as a mosquito or a flea, but perhaps Mary, your mother, will understand. I had to run away and perhaps my Saint told me to, please forgive me and guide me on my way." Then she dropped into dreamless sleep, the hot-water bottle glowing at her feet.

Five

Rosalie was more tired than she knew, and she did not wake until eight o'clock when the sun was quite high in the sky. As soon as she glanced at her watch, she sprang out of bed, kicked off her pyjamas, and dressed as quickly as she could. "Goodness, what will she ever think of me," said Rosalie to herself. "She'll think perhaps she's housing a lazy-bones, a slug-a-bed." She hurried down to the kitchen but the little old lady was not in sight. She washed her face and hands at the sink and ran her comb quickly through her hair thinking, "perhaps she has disappeared, perhaps she was only a fairy and this is a fairy's house." She noticed that her breakfast things were neatly set out on the checkered cloth, that the coffee pot was steaming on the back of the stove, and that the oat-meal porridge was erupting in tiny volcanoes in the double boiler. Just as she was drying her face and hands on the spotless roller towel that hung on the door leading to the cold pantry, in came the little old lady in the flesh, no fairy at all, with a pail of milk that brimmed in yellow bubbles.

"Good morning, my dear, I hope you slept well."

"Like a rock, like a log," said Rosalie. "I don't believe I turned over once. I never had a hot-water bottle before. But you mustn't think I'm lazy, this loafing in bed won't happen again. Tomorrow I'll milk the cow."

"I've a good Jersey cow but you have to strip her well. See what yellow creamy milk she gives. Her tongue's as black as printers' ink and her scutcheon yellow as a sovereign."

"I'll do the rest of the chores," said Rosalie.

"The chores are all done, my dear, stable cleaned, hay and water in the manger, hens and pigs fed, and the turnips ground up and sprinkled with short feed. You have to feed cows turnips just at the right time of day, just after the morning milking, then the milk never tastes of turnips."

"I'll have a lot to learn," said Rosalie, "but you'll find me a good worker. I'm strong and not lazy, I'll always be up bright and early. I missed this morning because I didn't get much sleep the first night in the lumber camp."

"You're too pretty to shovel manure," said the little old lady. "You can help me with everything but that. Manure should be shovelled by a wrinkled old woman. I've one very important question to ask you now."

Rosalie opened her eyes wide, perhaps she would have to tell all about her trouble after all.

"Yes?" said Rosalie with just a hint of defence in her voice. "What do you want to know, little old lady?"

"What kind of pudding do you like best in all the world? Because when you tell me you're going to have that kind for dinner tonight."

"Oh!" said Rosalie with a sigh of relief. "I was afraid you were going to quiz me about why I ran away. I really didn't steal anything or kill anybody."

"What do I care about that," said the little old lady. "Now what kind of pudding do you like the best of all?"

"Oh, my!" said Rosalie, "I have such a grand appetite. I like steamed apple dumplings with cream poured over them—I had that at my uncle's—but best of all I like steamed apple-duff with hot yellow sauce."

"Better than hot mince pie? I've got two fat jars of my own mince-meat well primed with brandy."

"That's a hard choice," said Rosalie. "I do like mince pie, I like almost everything, but perhaps steamed apple-duff best of all."

"Then we'll have it, and now to set your mind at rest, that's the only question you'll be asked this day. Now sit down and eat your breakfast, first oatmeal, and then bacon and coffee and strawberry jam. That'll put some fat on your bones and the men will come sniffing after you like a pack of hounds."

"I don't want to get fat," said Rosalie, "and I'm through with men for a long time."

"A woman's never through with them till she gets very old, they're

a blessing and a perpetual nuisance that has to be endured. It's a pity they haven't a rutting season in October like the moose, and get through with it and settle down like other decent animals."

Rosalie laughed and crunched her bacon, and drank with pleasure her coffee that had thick cream in it. The little old lady slyly brought out a package of cigarettes.

"Try one."

"I never smoke much," said Rosalie.

"Try one. These are Melachrinos, they're good after breakfast with coffee."

Rosalie and the little old lady both lit up. The old lady had another cup of coffee and they sat and smiled at one another.

"Why are you so good to me—I don't know what to call you—you see I've thought of you from the first as the little old lady.

"I'm lonely, I've been lonely for years and years, and I need some gay company, for once I was gay myself. But my name won't do for you at all. My mother had me christened Keziah, and at home they always called me Kitty. Kitty, Kitty, did you ever hear of such a silly name, as if I were a little kitten? A bad name can put a curse on you and a good name can be a blessing. I should have a simple name, like Mary or Margaret, or a high-sounding name like Brunhilda or Clytemnestra."

"But you must have a married name. Couldn't I call you Mrs-whatever it is?"

"No, I shouldn't like that, that's too distant, and I never really liked any of my married names. Why not call me by the name you thought of first, 'Little Old Lady' , or just 'Old Lady'."

"Would you like that?" said Rosalie.

"Indeed I would, and you shall be Rosalie while you're here and Stella Star when you go away."

"I don't like Stella Star very much, but I suppose I'll have to stick to it because I promised Johnny Allen."

"Star is too short and blunt," said the old lady, "it sounds to me like a female with a large bosom. Why not try 'Starry' or 'Starlight'?"

"That would be much worse," laughed Rosalie. "They're

sentimental and I'm not a bit sentimental, I want to learn what the world is really like."

"Well," said the old lady, "you know you can't just change your name overnight all by yourself. You have to go before a lawyer, and perhaps it has to go for permission to parliament. You might inherit something, you know, and you'd have to have a true name."

"Oh dear," said Rosalie, "what a bother! But there's nobody to leave anything to me."

"I might," said the little old lady. "I'm quite rich you know, and I've neither chick nor child, and all the people of my generation are dead, and really I don't know what to do with my money."

"Oh, old lady, you mustn't do that," cried Rosalie, "you've only known me overnight."

"I might you know. Anyway, we've settled one thing, you'll be Rosalie as long as you're here, and I'll be the 'Little Old Lady'. Come now, let's wash up and go bury the skunk."

The little old lady stuck the tynes of a dung-fork in him, and carried him gingerly as far from her person as possible. He still smelt to heaven.

"We'll bury him under the Gravenstein tree. It's said that skunks are good for apple trees."

Rosalie lifted out some sods with a round-pointed shovel, and heaped up a little mound of brown earth. "Deeper, deeper, Rosalie, he'll still stink at that depth, and we'll smell him when the wind is south, he's very penetrating." Rosalie dug deeper, and at last, the skunk was laid to rest, to sleep—unless ploughed out—until the last day.

"I think smells must be like people's souls if they have any. They float about and you can't see them or touch them but you're very conscious of them. Skunks have one smell, dogs, pigs, hens, cows and horses have others, coffee, bacon and pinks have pleasant smells. Why every man and woman has a different smell, no matter how much they wash. That's the way dogs pick them out, not by eyesight."

"You're a philosopher," laughed Rosalie.

"I've been around a lot. Wait till I tell you my sea adventures! Yes, souls must be smells, for a good smell makes you happy and a bad smell sick at your stomach. Good smells go to Heaven, if there is a heaven, and bad smells go to Hell. Skunks, bats, weasels and badgers all go to Hell. Do you know that a pig will keep himself sweet and clean if you give him a chance with plenty of straw in a clean sty?"

Rosalie laughed, "You must know that animals have no souls."

"Hm, I think a Jersey cow has a better chance of Heaven than some of the women I've seen in foreign ports. You can't tell how far souls go down, everything wants to live forever. Sometimes I think I hear a carrot sigh when I pull him out of the ground."

"Coffee and bacon have a good chance of seeing God then."

The little old lady laughed. "You're good for me, Rosalie, you make me laugh. Yes, certainly coffee and bacon are good, and the salty smell of the sea at half-flood when it comes to wash the earth twice daily."

Rosalie drove a little stake to mark the skunk's grave and with string tied on a cross piece. "We got acquainted over him, and we ought to mark him. Perhaps the good God who is all kindness and love, will wash him and give him a fragrant smell and he'll become a little skunk angel. Who knows? Anyway this'll mark him till the trumpet sounds the crack of Doom."

Back in the kitchen they looked at one another, and laughed again. "Your laugh, Rosalie, is like an April brook that has just got rid of the ice. You're good for me, Rosalie. Now I'll tell you what we'll do if you'll only stay awhile. I thought about it half the night. You don't need much sleep when you're old."

"I like to sleep," said Rosalie, "I like to sleep all by myself."

"Of course, you're young, your spirit's growing. Well, say we allow nine hours each day for sleep, I sometimes take a cat nap in the afternoon and so can you, then we can do all the cooking and cleaning and wood and chores in four hours, two in the morning and two at night, and that will leave us eleven hours each day to have fun and be happy. I've got wonderful plans. Some evenings we can play rummy or checkers or cribbage for a small stake, and some evenings

we can read aloud and tell stories. I'm full of wonderful stories that I'm simply bursting to tell, all about my three husbands and the ten years I spent on the sea."

"I love to hear stories," said Rosalie, "but I don't seem to have any interesting ones to tell.

"You haven't got your stories yet, you're only beginning to make them. Someday, perhaps when you are old, you'll have a story about me. You have to live a lot and bits have to be churned up before they turn into lumps of stories. I'm so full of stories that I'm like a can of rice that's got wet, either the lid s going to blow off or the sides bulge out."

Rosalie laughed again.

"As you know," went on the little old lady, "you can't tell stories properly without a listener. Some wise man said, 'That a good reader made a good book,' and certainly a good listener makes a good story."

"I'll listen," said Rosalie, "I like to listen. Will they be true stories?"

"Better than true, for when you get old events are all mingled with dreams and what you thought, and with what you've read in books. Sometimes I say to myself, 'Could that really have happened to me?' My stories seem to be real and better than true. Facts, you know, by themselves are not interesting. They have to be dressed up a little and coloured by the teller's character."

"You are so wise, old lady," said Rosalie. "I'm sure I'm going to learn a great deal from you."

"And in the daytime we'll make the most beautiful dresses for you, Rosalie. We'll send away and get the very latest plates of fashions, and the best of cloth. I know how to cut and sew end I've got a sewing machine."

"I'd always been told," said Rosalie, "that the world was hard, cold and dangerous, and now I find it a kind warm-hearted generous place."

"It can be dangerous, you'll pass dangers before you're through, but it's largely a reflection of what you yourself are, inside."

"But why do you offer to do all these things for me?"

"Just because you're Rosalie. Don't you see I'm a rich lonely old woman, with nobody worth-while to talk to and I've no children or grandchildren, and most of my generation is dead. Do stay for awhile, Rosalie. I can easily pay you five dollars a week. Perhaps it won't be much of a treat for you, but it'll be a God-send to me. I've been so long alone and none of the yokels can make me laugh. You'll be hidden safe here, too, till the hue and cry is over, nobody saw you turn in here, did the they"

"1 don't think so," said Rosalie. "I'll stay awhile, you're so kind and I like you too and perhaps I can learn a good deal from you at second hand about the way of life. If you tire of me just stick up a little notice on the kitchen wall, 'My head aches, Rosalie,' and if I want to go, I'll make a sign, 'My foot itches,' and I'll just slip away without any fuss."

The little old lady's eyes shone with happiness, so the bargain was struck.

Six

Indian summer came that year in late October, and as sometimes happens, that gracious month was warmer and more golden with autumn sunshine than September. September's frosts had touched the maples and birches and beeches and turned them into swaying turrets of scarlet and gold. The firs and spruces stood up cold and stiff like giant Christmas trees, rather proud and austere, as if in defiance of the coming winter, and changed their costume of summer green into one of dark greenish blue. The alder covers took on shades of heliotrope and purple, and the long grasses left behind at heading and fencerow were brittle and yellow. The raggedy hackmatacks tossed their half yellowed branches wildly, as if they were sons of spruces, not quite right in their minds. The fierce owls no longer hooted at night, but often Rosalie and the little old lady heard the love-call of the cow-moose in the forest, and the answer, and sometimes a crash of branches as her lover blundered toward her. Everyday or two a V of geese winged southward and these Rosalie always watched till they vanished.

Now they gathered what was left of the garden vegetables. The potatoes had been already dug and most of the apples gathered, though there were a few Bishop Pippins, Russets and Northern Spy gleaming among the withered leaves.

"I can't get the high ones anymore, I can only reach as high as the stepladder goes, but maybe you can."

"I'm a grand climber," said Rosalie. You should have seen Rosalie, her skirt tucked up about her slender waist, one foot braced in a crotch, and one long slim leg twined around a bough, laughing and singing and gathering golden russets to toss them down into the net held by the little old lady. There are so many pictures that should have been painted, but are lost alas, because no painter with the seeing eye was present.

The bean pods were all brown and withered, but these were

picked and dried and beaten with a flail and winnowed in the western October wind. Celery and parsnips are best left in the ground as long as possible, this the old lady knew, and squash winters best if left out of doors till the big leaves are all wilted and drooping in the frost. It is always fun to gather the autumn vegetables and store them away in the cellar for in so doing man recalls a primitive instinct that he shares with the animals. The pleasure is increased if you gather with someone you like or love. Rosalie and the little old lady made a happy game of gathering and storing.

"You mustn't pick squash up by the handles. Put your hands underneath them and carry them in your arms like a baby. If you carry them by the handles you loosen a little place in the skin and then they get a rotten spot. You must store them where it's dry and fairly warm. The stairs in the hall is the best place, there's a wide landing there, and they'll be handy."

One day the pig had to be killed. Rosalie didn't like that very much. The pig-killer made eyes at her and she had to force herself to give him a smile. "My niece, Miss Star, is spending the winter with me," explained the little old lady, and then in an aside to Rosalie, "Everyone will know that in a day or two, you have to make some kind of explanation to people in the country." Then she added to comfort her, "I always make the man shoot them behind the ear, and they never know what's happened to them." Rosalie heard the shot but there were no such screams of pain and terror as had haunted her childhood. She had grown up in a poverty-stricken country and knew that animals and fish and birds must die, that men may eat and live, but she always suffered when living things were hurt. When the second pork-keg was filled, the hams and sides salted and smoked, the head-cheese and pig's puddings made, they were nearly set for winter. The first snow flurries arrived on November fifth and a carpenter came and screwed on double windows and storm-doors. Soon it was necessary to crack the sheet-ice on the spring where the cow drank. Lamps were lighted and gave their yellow spots of

light before five in the afternoon. Now it was snugger than ever indoors.

One evening when they were settled by the fire the little old lady said, “Do you know, Rosalie, the book I like best of all?”

“How could I?” said Rosalie.

“Great Expectations, I’ve read it at least thirty times. I’ve read it on the land and I’ve read it on the sea, I’ve read it in steaming hot lands, and in bleak roaring harbours, and I’ve never tired of it.”

“Shall we read it aloud this winter?” said Rosalie. “I’ve never even heard of it.”

“Could we?” said the little old lady eagerly.

“Of course all the women in it are fools except Jo’s wife—Mr. Dickens always made his women sentimental, soft things, but the men are strong and kind, and I like a book to begin with a little child, and carry him along through joys and sorrows, till he’s almost through with life.” The little old lady went into her bedroom and brought out a well-worn copy.

“One night we’ll read, and one night we’ll tell stories.”

“I’ve told you I haven’t any stories to tell,” said Rosalie. “You see I’m not quite nineteen.”

“Not yet you haven’t, but I have thousands. I’ll tell you all about my three husbands.”

“Did you love them all?” laughed Rosalie.

“I liked then all,” said she little old lady, “but of course I only loved the first one. The others were agreeable companions, though I did have a bit of trouble with the last one, he’s the one that burnt the church.”

“Oh,” said Rosalie, “what a terrible thing.”

“Not so bad, he was a bit cracked at the end. Anything over done always makes a crack-pot of a man. But come now, begin.”

Rosalie opened the book and began in a rather prim school teacher’s voice:

"My father's family name being Pirrip and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names together, nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to called Pip."

Here the little old lady interrupted: "I often wonder how a great author writes the first sentence of a book. There are so many places to begin and so many ways to begin."

"Perhaps," said Rosalie, "he just takes a pencil in his hand and writes down first whatever comes into his mind."

"No, no, for he might write down first the hero's dying words and then the story would end as soon as it was begun. I still think a good book should begin with the birth of the chief character, and he's pretty close to it here, and end with the death of the hero or with his getting married. However, the mother or the doctor would be the only ones that could tell about the child's birth, and the doctor's usually in a hurry, and the mother too far gone for writing."

"I read a joke once," said Rosalie, "where the writer said, 'I was born in Tatamagouche, because my mother was living there at that time, and as she was not very well, I felt I ought to be near her.' "

The old lady laughed, "Do you know what we are, Rosalie? A couple of chatterboxes, and if we make comments on every sentence we'll never get on with the book. Now not another word out of either of us till we've finished two chapters. You'll like Jo and that old humbug Pumblechook."

Rosalie read on as directed, "it's very interesting," she said as she put a mark in the book and closed it. "And now for one of your stories, little old lady."

"Do you know any geography, Rosalie?"

"Some," said Rosalie. "I've taught geography to children, and I can rattle off the exports of Trinidad, 'sugar, molasses, rum, coffee, cocoa, pitch and timber,' and the minerals of England, 'iron, coal, copper, tin, lead, zinc and salt.' "

"That's all very well, that's geography out of books, and that's the best most people can do, but the way to learn geography really is to travel the wide world and look at peoples and places. That's what I've

done, for my first husband was a sea-captain and with him, when I was young, I sailed for ten years, the seven seas."

"Oh, tell me about that," cried Rosalie. "I have such a longing to know what the world and people are really like."

The little old lady lit a cigarette and hitched up her chair. "I fell in love with Mat Decker when I was a little girl in school. I suppose I was about ten then and he was a big strong boy. Women are funny things, for even at that age I knew I was going to try hard to marry Mat when I grew up. I always had my eye on him, though he hardly looked at me, but he sometimes shyly pulled my pigtails when he passed behind me. When he was fourteen his father took him out of school and put him in the forecastle. That was the way they did in those days, any sea-coast boy worth his salt must start in the foc's'le and learn foc's'le discipline. And away he sailed down river in the barque Arethusa, one of the vessels my father owned. I managed to get his mother to put a housewife, full of pins and needles and thread and yarn, into his dunnage-bag, with my name on it. I had a good deal of childish grief when he sailed away, and I never expected to see him again.

"We lived in a village of steep hills that centered on a bridge and a tidal river that was only a trickle of water at slack low tide, but a good four fathom at the top of the flood. It was a village of green hills, a strip of brown water, and snug white houses on the hillsides, very cold in winter and very hot in summer. Above the bridge was the store, and the shipyard where my father and uncle built ships and launched them slanting, down river on the top of the flood. We were quite the people of the village for both my father and my uncle had married daughters of shipbuilders further up shore, and we owned the store, and everybody was a little in debt to us. Nobody ever squared up their bills, and the accounts were carried on from year to year, and everything depended on the goodwill of my father, who felt some responsibility for the people in the village. No one ever went hungry, even the poorest, or without clothes or working equipment. It was what they now call the patriarchal system.

"You see when they built a ship, and there was plenty of cheap

ship timber, they divided her into sixty shares. The builders took thirty-one shares to have control, and the other shares were divided up in ones and twos and bought by little people, who had saved something. So a great many people had an interest in ships, even the women talked ships. Then nearly every man in the village had a special trade or craft. Some cut nails, some were riggers, one old fellow made all the figure-heads, some were painters, some dubbers, some made spars and yards, some finished the fine work in teak or mahogany of cabins, wheels and binnacles, and some hammered out anchors and heavy iron work.

"Of course as a little girl I didn't know what an interesting village it was. Then, when I was waiting, waiting, it seemed shut in and dull to me, but now when I see these present day slovenly people about me, I realize that it's best to have a village full of craftsmen where many have an interest in the common good. Nobody had much money, but they had plenty of things and that is what counts. My people never insured their ships, and if they were lost they were lost, and everyone bore the loss patiently in men and money. The little village cemetery was crowded with stones that corresponded to no body buried in a grave. So-and-so slipped off the jib-boom in the China Sea, so-and-so fell from the royals in the Indian Ocean.

"It was four years before the Arethusa came up the river again on a full flood tide to be overhauled and refitted. Everyone in the village was on the wharves when the stubby tug nestled the Arethusa in to her berth. Mat, my Mat, was on the forecastle head, shouting orders and telling the sailors what to do, for he was third mate now, and my heart was almost bursting with love and pride. I was about fifteen then and a grown woman, for girls ripened earlier in those days, and I was a good four inches taller than I am now for old people shrink with age, like woollen socks washed in hot water. Mat was home all winter for the Arethusa had to be hauled out on the slip, and scraped and painted and have her bottom coppered. We used to go coasting down the steep village hills and Mat always too me on his double-runner. One night we slewed off track and ran into a deep snowbank and got covered with snow. We both laughed and

Mat turned around quick and put his arms around me and kissed me, a quick kiss that was frosty outside and warm within, and said, 'Will you be my sweetheart, Kitty? ' And I wasn't ashamed, but I said quite boldly, 'Yes I always wanted to be your sweetheart.'

"Then he said, 'You'll wait for me? I'll be a master soon.'

" 'I'll wait, Mat,' said I. 'Don't fall overboard.'

" 'No fear,' said he. 'I'll hold fast for you, Kitty. I don't have to go aloft after I'm first mate.'

" 'Good,' said I, 'and never forget the rule of the sea, 'One hand for yourself and one hand for the ship.'

" 'I learned that long ago Kitty,' he said and he kissed me again, and that was all the courting I ever had, for he sailed away soon after that. I didn't see him again till he was twenty-three, and when he brought the Arethusa up the river that time he was master. That's was almost a record, though an uncle of mine has been master at nineteen, but then his father owned half the ship and he pushed his son along. But the Deckers were poor people and Mat had to push his way up from 'prentice-boy to third, second, first mate, and at last to master by the sheer strength of his arms and brains.

"There was quite a family row when I told mother and father I was going to marry Mat Decker for Mat's father was only a ship's iron worker who swung a heavy hammer in a forge, and my people, as I said before, had got to think they were somebody. However, they couldn't get over the fact that Mat was Master of the barque Arethusa, and that shipmasters were the only aristocrats we knew. Shipmasters in those days went ashore in top hats and Prince Albert coats when they wanted to do business with a Consul or make a bargain for the freight or cargo. You see, Rosalie, a master is a king and more than a king for he is the absolute ruler of his ship, and a ship on the high seas is a tiny state. He has to be doctor, lawyer, trader, priest, and judge, and the safety of the twenty-five men aboard is in his absolute keeping. He treats them when they're sick, he buries the dead, he can marry and put mutineers to death, and above all, he has get to be a first class seaman and a shrewd trader. He's really a very great man. So my parents couldn't talk me out of

it, though they'd hoped I'd marry the son of a rich snob who owned a flock of ships. But I couldn't abide him. He thought money, clothes and going to college make a man, but I knew in my bones that only labour, cold, poverty and humility – and not too much humility – make a man.

"I had a will of my own, and I married Mat at nineteen in the village church in the early morning. We had a wedding breakfast and sailed that very day. The Arethusa had a deck-load of lumber and she was low in the water when the tug took us down the river and through the drawbridge and out into the Basin. There she left, tooting good-bye, and I stood by the steersman as the great sails were set.

"Just outside the Gut we struck a breeze of wind, a squall, a half gale, and deep-laden as she was the old Arethusa heeled over. The tide was running, against the wind and it made a nasty sea. I went below and lost my wedding breakfast, and I had no one to hold my head, for Mat was busy on deck. I was very miserable, but I didn't cry. I said to myself 'I don't care if I die, I'm glad I married Mat and went to sea.'

"The old Arethusa rolled and pitched and rattled and slatted all the way to New York, for that's the first port we were bound to, and I was sick as a dog all the way. Mat was good to me, he used to kiss me, and rub my head, and run strong fingers through my hair but he never tried to make love to me. I was grateful to him for that. You know, Rosalie, everything has to be right in time and place and circumstances and mood, for love between a man and a woman. Then let moralists prate as they like, it's Heaven upon earth, there's no joy quite like it."

"When we got to New York—it took five days of rough, blowy, blustery weather all the way—I was so sick and wobbly in the knees that Mat had to carry me ashore, and put me in a hospital. I didn't see much of New York or learn much about it that time, only every day as I lay in bed I used to hear the roar of the streets and a steady rumbling grumbling roar, that was something like the roar of the sea. That's the first impression I got of New York City. Of course, after that I saw it several times, with all the wonders of Broadway

and the shops along Fifth Avenue, and the picture galleries, and often Mat and I dined at the Astor and went to the theatre afterwards. I've never forgotten the first light opera I saw, Rosalie. It was called 'La Poupee' and the lead was Stella Gastelle. It was all strange and new to me and seemed quite real though part of a fairy world. I was very green and untried then, and it was only long after that I learned that Miss Gastelle was forty and the divorced wife of a doctor in Sunderland. What lovely dreams and illusions youth has. You must have them too, Rosalie.

"It took ten days to load the Arethusa with case-oil for Antwerp and by that time I was well and strong and hungry for food and love. At last we pulled out of the dock, and do you know, I never was seasick again, never again, though I've been in plenty of gales, and round the Horn four times, but I never again felt my stomach turn.

"About a hundred miles off New York we entered the Gulf Stream—I always believed Mat had gone south out of his course to give me an easy passage—and in that great stream that flows like a river through the sea the water is a lighter blue and there floats strange yellow seaweeds that grew on no northern shores."

Here the old lady got up from her chair, reached to a shelf and brought down a globe: "Here you see, Rosalie, here's New York, and here lies Antwerp, and here's the good barque Arethusa loaded with case-oil wallowing along through the Gulf Stream. People never think that there are rivers in the sea. The Gulf Stream starts in the hot Carribean and flows broad and strong across the cold Atlantic, splits when it comes to Europe and part turns south towards Spain and part flows through the English Channel, and part turns north along England's west coast and keeps England warm. It's geography that makes history Rosalie. I've kept my eyes open and noticed that as I wandered about the world. England's as far north as we are, and if it weren't for that great warm ocean river the English would be quite a different people. Hunger and necessity and the love of adventure move men and peoples, geography makes history, and different climates promote different religions."

"Oh," said Rosalie, "can that be true, old lady? Surely there's only one true religion."

The old lady smiled, "Look about you and learn, my dear, look about you and learn, learn if you can. But I mustn't ride off on one of my he horses, I must stick to my story. Oh, the lovely Atlantic! It's rough and windy and cold, but there's something honest about it, and it will always be my best-loved ocean. The Pacific is a false name for there's nothing pacific about it, it lies sleek and quiet as a cat and hits you with sudden whirling storms. Sailors say the Pacific's a slut and the Atlantic a strong sailor-man. It blew strong north and north-west all the way across so that we were close-hauled, or with the sheets and braces slackened only a little. I used to go on deck every morning and afternoon and hold fast to something and look about me, and wonder that there was so much water in the world. Mat cracked everything on her, even the sky-sails—the old Arethusa had sky-sails above the royals, though this was unusual in a barque—for he was ambitious to make a quick run and money for the owners. He was always on deck when the watches changed. You see, Rosalie, the men are divided into two watches, one under the second mate and one under the third mate, and they take charge of the ship by turns; the short dog-watches of two hours each run from four to eight, and then begin the long watches from eight to midnight, and from midnight to four in the morning. Mat used to come down to me after the midnight shift, when he left the ship in the first mate's charge, all fresh and clean rosy and salty, washed with midnight spray, and I'd be waiting for him warm and snug and wide-eyed, in our broad berth. Our cabin was on the starboard side and that was the lee-side all the way on that run. The ship listed that way and we couldn't roll out of that berth. The Arethusa builders had built the captain's berth wide with a high outer sideboard, as if they knew I'd go to sea with Mat.

"Well," said the little old lady, after a pause to catch her breath, "I'd like to tell all the women in the world that if they want to be loved properly, they should have a strong man in a warm wide berth, on the Atlantic in half a gale of wind. Poor tame dwellers

on the land, they learn so little! A squall of wind would strike the old Arethusa making all her stays and rigging sing and whistle and her canvas bang, and heavily laden though she was, down she'd heel to starboard, carrying Mat and me with her. Then she'd duck like a startled loon, into a hollow between waves, and bury her plump figurehead and half her jib-boom in the next sea, and her stern would fly up in the air till a third of her rudder was clear, and the next minute she'd rear and prance like a restive colt in a spring pasture. And there was the cold rough sea-water swishing and slapping and swooshing within a foot of my head, but I didn't care for Mat's strong arms were around me. I used to laugh out loud—I could laugh then—and I didn't care if the Arethusa turned turtle and sank fathoms deep into the sea, if only Mat kept his arms around me. Sometimes when it blew extra hard I used to whisper to Mat, 'You'd better take the sky-sails off her, Mat,' and he'd kiss me and whisper back, 'No, Kitty, she heels further to starboard this way.' "

"Oh, oh," said Rosalie, "little old lady, I'm glad you loved Mat so beautifully on the rough stormy sea. How did you ever lose him?"

"That doesn't come yet, that comes at the end of my first long story.

"We only had one adventure on the way over. One afternoon we passed close to the Great Eastern laying cable. Do you know about the cable, Rosalie?"

"Yes, yes," said Rosalie, "it's the telegraph under the sea."

"That's right. The Great Eastern was too big for her time. She cost three quarters of a million pounds and lost money for her owners. She had five funnels, six masts, paddle wheels and a screw. She was a bulky ship and no dry dock in the world in her time could hold her. So they only painted her twice in all her life and each time they scraped five tons of mussels and barnacles off her bottom."

Rosalie laughed at this and said, "The very thought of it makes me itchy."

"Mat looked, at the Great Eastern as we passed, close to starboard, and said, as if he h d been a prophet, 'There's the end of

the fast-sailing clipper ship!' From the very start she was unlucky, and do you know why? When the owners decided to break her up—even on that trip she almost got away from her tugs and went ashore on the Isle of Man—what do you think they found?"

"What?" asked. Rosalie.

"Between the sheathing and the planking of the ship, alongside the top of the kelson and the top of the keel, they found the skeleton of a man, and no one ever knew who he was or how he got there."

"Oh," said Rosalie, feeling the hair bristle a little on the back of her neck, "poor man, he had no one's arms around him when the Great Eastern plunged her nose into the sea. How sad and lonely, and cold to die there alone."

"Now that's enough for tonight. Let's have one swift game of rummy and then to bed. You're such a good listener, Rosalie, I do hope you'll stay. I'm sure I have stories enough to last all winter."

"You've only made a start on your first husband," laughed Rosalie.

"Yes, and he was by far the best and most exciting. Stories about husbands should really be told backward or the story turns sour like a bad book. So many authors start well and end ill. They seem to have an idea to begin with but they peter out with time. I hope your foot won't itch too soon, Rosalie, we'll make such beautiful dresses together."

"And I'm beginning to hope that you won't get a headache too soon little old lady."

Seven

Day followed day with duties and chores, and evening came upon them before they knew it. Rosalie had never "been so rested and happy.

"Especially," said Mr. Pumblechook, "be grateful to them which brought you up by hand … Joe always aided and comforted me when he could in some way of his own, and he always did so at dinner-time by giving me gravy if there was any. There being plenty of gravy today, he spooned into my plate at this point about half a pint," read Rosalie.

"What a kind man Jo was," said the little old lady. "He was right inside. I suppose millions of readers have loved Jo, and he's more real to them than any man they ever met."

"But old Pumblechook was a wind-bag," said Rosalie. "There was a man in our village something like Pumblechook on a small scale."

"There's a man like Pumblechook in every village. He was a thorough humbug and a hypocrite. I've always wanted to slap him or stick him out on the end of the royals to tie down the gaskets, with the foot-ropes swaying under his feet and the sail rearing and flapping in half a gale of wind on the North Atlantic. That would have blown the hypocrisy out of him. But go on, go on, Rosalie. I like the sound of your voice."

Rosalie read on for a page or two till some new topic struck the little old lady's attention.

"You read clearly, Rosalie," she said, "and place the emphasis in the right places."

"I taught my pupils to read distinctly," said Rosalie, "and so perhaps I learned myself. But you know in this little while I've been away from home and listened to other people, I hear in my voice a queer little upward lilt at the end of my sentences. Do you notice it?"

"Of course I do," said the little old lady. "I've got an ear. But that is pleasant somehow. Everything is nice about you, Rosalie, I can't find

any fault in you. You've got what people call charm, and that's a very lovely and a very dangerous thing to possess."

"Have I?" laughed Rosalie. "You're a flatterer. Well, perhaps I have a little but in another month I'd have lost it. I suppose that queer little lilt in my voice comes from the fact that I'm by nature a French speaker—not Parisian French, of course—and that my first language was French. I only began to learn English when I was eight or nine."

"You can speak French, Rosalie?"

"Of course, and write it more correctly than I speak."

The little old lady laughed aloud in her happiness: "I can speak French, too. I wasn't born a French speaker, but I learned it in foreign ports. I had to learn it to help Mat, I'll tell you all about that someday."

"Oh, I'm glad, that will make us still better friends."

I'll tell you, Rosalie, after we get through with Mr. Dickens' 'Great Expectations,' we'll read a French book together in French. Only you'll have to read slowly at first for I've hardly heard a word of French in thirty years. I could rattle it off when I was twenty-five. Will we read a French book together?"

"They're said to be very wicked," said Rosalie.

"They are, I've read some terrible ones that the sailors brought aboard. The French are hipped on wine and women. Give a French sailor a bottle of wine and a fat cocotte and he asks for no more. But in fairness I ought to say that English sailors are like that, too, only the English drink rum. But there must be some decent French books that are not too sweet and namby-pamby, there must be somebody like a French Dickens."

"Maybe," said Rosalie, "Balzac perhaps, though the priest always advised young girls against his books."

"Fie on the medicine men, they read these books themselves, and chuckle over them, only they don't want you to know. Once long ago on the sea, I read a French book called 'Les Miserables'. There were kind people in it. And another called 'An Iceland Fisherman'. The people who wrote those were no fools or evil men. We could send away and get them."

"Les Miserables is one of my favourites," exclaimed Rosalie, "the story of the saintly bishop and the good convict. I have already read that twice. There's no need to send away for a copy for I have it in my basket. It will be fun, we'll be two scholars reading in a foreign language."

"Yes, it's great to know languages, I know a little of four, but I suppose the important thing is to be able to think correctly in one. Come now, we're both such awful talkers the winter will be over before we get through with 'Great Expectations'."

In mid December deep snow came, two feet of shining snow, and the trees began to creak and groan and complain in the frost as if they needed oiling. It was beautiful without, but a bleak beauty as the snow swirled about in each gust of wind. The evening kitchen by comparison was cosier than ever.

Rosalie and the little old lady bundled up and shovelled wide tracks to barn, wood pile and spring hole. Now each day ice must be broken on the spring, for strange to say, a cow will never break the thinnest ice with her nose. It is good for cows to get the air once a day even in the coldest weather, at any rate that is what the little old lady told Rosalie. Cows and hens and pigs need fresh air, just like people, and the little old lady insisted on flinging the barn doors open for a little every day and then bedding the animals down in plenty of straw litter.

Rosalie stood at the window and looked out at the veil of snow that swirled in the wind, just as day was dying; "We'll have to dig again tomorrow. The Snow God is filling up our paths and trenches. I believe he likes to tease us."

"You have to use your arms and wits in this world. You can't depend on miracles and snow doesn't get dug "by thinking about it. I'm glad we don't have to wade out to an outside toilet."

"I am too," said Rosalie, "I've had enough of that."

"Your skin sticks fast to the seat on a frosty morning."

"Oh, old lady, don't let's talk about it."

"I won't, Rosalie, but you know, Rosalie, sometimes coarse things are comical."

"They certainly are," said Rosalie, "and when they're really comical and make you laugh they do no harm to anyone. I have heard that some women talk about coarser things than men when they're by themselves."

"Maybe they do, some. I've pumped those senoritas and madames no end in foreign ports. Once a woman slips down, she slips pretty far.

"I must tell you a little country story before we begin to read, if you think you can stand it."

"I love your stories, little old lady."

"Well, you see in the back country—not in our village—but in the backwoods, when I was a little girl the people had no toilets at all, neither indoors nor out, even many of the little hinterland schoolhouses had no outhouses, and men, women and children had to take to the woods or barns to perform their natural functions."

"It must have been chilly in weather like this," remarked Rosalie. "I never knew anything as bad as that."

"It was chilly, bitter chilly, and quick they were about it I expect. Well, there was a long, lanky backwoodsman named Angus McGinnis, who lived on the North Range, and by some hook or crook he pulled himself out of the woods and went over to the States—perhaps he went as a sailor man and deserted in port—and there he learned the carpenter's trade and married an American women. When he was over fifty and had saved some money, he inherited the rocky old homestead and came home with his family to live there. As soon as he got home he set about repairing and fixing up the old house and barn, and perhaps on the insistence of the American wife, he built himself an outdoor toilet, a toilet with five seats like steps, one large over-size for adults, one smaller for young men and women, one still smaller for growing boys and girls, one for children, and a tiny one for infants. What a talk that made in the backwoods countryside! Everyone laughed at him for bringing new Yankee ideas into the country, and one rustic wit named him, 'Proud-ass McGinnis'."

Rosalie had to break into laughter.

"And do you know, Rosalie, that name stuck to him until he died, and he died an old man, well over eighty. In fact, he became very proud of the name, and he made a will and asked to have 'Proud-ass McGinnis' carved on his grave stone, but the minister would have none of it."

"Old Lady, it may be coarse but it's comical," said Rosalie, "especially when told by you. Things change slowly, don't they, now everyone has toilets. Perhaps old Mr. McGinnis was a pioneer."

"He was," said the little old lady as she stuffed a piece of wood in the stove. "He was the true pioneer of the fancy outdoor toilet, and I'm the pioneer of the indoor toilet in these parts. It's only a bit of a job pumping the tank."

"Not much," said Rosalie, "I can fill it in twenty minutes. But now, Old Lady, tell me some more about you and Mat on the sea—it seems more real somehow than even Mr. Dickens. You left me in mid-ocean on your way to Antwerp, staring at the Great Eastern."

The little old lady settled herself back in her cushioned rocking chair, began to rock gently and sway a little as if with the movement of a ship. "We had no great excitement that I remember after we passed the Great Eastern, but I decided as soon as I got my sea legs that I was going to learn all I could about a ship, so I could be Mat's partner and helper. That's what a wise woman does, she becomes a partner to her man.

"Everyday when I went on deck I got Mat or the first mate to teach me something, the names of spars and yards and sails and sheets, braces and halyards, upper and lower top-sails, t'gallant, royals, sky sails, studding sails—though we were close-hauled all the time on that voyage and you only carry studding sails when you're running free—stay sails, spanker, jibs. Of course, I had known some of these things from the time when I was a girl, for I'd grown up in a ship-building village where everybody talked ships. But I didn't know much about rigging for while they built and launched the hulls above the bridge, they always towed them down to deep tide-water to ship the spars and set the yards. Do you know that conundrum, Rosalie, 'Why is a ship called she?' "

"No," said Rosalie, "but I can try to guess. I always like conundrums. I suppose it's something improper."

"Not very."

"Because she's a hooker?" ventured Rosalie.

"No."

"Because she's got braces. Oh no, that would be a man. Perhaps because she can't keep straight without ballast."

"Not bad, but that's not the answer. It's because her rigging is worth more than her hull."

"That's what men say," laughed Rosalie.

"Then I began to peer into the binnacle over the steersman's shoulder, to see what course he was holding her on. A little north of west we sailed on, close-hauled, day after day. So one night in the cabin Mat said to me, 'You'd better learn the compass points, Kitty, and he gave me a card and I set to work. It only took me a couple of days to master it and learn it thoroughly, and I sang it off to Mat even as I can sing it to you, for anything thoroughly learned, in youth is rarely forgotten. North, north by east, north northeast, northeast by north, northeast . . .

"Mat laughed, when I had gone clear round, the circle, 'we'll make a sailor man of you yet, Kitty. I'll have to buy you some dungarees and sea boots,' said he. Oh, we were so happy on that first voyage across the rough Atlantic, so happy in the little kingdom we ruled all by ourselves. Men and women should have common adventures together. We had no trouble with our crew for they were all Nova Scotians, mostly local boys, who knew that Mat was a first-class sailor man. Then one day on deck, when I was peeping and peering into the binnacle, Mat said to the steersman, a boy from home: 'Let Kitty, I mean the Missus, take the wheel for a minute.' What a thrill to hold a big ship on her course, with all sail set and a fresh wind blowing. The sails slap, the spars bend, the wind sings through the rigging, white-capped rollers push past, and the great ship plunges through the waters, till the staring figurehead is buried in foam above its breasts. Of course, Mat kept one hand on me and one hand on the wheel spokes, too. For when you begin to steer a ship,

you steer too much, just as I've heard a person does in learning to drive a car. You can't hold her all the time on the lubber's line, that's the black mark up and down the fixed case of the compass, that's supposed to line up with the ship's stem. You can't hold her exactly on the lubber line, you can only manage an average of the course. Do you understand this, Rosalie?"

"Nearly all. You see I grew up among boats and fishermen, but they don't pay much attention to compasses. They go by local marks, and coming home in the fog they know where they are when Mother Carey's Chickens leave them. They always trail the fishing boats."

"It sounds like the rule of early Nova Scotian navigation. You sail due south till the butter's used up and then steer west and hit Trinidad."

"You'll have to teach me the compass, said. Rosalie. Maybe I'll end up on a ship."

"They steer by degrees now I hear. No, you won't end up on a ship, though you'll cross a great sea and you'll be clad in white."

"Goodness, Old lady," said Rosalie, "you give me goose-flesh all over when you turn prophetess."

"Old people, very old people like me, who have lived life, can see both backwards and forwards. Time, as we measure it in our poor way, is just a matter of watches and clocks and the sun coming up, and that's a fraud too, for the sun doesn't come up at all, instead the earth turns on its own axis. Come now, it's getting late, a game of rummy and then to bed. You're getting too good, Rosalie, you've made twenty-five cents off me in the 1ast two nights."

Eight

They finished "Great Expectations" on Christmas Eve. Rosalie read rather sadly as if she were parting with an old friend:

"We are friends," said I rising and bending over her, as she rose from the bench.

"And will continue friends apart," said Estella.

I took her hand in mine and we went out of that ruined place, and as the morning mists had risen long ago, when I first left the forge, so, the evening mists were rising now, and in all that broad expanse of tranquil light I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

"It's too bad we've finished," said Rosalie. "it was a lovely book."

"Yes, too bad but even good things always come to an end."

"I do hope Estella married him, he'd been so faithful and had waited so long."

"Of course she did, she'd been a great fool long enough, but a hard real world gave her a sense of values. Of course she married him, and right glad she was to find a fitting mate."

"It's made me sad though, not to be quite sure. They seemed realer than real people to me. It's not too late, tell me one more story of you and Mat on the Arethusa to cheer me up."

"Let's see, where was I?"

"Almost to England, or rather Antwerp, on your first Atlantic crossing."

The little old lady took off her glasses and began: "We made a wonderful run from Block Island to Queenstown, only eighteen days and close to a record. The old Arethusa was blunt in the bows and she was deep loaded, but she had a clean bottom, and never a day of head wind did we have. Then before we knew it, we were in the English Channel and we kept close to the English side, and I saw for the first time the White Cliffs of Dover and far off to starboard

a dim line that was the French shore. And it's strange, Rosalie, how little phrases you pick up are remembered and touch your heart; the White Cliffs of Dover, the White Cliffs of Dover. I stared and stared and said that phrase over and over. The English knew nothing of me, and really I knew little of them, but this England was where my folks came from long ago, brave men without money, with nothing but the strength of their hands and courage in their hearts to make a home for themselves in the wilderness that was their very own. England even then seemed to me like home in a long since past, for all the books I had read had been English books, and all the history I had studied had been English history. There's good breed in that little northern island.

"At last a stubby impudent-looking tug hooked on to us and brought us alongside the pier in Antwerp. Mat had nothing to do with the discharging of the cargo of case-oil, and we went ashore and walked about every day. It was spring, May, I think, and it seemed always sunshine and fair weather. Mat used to put on a beaver top hat, a tailed coat and light trousers whenever we went ashore for though he was only twenty-three he was the Old Man, and I put on my smartest bonnets and a flowered dress Mat had bought me in New York. People used to turn and look at us, the giant broad-shouldered red-faced sailor man—the top hat made him at least six foot eight—and the slim little bride beside him. We were so happy there in Antwerp, and the old world with its crooked grey buildings was new to me. Everything gave us pleasure, looking in shop windows to see the curious strange things they had for sale, staring at big pictures in picture galleries though we didn't know much about them, and going to music halls where neither of us understood a word but somehow got the jokes just the same. And the best fun of all was eating in the little cafes, sometimes under an awning on the very sidewalk, where we watched all of Antwerp march by. They are little, chattering, laughing men, those Belgians, and they know how to cook. They make even the commonest thing taste well in rich spicy sauces. The waiters used to smile and show their teeth and call me La petite Madame, and I, really a green

country girl, felt very grand indeed. I never saw the inside of their kitchens, but they're said to be very dirty and untidy, some people say that all first-class cooks are dirty. Those French Belgians can certainly cook fish and puddings. And while we were sipping black coffee out of tiny cups we used to watch the pairs of whispering, laughing lovers, young lovers arm in arm, strolling about. Sometimes we would visit the parks where there were green iron seats and the chestnuts were bursting in leaf and flower. Everywhere you go, Rosalie, at every season of the year, but especially in the spring season, you see pairs of lovers. We're just the same in that way as the birds and animals and fishes. Everything in nature cries out, 'reproduce yourself, reproduce yourself.' It was my great sorrow in life that I could bear no children to such a noble man as Mat. I guess it must have been my fault for I had two men afterwards.

"There was never anything better than that spring in Antwerp. Even the dogs knew that May was come and ran about in packs expressing joy in every frisky movement. But the Belgians make dogs work, they harness them to milk carts. Most dogs are loafers and make their way through life by being agreeable and wagging their tails at their masters—some people are like that too—but the Belgians and Esquimaux put dogs to work, and very good it is for them.

"It was in Antwerp sitting with Mat before a cafe that I first saw street-girls. Some people call them by an ugly name, but everything pleased me then, and they were so pretty and pert and devil-may-care and reckless that I felt I wanted to talk with them and wish them luck.

"But while I didn't feel a bit like reforming the street-girls, for I am not a reformer by nature, they gave me a certain feeling of sadness, perhaps because of my own great happiness and perhaps because I learned that they were often poor and led that kind of life to support needy parents. They seemed like butterflies, butterflies that have only a brief day or two of life, and that flutter about and show their bright colours as long as the sunshine lasts and until the rains come.

"There never was anything again like seeing Antwerp for the first

time. I can't tell you everything I saw, Rosalie, or I'd never get on with my story, all about driving out into the country and all the queer little farms we passed, and every foot of ground under cultivation, crowded with growing vegetables and flowers and gay with tulips, the women working in the fields with the men, their sterns in the air, always bent double tending their plots and hoeing and weeding. I'd never come to an end if I told you everything about me and Antwerp and Mat and the Arethusa.

"From Antwerp we sailed across the North Sea, in ballast to Hamburg and up the Elbe, a great broad tidal river. Look at the globe, Rosalie. Do you see the English Channel and Dover and The Goodwins and Antwerp and the Elbe and Hamburg?"

"Yes, yes," said Rosalie, "I know all those on the map already, but what were Hamburg and the people there like? Do you suppose I'll ever see Antwerp and Hamburg?"

"You're going to see strange places, Rosalie, though not so many as me. Antwerp, Antwerp. Yes, you'll see Antwerp I think. I had the itching foot too when I was young, only you must wait and be patient and work at whatever comes to your hand."

"Go on OId Lady, go on with your story. What was Hamburg like?"

"Hamburg was a great grey city, not so bright-coloured as Antwerp, but somehow more solid, all stone and cement, a heavy pompous city, a great place for trade, and ships of all rigs from all kinds of foreign ports lay in the stream. The Arethusa could hardly find a place to cast her mud-hook. Here we took on a load of heavy machinery, in great wooden crates, and general cargo for Buenos Ayres. Mat and I went ashore every day dressed to the nines just as we had in Antwerp. Now the spring was far advanced, but there were still pairs of wandering lovers, I always had an eye cocked for them. The food was heavy in the restaurants where fat men sat with their families and drank stein after stein of foaming light coloured beer. The men never smiled at their fat wives, nor laughed nor talked with them much. Green as I was I could see that the men were cocks of the walk and thought themselves very important, and I was glad I hadn't married a German man. Mat and I could always

laugh and make little jokes together. He could be tough with a tough crew, but kind and gentle with a sick or wounded man.

"I've lived here so long alone, Rosalie, that I've got rather rough in my speech, maybe a defence among these people, but I can speak fine or coarse as I please. It was while I was in Hamburg that I learned I had a quick ear for words, and for sometime I'd been wondering how I could really help Mat who'd never got much schooling. A woman has to be a useful working partner to the man she loves if she wants to keep him. Love is good but it's not enough. There must be something more for a happy partnership.

"Now Mat had to arrange all about cargoes and freight rates, and he was a pretty good trader, but he didn't understand a word of any foreign language. The old Arethusa made thirty thousand dollars for the owners in the first year we had her, and her hull and rigging complete only cost sixty-five thousand. There was money in ships in those days. Mat was hampered by the language difficulty, however, so when I found I had a quick ear, I made up my mind to learn German, and I hired girl who had been a teacher, to come aboard every morning at nine o'clock and give me lessons, and I ground away at der, die, das. In no time I knew the words for water and beer and man, woman, child, street and waiter—you called them all ober if you wanted quick attention—church and house. Really lot of German words sound just like English. After I had learned a great many easy words, the verbs were the hardest, I got her to tell me all the words about ships and cargoes and wharves and docks, and tides and warehouses, and banking and accounts and trading and money. I wrote down all the words I'd learned in a scribbling book, and before I left Hamburg I knew over a thousand German words. I still know them, Rosalie, but I'll never use them again."

"Old Lady, I wish you were young again and we could wander over the wide world together, and you could speak all the words you've learned in your travels."

"You can't set the clock back. Nothing but the present and the future count, but it's like living again to tell it all to you, Rosalie. I've been waiting for an understanding listener for so long. I kept

on working at the German by myself and the start I had got in Hamburg with the German teacher and listening to the Germans talking was of great value to me. It's through the ear and not the eye, Rosalie, that one learns a foreign tongue. That's why the children in school who study languages from books never learn to speak well a language other than their own."

"I know two languages," said Rosalie, "and I seem to have learned both without trying."

"You learned them just by hearing them. You'll use both but you won't need more than those. I can't tell precisely what's going to happen to you, but I certainly see you in white.

"We had a bit of bad luck in getting out of Hamburg harbour, and towing down the Elbe. The tug ran us aground on the edge of the channel but fortunately, it was soft deep mud. You always run out of Hamburg on the beginning of the ebb, and the tide runs out fast. Mat was mad as a hatter and addressed a few Nova Scotian words to the tug's captain, but he didn't waste any time swearing. That's a beaten man's game. Mat was a real sailor man and quick as greased lightning in anything about ships. While the mate got the boats into the water, he got some hawsers and three kedge anchors from the lazaretto. There was real danger that we'd tilt into the channel and land on our beam ends and stay there with our cargo all shifted to starboard. But Mat took the kedge anchors far in on the flats, and made the hawsers fast a third up the spars, and the old Arethusa settled down in the mud, and stood upright like the lady she was. We floated off into the channel at the top of the next flood, but then we had to anchor and wait for surveyors to come aboard and see if our ship had damaged her bottom. The pump sucked after two minutes so we knew she wasn't leaking, she was honestly built. It was then that my little bit of German came into play, for I arranged that the towage company had to pay us a round sum for the delay and putting us ashore. 'Good girl, Kitty,' said Mat, 'I never could have managed that by myself.' Words of praise are sweet from the lips of one you love and I made up my mind then that I would learn and help Mat a lot before I was through. 'Your share's four hundred

dollars on that deal, Kitty,' said Mat, handing it over to me. That was the most money I'd ever had up to that time and I made that money work, Rosalie, but I'll tell you all about that later on.

"Out we went on the North Sea again, this time not so deep, and through the English Chanel, with a fair following wind all the way. The wind always seemed to be fair in those early days. But we had had one bit of bad luck in Hamburg. We had lost one of our men who had got in tow withs ome German girl and deserted. So we shipped an old Dane, named Hansen, in his place. He was a great black-bearded man about sixty, and he was a first rate sailor man, for he'd followed the sea since boyhood. But as soon as we get well into the North Sea old Hansen fell ill, and Mat found out that he had the worst kind of bad disease. You don't know what that is, Rosalie."

"Oh yes I do," said Rosalie. "I've heard about it."

"Mat read his big doctor's book, and did what he could, and his treatments certainly made old Hansen howl, but the old fellow got no better, so we just let him moon about the deck, and ran the Arethusa one man short on the port watch.

"Then, Rosalie, we ran across the mouth of the Bay of Biscay. Do you see where that is? Every day it got warmer and the nights more mellow, and at last we came into the trade winds and the old Arethusa ambled along leisurely on an even keel. Do you know what the trade winds are?"

"A little," said Rosalie. "They blow gently one way in hot places."

"That's it, the hot air rises at the equator and the colder air from north and south flows in to fill the space, and the earth turns on its axis, and the winds never catch up with it, so that they don't blow north and south but north-east and south-west."

"It's not so simple, is it?" said Rosalie.

"It's simple for sailing. You just sail along with all sail set and for days never shift a hallyard or a brace. Oh, Rosalie, you should have seen me in those first nights on a tropical ocean, me in love with Mat, the Master, king and queen of our own little kingdom. Sometimes it seemed that there was no land anywhere and that we would float forever on this tropic sea. Talk about Eden, and

Adam's garden! Adam and Eve were flats compared to Mat and me, for Mat and I worked together and played together, and who would be content to loaf forever in a shady garden, languidly plucking a ripe banana, talking with a serpent and cuddling a pretty woman or being cuddled by a handsome man. We had a real working paradise. By day, the sea, streaked with streamers of kelp and yellow eel-grass, slipped gently by us. Sometimes dolphins and porpoises played about our bows, sometimes schools of flying fish rose to glitter in the sunshine. Through it all the old Arethusa waddled on her way to Buenos Ayres, steady and contented as a fat old lady on her way to the grocery shop. And at night, after a sudden twilight, for there day changes into night in the twinkling of an eye, such a multitude of stars burned in the sky, not like our cold northern stars. The sky was like a great blue bowl splashed with gold. Now the great bear drooped behind the northern horizon and Mat told me I would soon see the Southern Cross. I put on my thinnest dresses and my lightest underclothes and sat on deck all day long. I could hardly bear to go below at night because sky and sea were so beautiful. When it got too hot in the foc's'le the men would drag their mattresses out on deck and sleep in the shelter of the foe's'le-head. They all did the same thing; they wrapped their heads in their jackets or a piece of canvas, for sailors think that if the moon shines on them while sleeping it will make them crazy lunatics."

"Luna means moon in the old language," said Rosalie, "perhaps that has something to do with it."

"Maybe, anyway they all did it, and none of them went crazy.

"Just before we got to the line poor old Hansen died and we had a funeral at sea. The sailors sewed him up in a long canvas sack and put a length of chain at his feet, and laid him on a plank, the outer end resting on the bulwarks and the inner held up in place by two sailors. That long white bundle was a sad sight to my young eyes, for young lovers think that they can never die. The warm wind was friendly, the sea rolled ever so gently, and old Hansen was to be left alone in the depth of infinite waters. I could think of the dead rising from their churchyard graves, as I had been been taught, but never

of old Hansen rising from the depths of that tropic sea. The men lined up in the waist of the ship, and Mat in his black coat with his cap off and the Book in hand stood alone near the body. Then he read as well as he could, stumbling over some of the big words, the sorrowful sentences for those buried at sea. The sailors began to tip up slowly the inner end of the plank. I was standing alone above them all, watching from the break of the poop, and suddenly I felt that I must do something for poor old Hansen. 'Wait, wait,' I cried, 'I want to sing for old Hansen.' Mat looked around at me, for the first time with an angry face. I had a voice when I was young, Rosalie, and I used to sing in the village choir. So I lifted up my little voice, that seemed so thin and weak in those infinite spaces of sea and sky, and sang a bit of an anthem I remembered:

Oh rest in the Lord,
Wait patiently for Him,
And He shall give thee
The desire of they heart.

It was quite inappropriate but I had to sing for the soul of that poor lonely sailor. The men all stood fast, not one cracked a smile, and when I had finished my song the sailors, on a signal from Mat, tipped the plank and old Hansen slid into the sea, with ever so little a splash. I could see the long white bundle going down, down in a kind of spiral through the pale blue water. Then I turned and ran below, and locked myself in my cabin and cried my heart out. Presently Mat knocked on the door and I was a little afraid to open, but be said: 'You did well, Kitty, it was right that you should sing,' and he kissed away my tears.

A little after that we crossed the Line, and on that day Mat said to me, 'You must have your initiation, as the men forward will have for the greenhorns, so that you'll always be lucky as a sailor girl.' So together in our cabin he blacked my face with charcoal, ducked my head in the washbasin, and gave me a spanking. Not a hard spanking, you know, just a love spanking, though I can remember it stung a little for he had a great strong hand. Then we washed the smut off

my face and went to bed. 'We'll be crossing the Line at eleven forty-seven as near as I can reckon,' he said, and at eleven forty-five he put his watch away and took me in his arms. Sometime after midnight Mat whispered to me, 'You're a true sailor-man's wife now, Kitty, and wedded to the sea as well.'

"How lovely," said Rosalie.

"Quick, Rosalie, get the cards, we've only time for a swift game of rummy before we turn in."

Nine

Christmas came with the snow deep all around them. They had a turkey and cranberry sauce and a plum pudding with brandy blazing above it, and candies and nuts; certainly the old lady was no niggard, even the cow, pig, and hens got extra rations that day. But dinner was late in the day, early in the morning they got up to exchange presents and open their stockings. On Christmas Eve the little old lady had dug into a black teak sea-chest and produced a pair of white giant wool stockings that once had been Mat's. "They're very old, but I've kept them wrapped and powdered and the moths have never got in them. They were always a joke, these stockings, between Mat and me, for the feet are at least sixteen inches long and the legs at least three feet. They were knit for Mat by a Cape Island woman, and well knit, I think she must have been in love with him. Mat used to wear them under his sea-boots on deck, but once when we loaded in Murmansk, I used them for bed socks and they reached clean to my thighs."

Rosalie laughed, "You are a great one for adventures, big and little."

So on the shelf behind the stove they had tacked Mat's giant stockings and had waited like children to see what Santa Claus would bring them. Two travelling pedlars and the grocery car had visited had

them in the week before Christmas and they had secretly filled these stockings for each other; packages of nuts and candies, toilet soaps, pencils, bottles of mucilage, writing pads, ink, pens, coring knives, ribbons, salt shakers, chewing gum, oranges, life-savers, an odd potato and a lump of coal. The little old lady was as pleased as a child when she emptied her pile of little gifts on the kitchen table. Rosalie had managed to buy a miniature barque fully rigged in a bottle, the work of some old sailor, and this pleased the little old lady more than anything. She cried a little as she turned the bottle over

and over in her wrinkled hands and looked closely at the hull and rigging. "It's all correct, Rosalie, oh what a lovely gift, only perhaps the spars rake back too far."

Rosalie was just as pleased with the heap she drew from Mat's old stocking, for amid all the little things there was one article of value, a silver-backed hair brush with stiff bristles such as Rosalie had always longed for. "Oh, Old Lady," said Rosalie, going to her and putting her arms around her and kissing her, "I think you are the nicest old lady in all the world, I think I shall live with you always."

"Oh, no, I won't last for always. When the warm spring comes you must be off to travel the roads of the world, else you'll have no interesting stories to tell when you are old. You never can get the whole of life second hand."

For real presents Rosalie gave the old lady a wine-coloured dressing gown of soft wool, and the little old lady gave Rosalie a dark blue ski suit. "Now you can rig out properly to shovel snow," she said slyly.

After dinner they drank several glasses of port and then they sang together, Rosalie in her sweet young voice and the old lady in tones made light and faint by age, the Christmas songs 'Noel', 'O little Town of Bethlehem', 'Good King Wenceslas', and 'Holy Night', that are the common inheritance of all our race.

"It's too bad that we've finished with 'Great Expectations'. Do you think we could go over it again?"

"Oh, Little Old Lady," said Rosalie, "of course we will if you like but now we've got 'Les Miserables', and I've looked forward so to that."

"Of course, it would be stupid to go through 'Great Expectations' again, that's only the whim of an old lady trying to recapture her youth. But Dickens does seem somehow the Christmas day author. Couldn't you read just a bit, the bit about the capture of the convict on the marshes, I think that happened on Christmas day. You're unhappy if you're very rich, Rosalie, but it's dreadful to be desperately poor. Dickens had such sympathy for the poor and wretched that he always puts you on their side."

Rosalie got down the book and found the place, long icicles hung from the roof's edge and glittered through the window, and the wind

swirled about the eaves. The stove cracked merrily and they were both warm, contented and happy. Rosalie began:

"*I know, but this is another pint, a separate matter. A man can't starve, at least, I can't. I took some wittles up at the village over yonder—where the church stands, a' most out on the marshes.*"

"*You mean stole,*" *said the sergeant.*

"*And I'll tell you where from. From the blacksmith's,*"

"You see," interrupted the little old lady, as was her habit, "he's trying to cover up and protect little Pip. Down and out people are often like that, they have loyalty to them that help them."

Rosalie read on:

"*Halloa!*" *said the sergeant staring at Joe.*

"*Halloa Pip,*" *said Joe, staring at me. "It was some broken witties—that's what it was—and a dram of liquor, and a pie.*"

"*Have you happened to miss such an article as a pie, blacksmith?*" *asked the sergeant confidentally.*

"*My wife did, at the very moment when you came in. Don't you know Pip.*"

"So," *said my convict, turning eyes on Joe in a moody manner, without the least glance at me, "So you're the blacksmith are you? Then, I'm sorry to say, I've eat your pie.*"

"*God knows you're welcome to it—so far as it was ever mine,*" *returned Joe with a saving remembrance of Mrs. Joe.*

"*We don't know what you've done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it, poor miserable creature—would us Pip?*"

Then something that I had noticed before clicked in the man's throat, and he turned his back.

"Now, there was a miserable creature for you, deserted by all the world, and there was Joe the kind man anxious to help him if he could," declared the little old lady.

"But most awfully hen-pecked," said Rosalie, "why didn't he assert himself with his woman?"

"It's often that way with big men and skinny women. It's just as the book says, she had a master-mind, and the master-mind is bound to rule."

"I think your stories are just as interesting as Mr. Dickens'. Why don't you write your stories down and make a great fat book about them?"

"My dear, you don't know what you say. I can tell stories, yes, but written words are quite different from spoken words. There's a kind of magic in written words. I've tried and tried to write them down, when I was so long alone, to write them down just to get them out of my system, when they seemed boiling up inside me, but you see they won't come out the end of an ordinary pen or pencil. Everything I try to write down seems stiff and unnatural and silly, and not the least bit true inwardly; my fingers itch, my muscles stiffen up, and my brain's paralyzed. There's something very strange about writing when one isn't used to it and has no flair for it."

"Perhaps," said Rosalie, "I could write them down as you told them to me."

"No, that wouldn't do at all. I'd go too fast or you'd go too slow and we'd be all in a muddle. The story wouldn't flow, and when you read it out afterwards, the sentences would all go tumbling over each other, like little boys skating on a slick pond."

"I could go fast, and remember a lot," said Rosalie.

"No, my dear, it would be just the same as if I'd written it. I'd stiffen up and all the written words would be dead and dull, just like flying fish that glitter skimming in the sunshine, and when landing on deck are just dead little fish."

"Nobody ever told me before," said Rosalie, "that there's such a difference between speaking and writing."

"There is, there is, why when a woman says 'No' it may mean twenty things, everything from real 'No' to intended 'Yes'. But when you write down the word 'No' it's just 'NO', nothing more or less. There's with it no gleam in the eye or gesture of the hand or

movement of lips or cheek muscle, it's just plain 'No'. I don't see how authors do it."

"I suppose some people are born with a bent for writing," said Rosalie.

"That's it, you've got to have a natural talent for writing just as you do for being a great sailor man. I've got no talent for writing. Now Dickens had. Mat had a talent for sailing a ship. He never had to think long, he knew by instinct how to help a ship and he acted quick."

"Do you think every human being has something he could do well, do you think God has made us so?" asked Rosalie.

"Certainly, and it's very sad when people are stuck into jobs all their lives that they're not handy at, and have no liking for."

"Do you suppose, Old Lady," said Rosalie, "that I'll ever find out what I should do and what I can do? I don't know yet, I'm only wandering."

"Of course you will. That's why you came to me, that's why you opened the carriage gate by the half-burnt church and came up the lane to this little yellow house. I'm old and have a little wisdom, and when you've done with me you'll go on and on till you find yourself and your own mate."

"Go with your story about the Arethusa in the tropics, Old Lady, that will complete a wonderful Christmas day."

"I'll never be able to tell you everything, Rosalie, the winter won't be long enough."

"Then spring will come."

"When long spring evenings come, we'll be out of doors fussing over plants. You're only nineteen, Rosalie, and with the spring some sap will rise up in you and I'll one day see you gazing at a far off horizon."

"Oh," said Rosalie, "I should like to hear the end of your stories; what with the books we read, I think it's better than going to college. I'm learning so much that my world seems swelling out everyday."

"Well, after we crossed the Line, lovely days and lovely nights drowsed away, and the old Arethusa dwadled along through the

Doldrums where there's scarce any wind, till we struck the Southern Trade winds. They blew south-west if I remember. After awhile we began to smell strange smells, pleasant smells, smells like cinnamon and cloves and nutmegs and coffee, and scents of flowers, and the sea took on another colour for the great Amazon flows into it. Mat told me we were off the coast of Brazil, though we could see no land as yet. Then we sailed south for some days till we came to the entrance of a spacious bay, and there spread out from seashore to hillside was the beautiful city of Buenos Ayres, a blaze of colour. It seemed all green and pale yellow and red, for trees grew about the houses and everywhere were masses of Bougainvillea and Flame Flower. I stood with my mouth open in wonder at this first sight of a great southern city.

"But when we dressed and went ashore, the people did not seem so appealing as their city. The men were full of smiles, but they were fat and greasy. I wouldn't trust one of them the length of my nose. 'Dagos' the men called them, but afterwards I learned that English speaking sailors call all French, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks or Italians or anyone that hails from the Mediterranean Basin, 'Dagos'.

"The women were beauties, and they did rig themselves up in black veils, fancy shawls and mantillas, and they'd all been in the paint pot up to their ears, and their eyelashes were all lacquered with some kind of shiny stuff. The business of the upper-class women in those ports is looking beautiful. In those hot countries they haven't much natural colour, and they daub or paint and powder. There was an old fellow in Schenectady who made a pot of money manufacturing and shipping by the ton 'Pink Pills for Pale People', to the women of Brazil and the Argentine. Here on the streets they stared at Mat and me more than they did in Antwerp or Hamburg, and laughed at us a little too, as if we were wild people from the frozen north. Once in awhile a nice woman gave me a smile, as if she enjoyed my natural complexion and rosy cheeks.

"At night there was always twanging of guitars, and men singing in tenor voices, and making a great fuss about their love affairs. They reminded me of roosters in a spring barnyard, only of course

roosters can't sing. But when I got about a little I learned from experienced women —one especially who spoke English and taught me Spanish—that northern men are by far the most intense and enduring lovers. So remember that, Rosalie, if ever any Dago man comes hanging around hat in hand."

"Little Old Lady," cried Rosalie impulsively, "I might as well tell you, I'm married already, I was married for over a month and that's what I ran away from. I can't ever have a lover and right now I don't think I ever want one."

"I thought there was something like that behind your running away. Rules and regulations can't hold two unhappy people together and sometimes they can't hold two happy people apart. It would be too bad never to find your mate. I was so happy with Mat that I wish that happiness for every woman, though I realize I was very lucky and that it cannot always be.

"To get on with my story, Mat and. I took a holiday for six whole days, while they were getting the general cargo out of the Arethusa and reloading her. We took a funny little train and went through the hills, and then on and on by horseback. Behind Buenos Ayres are vast plains as far as the eye can reach. I felt at home there because the plains seemed limitless like the sea. I had never seen such a land, where everything in nature and apparently without cultivation, grew in a kind of savage profusion. The grass grew breast high, and the wind moved it like waves of the sea, and great cloud shadows raced across it, like squalls when a breeze is getting up; and in all the damp places were patches of bright coloured flowers; everywhere strange gay birds fluttered and everywhere on these vast plains were herds of red and white cattle watched over by cowboys, that were half Indian, who rode as if they were part of their horses. At night we stopped in low-roofed, single storey farm houses called haciendas, and though we could not understand each other's tongues, the people were polite and kind. There I used my first few words of Spanish. When we were riding over the plains I would say to Mat, 'We're so happy it can't last,' and he'd laugh in his quiet way and reply, 'Sure it will last, we'll be happy together

till we're old, old people sitting by the fireside. Surely the Lord God wants us to be happy.'

"Years and years afterwards, since I've been living alone in this little yellow house, I read two books by a man named Hudson, who knew that land well, 'Far Away and Long Ago', and 'The Purple Land', and they brought back to me all those happy days on the Pampas till my old heart was almost bursting with joy and sorrow.

"In Buenos Ayres there were many Germans, in fact all the big shipping houses were managed by Germans—they're a more solid people than Portuguese and Spaniards—and because of the German I'd learned I was able to help Mat a good deal. And I was learning Spanish too, Spanish is much easier than German. Oh, I was ambitious and eager to learn in those days.

"We got a freight to Melbourne, Australia, and that was a long voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. And it was on this voyage that I pestered Mat to teach me navigation. I wanted to know everything, Rosalie. Mat laughed, but after awhile got a big volume called 'Norrie's Epitome' out of his chest and said, 'Read that for a starter, Kitty, if you're bound to ruin your pretty eyes, that'll hold you most of the way to Melbourne. Here's the other book that goes with it,' and he gave me another fat book by an American named Bowditch.

"I won't stop at Melbourne," said I, "for I mean to sail the seas of the world with you, till we're so blind we can't tell a red buoy from a black one, and someday I'm going to learn to take a sight and check it against the position by dead reckoning. Do you know what dead reckoning is, Rosalie?"

Rosalie shook her pretty head.

"Well you see, a ship on the ocean tows behind her a twirling instrument called a log, because at first they really used a log that didn't twirl at all, and that tells how fast the ship is sailing, and from that how far she travels in twenty-four hours. Then you take the course that you've given to the steersmen, and plot the distance given by the log on the courses sailed, on a big chart in the chart-room. So every day you can tell almost where you are by dead

reckoning, and that's easy and very good fun. But it doesn't give you a true position, because there are currents and great rivers running through the sea, that wash you hither and yon. Of course most of these currents and their directions are known, but often they change their speed or alter their course a little. Even after you make allowance for currents you are a little wrong, so at dead noon the Old Man—that's what the men call the Master, no matter how young he is—takes the height of the sun, and works out his latitude from that, his longitude he gets from the chronometer that keeps Greenwich time. Do you understand, latitude and longitude, Rosalie?"

"A little," said Rosalie, "they're the circles that run around the earth east and west and north and south on the map."

"That's right and where your latitude and longitude lines cross, there you are. I pegged away at navigation and languages and never was idle from the crack of dawn till midnight. We had a little foot-pump organ in the cabin and sometimes I'd play and sing for Mat. He liked 'The Rose of Tralee' best of all. He used to tease me when he saw me scowling over Norrie's Epitome. 'You'll never get on with logarithms, Kitty, they're hard,' he said. 'I hardly understand them myself, they're all rule of thumb to me.' 'I'll try hard anyway,' said I, for you must never let a man know that you're one lap ahead of him. I wasn't going to tell Mat that I'd learned logarithms in school, and that when I wanted to multiply big numbers, I added the indices to the root of ten, and subtracted to divide."

"I know that too," said Rosalie. "I learned that too, logarithms are only quick dodges for multiplying, dividing and getting square and cube roots."

"That's right, you're bright as a new button, you'll go somewhere, Rosalie."

"So I pegged away at Norrie and Bowditch and after awhile learned how to shoot the sun and a star. I wanted to know everything that Mat knew about sails and ropes and spars and yards and stowing cargoes, and battening down hatches and painting and cleaning ships. Everything about sailing on a ship is exciting. I'd like

to have learned to go aloft and tie down a gasket on the end of a royal, but Mat drew the line at that, and I knew it would never do myself, for while we played silly games in the cabin we had to keep up some show of dignity before the crew for the sake of discipline.

"At last we made Cape Town and there we lay for a week, taking on water and fresh provisions and making a few minor repairs to one of the spars that had sprung a little in a gale. We went up-country, first by train and then by horses and oxen in Cape-carts, and there for the first time I saw black and brown men, living in Kraals and villages. I began to wonder then why God made some men white, some black, some yellow and some chocolate coloured. You see, Rosalie, when you are brought up in a little community with its village life, its schools, its settled very limited opinions, its churches, its innocent little parties, and its funny social distinctions, you get a very meagre idea of our world and none at all of the universe."

"Don't I know that," said Rosalie. "Oh, Old Lady, teach me how to learn."

"I learned a lot by observation, Rosalie, and I expect you will do the same.

"These brown and black people bothered me and I began to look about me. South Africa is a strange country with worn mountains that you can tell at a glance have been half-washed away, and suddenly I knew by some kind of intuition that the world was old and tired, very ancient and tired, and shrinking like an old lady. And I knew too that these black and brown men had been on the world a very long long time, and had been the same for long ages. Perhaps the hot sun had coloured them. Anyway, later in many years of travelling, I saw that hunger and climate and necessity, and geography, rivers, bays, lakes, seas, and mountains are the forces that have made men what they are.

"When I got up country and saw Zulus, Kaffirs, and little bands of pigmy bushmen, that it is said shoot poisoned arrows from their blow-pipes, I knew that these could not all have sprung from one pair of idle lovers in an idle garden.

"Then too I saw the great bearded Boer farmers, rough, strong,

heavy-handed people sprung from Dutch or German stock. Everyone was talking there of gold and diamonds—men love gold and diamonds, and will risk all for the adventure of getting them—and men, the most desperate and most daring were flocking in to South Africa from all lands to tear down hills and screen gravel for gold. There were plenty of gold-rush shanty-built towns full of saloons and the type of women that follow the gold-diggers—not like the slim, dainty girls of Antwerp—a coarse type, themselves gold diggers. And there were names that I heard on every tongue—Cecil Rhodes and Barney Bernardo, great business men and promoters; Paul Kruger, the Old Testament patriarch and Chief of the Boers; and a great, powerful, savage king named Benguala. And ever they said that these three forces would one day clash, and sure enough they did, and Savage and Patriarch, who worshipped a fierce Old Testament God, were beaten by the men who loved gold and diamonds. You've heard of the Boer war, Rosalie, where the farmers almost beat the English?"

"I've heard a little about it," said Rosalie.

"Now I've talked your ear and arm off, old ladies can never stop chattering about the past since they have no hope for the future. It's been the happiest Christmas day, Rosalie, I've spent in thirty years."

Rosalie won fifteen cents at rummy, in fact the little old lady discarded to her obvious disadvantage so that Rosalie might win. It was cold and bleak outside, warm and snug within. It would take them a week to finish the turkey and there would be turkey soup to follow. They put away their presents and went to bed and Rosalie, snug and warm and well-content, said a prayer of thankfulness before she dropped into forgetfulness.

Ten

The little old lady was as good as her word and after Christmas she ordered cloths from sample books, got the next summer's fashion books and patterns, and began to plan on making dresses for Rosalie s campaign against the world. She was no country dressmaker. She was a skilled cutter and seamstress, and nothing but the best material would suit her touch and eye.

"You must have one red dress, Rosalie, to go against your black hair, and one of powder blue to bring out the blue-gray of your eyes, and a white dress, a black dress and a sedate tweed dress to wear when you are hunting for a job. Then, of course, you must have half a dozen cotton dresses, and lots of under things and pyjamas."

"But how in the world will I carry these things, said Rosalie, "when I go walking the roads of the world?"

"I've thought of all that but I can't tell you yet, that must be a secret and surprise that we'll enjoy in a month together. I've got two leather trunks in the attic that have been twice around the world, and that are no more use to me. On my next journey, I'll travel light."

"I can never repay you, Old Lady."

"You're repaying me now. What use is extra money now to a wrinkled old lady. When I dress you I renew for a little the glory of my own youth. Never fear, they won't look homemade, for I've had lessons from the best in cutting and sewing, and I had plenty of time to practice sewing in long ninety day voyages from Shanghai to London. They won't look homemade but smart and right up to the minute."

"I'm sure they will. How do you happen to know so much, Little Old Lady?"

"Necessity drives us all on. I learned a little at home, but at sea, I had to make my own dresses to please Mat and my own young vanity. 'Smart as paint, Kitty,' he used to say, looking me over before we went ashore, 'smart as a new ship just off the docks with a

shining copper bottom, smart as paint and fragrant as a wayside rose.'"

Rosalie did not have to repeat on 'Great Expectations', rather when the lamp was lighted and chores and housework done, she carried on with the greatest of all French stories. Her Acadian French ran trippingly from her tongue, and she read with animation,

In 1804, M. Myriel was the cure of Brignolles. He was then an old man, and lived in the deepest seclusion. Near the time of the coronation, a trifling matter of business belonging to his curacy—what it was, is not now precisely known—took him to Paris.

Among other personages of authority, he went to visit Cardinal Fesch on behalf of his parishioners.

One day, when the Emperor had come to visit his uncle, the worthy cure, who was waiting in the ante-room, happened to be on the way to his Majesty. Napoleon noticing that the old man looked at him with a certain curiousness, turned around and said brusquely:

"Who is this good man who looks at me?"

"Sire," said M. Myriel, "you behold a good man, and I a great man."

That evening the emperor asked the Cardinal, the name of the cure, and sometime afterwards M. Myriel was overwhelmed with surprise on learning that he had been appointed Bishop of D–."

"God put that idea in Napoleon's heart, you will see why later," said the little old lady.

It is too long to tell in this book all the winter tales that the little old lady told Rosalie; how she and Mat sailed the seven seas and visited Shanghai and Hong Kong, London and Port of Spain, the Golden Gate, New Orleans and Copenhagen; how Kitty learned to do some trading and I fear a little smuggling on her own account; how they took on guano in Chile and had for two months to wait their turn with twenty ships lying in the road-stead in turn ahead of them. "The best smelling cargo," she used to say, "is deck loads of spruce and pine deal, the worst smelling is guano."

Only a few extracts from this winter's saga can be told, otherwise

this story would be all about the little old lady and not about Rosalie at all.

Eleven

Rosalie read along, the old lady nodded her head, listened, smiled, approved,

"My friend," said the bishop, "before you go away, here are your candlesticks; take them."

He went to the mantlepiece, took the two candlesticks and brought them to Jean Valjean. The two women beheld the action without a word, or gesture, or look that might disturb the bishop.

Jean Valjean was trembling in every limb. He took the candlesticks mechanically, and with a wild appearance.

"Now," said the bishop, "go in peace. By the way, when you come again, you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door. It is closed only with a latch, day and night."

Then turning to the gendarmes, he said: "Messieurs, you can retire." The gendarmes withdrew.

Jean Valjean felt like a man who is just about to faint.

The Bishop approached him and said in a low voice:

"Forget not; never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man."

Jean VaiJean, who had no recollection of this promise, stood utterly confounded. The bishop had laid much stress upon these words as he uttered them. He continued solemnly: Jean Valjean, my brother; you belong no longer to evil but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, a I give it to God!"

"Rosalie, he was a saint, a true saint."

"Yes he really loved the poor."

"He gave away everything he had. I don't think much of these rich persons that live in palaces, and draw great salaries. It's a bad system to get into a round of hidebound prayers. They get to worship an institution instead of helping the people. There are very few real

Christians like the bishop in the world, you can count them on your fingers and toes."

"Do you really think so, Old Lady?" said Rosalie timidly. "Don't you think you'll get to Heaven if you go to church regularly and say all the prayers?"

"Heaven! Where is it? In the sky? Deep in the earth? It's my opinion that the only people who'll get to Heaven, if there is such a place, will be saints like the Bishop."

"Do you think everyone should give away all they have, Old Lady?' asked Rosalie.

"Certainly not, where would I be if I'd given away my shirt? In the county poorhouse. I'm rich and I've hung on to my money. I'm no saint, I'm a sinner, you have to be one or the other. This plan of giving away everything doesn't work for sinners, it only works for saints."

"But you've been kinder to me, Old Lady, than anyone so far in the world, surely you must be a Christian."

"No, I'm not. It's a bold man that calls himself such. Most of them are seeking something more; heavenly insurance, I call it. No poor one comes to this door without a gift of food or clothing, but still I'm not a Christian. I have plenty of money in the trust company, and I mean to hang on to it. You have to look after your property, your possessions, or you'll come to a sorry end. Now, Mat he came near to being a saint, he never longed for possessions, he was always doing a good turn for somebody, if he had a dollar in his pocket his fingers itched at the sight of a beggar."

"Tell me more about you and Mat," said Rosalie.

"It was six years," began the little old lady, "before the owners called the Arethusa home, to be cleaned and refitted. She had made a pot of money in those six years, for freights were high. We'd never carried away a yard of spar, though we'd been in plenty of gales, for Mat was a triple A master, daring yet careful; he had no frayed rigging, no rotten sails, for halyards and braces and foot-ropes were rewove three times a year. Good seamen liked to sail with Mat. He was a driver, but they felt safe on his ship. I was the one that saved

the money for what I bought in Shanghai or Valpariso, I sold duty free at great profit in Boston and London. Mat was the saint, I was the worldly one, women are often greedy.

"Well, at last after six years we came home; through the deep narrow Gut, across the blue Basin, home up the little tidal river, that seemed like a child's brook after the Amazon; up the little home tidal river we went on the top of the flood.

"Father's tug picked us up a mile below the drawbridge, and on an even keel, we came up four miles of river between hills gay with orchards, our sails rolled tight and neat the gaskets all tied down and the yards squared. She was no battered barque returning, for Mat was a great lad to lay on paint. I was proud as a queen standing there on the poop-deck, watching the people on the wharves grow from pigmies to full-sized people I could begin to recognize. It was good to be home, but how low the green hills looked, how small and shrunken my native village of white houses.

"All the village was on the wharves to greet us, and of course, father and mother among them. Mat's people, the humble Deckers, were there too, but not in the front row. It took some time to tie up, but the wharves were high, and on the flood flush with the Arathusa's deck, so we were soon ashore. Father gave me a hug, then held me off and looked at me and said, 'Why, you're a woman now, Kitty, you went away a little girl.' Mother kissed me warmly, and I could tell by the light in her eyes that she was glad to see me back, though I'd always been more friendly with father than mother. 'You'll have a thousand things to tell me, Kitty,' she said, and so I had, though I can tell them better now, when I can see the whole of my life as one piece.

"They had a grand surprise for us too; a shining new ship on the ways, two hundred tons bigger than the old Arethusa, that was to be full-rigged with yards on her mizzen, and Mat was to be not only master, but a third-part owner. She was a beauty, clipper-built like the ships in the China tea trade.

"But there was a sad part; joy and sorrow you learn come in streaks, like fat and lean in bacon. The old Arethusa was fourteen

years old and had paid for herself many times over—she was a lucky ship—and before we got home the owners had sold her to some Norwegians. A month after our arrival a foreign captain and crew came and took her down the river. It nearly broke my heart for I felt that I had been married to her as well as to Mat. I stood on the highest hill and watched and watched, as the tug took our lovely old barque down the winding river, and out into the Basin, till her royals faded in the mists about the Gut. She had been my first home with my great-hearted lover; in her I had first seen strange lands, strange cities, strange peoples; never again in any ship could I have such days of wonder. Only I was glad that if she had to be sold the Norwegians had got her, for Norwegians are good and true sailormen.

"We were home for four months, while the new Arethusa was finished and sparred and rigged and painted. She was indeed a beautiful ship and of course much faster than the barque whose name she bore. But I was home quite long enough, for after the first few days of getting acquainted again, my father and mother took it for granted that I was still little Kitty, and the rules and little conventions of the village irked me. However, I was wise enough to smile and say nothing. But I was indeed glad to be on the sea with Mat again in our fast full-rigged ship in a kingdom that was all our own.

"I must skip hundreds of things, Rosalie, my memory of what happened on our ship is not as clear and vivid as what happened on the barque, for then it was all new and strange. Moreover, I would go on for ever and ever; there would be no end."

"I like to listen, Old Lady," said Rosalie. "I'm learning all the time."

"Once in March we were making the Nova Scotia coast, and after we left the Gulf Stream the weather was thick as mud with driving squalls of snow. I tell you I changed quickly from cottons to woolens. It wasn't often that Mat made an error in reckoning, and then we always checked together, but we had to run by dead reckoning for we hadn't seen the sun by day nor the stars by night. Something went wrong; perhaps the compass was out, for you know, Rosalie,

sometimes the ironwork of the ship, or some metallic substance in the cargo, may pull the compass several degrees off. Anyway, we made the coast too far to the westward, and the first thing we knew we were almost on top of Little Hope light. Willard Langille and Lily used to tend that light. Fortunately, we heard the bell and horn just in time and the water was bold. Mat hauled the Arethusa off seaward and jogged her slowly up the coast. Then at the end of a day and a nignt the fog lifted and the sun came out, and far inshore we saw a strange sight; a ship, a full-rigged iron ship, with the sails tied up but flapping as if the work had been done hurriedly; she rode straight as if to anchor but was flying a flag of distress. Mat stood the Arethusa in as close as he dared, and lowered the jolly-boat from the davits. 'Mat,' I said, 'I want to go with you.' He hesitated for a moment, and then said, 'All right, Kitty,' for he always wanted to please me. We had a good first-mate, and he jogged the Arethusa to and fro with the foresail backed, while we rowed over to the anchored ship. As we got nearer we noticed, that she was full-rigged with no list, and painted red. Though not aground, she was close in on the harbour sand-bar,, and as we came under her quarter we saw her name The Ardmore of Belfast. 'What in the world of cats is she doing here?' said Mat.

"She was loaded with alcohol, and had jogged alone nearly five hundred miles. Mat had a pretty shrewd idea what had happened to her, but that's another story. My head's so full of stories, Rosalie, that it's hard for me to finish any one.

"The boy, the son of the shipbuilder, was less frightened than the other, and he said, "Let the off-shore wind blow her till she'll swing clear off the bar and then we'll let go the anchor and give her plenty of chain.

"And after the Ardmore had plenty of chain, they cut the lashing that the anchor was catted with, knocked out the pawl, cleared the windlass and let the big mud-hook go with a splash and rattle of chain. That's always a sweet sound to a sailor-man's ear after a long voyage. It was just after they hove the anchor, and the sun broke out and they hoisted the jack up-side-down, that we sighted them.

"Mat patted them on back and shoulder, and told them they were brave lads, and would someday make good sailor-men. That was the highest praise he could ever give to a man. Then Mat, thought quick. He wrote down the names and addresses of the two lads and said, 'We'll get her under weigh.' He called up the other sailor from the jolly boat and that made seven of us counting the two lads. Somehow, between us we hove up the big heavy anchor. It was hard work breaking her out, but Mat was as powerful as three men and the country lads were strong and willing and so were our own sailors. I pushed too on the capstan bars with all my one hundred and five pounds, and when we were stuck with the chain almost up and down, Mat began to bellow 'Blow the Man Down', and we gave an extra heave and the big mud-hook broke loose. You know you have to learn in life, Rosalie, that you always have a little more strength for a crisis than you think you have, for strength is a thing of the mind. It takes three strong men to handle a sailor crazed with dope and drink. Yes, strength is a thing, in great part, of the mind; don't forget that Rosalie, if you're ever in a jam."

"I'll remember," said Rosalie, and indeed in later years, she was glad that the little old lady had given her that precept.

"Now the Ardmore was afloat and drifting out to sea, Mat got two jibs on her quick and hurried the lads into their dory. I took the wheel and Mat and the sailor-men loosed the lower topsails and hauled round the braces, and there we were going to sea on a strange ship, before the coward captain and his crew could launch his jolly-boat through the surf. In fact they never tried to push off, as far as we could see. She was an abandoned ship and we had her. Mat figured that they had tried to lose her for the insurance. We sailed in close to the lee of the Arethusa; we had a smart second mate and Mat put him in command of the Ardmore, and give him the whole of starboard watch. Follow the Arethusa, Mat told the the mate, and we'll make Halifax together. They got sail on her, the wind was light off-shore, and both ships were close-hauled. The Ardmore wasn't as smart a sailer as the Arethusa, and as she was light in ballast she made more lee-way, but whenever she dropped more than a mile

behind, Mat jogged the Arethusa till the Ardmore caught up with her. Next day by noon both ships were anchored in Bedford Basin, and the officials of the admiralty Court came on board.

"Then there was a great to-do, for the Ardmore's captain turned up and claimed that Mat had stolen his ship, and committed an act of piracy. But he hadn't a leg to stand on, not even a wooden leg, and in the end he lost his master's certificate. We got a handsome salvage and our crew got prize money, more money than such simple sailors had ever had in all their lives before, and Mat sent cheques for twelve hundred dollars to each of the lads who had helped us. Good old generous Mat. He wrote on each of the cheques, 'Get an education with this, I never had the chance.'

"And do you know I always kept track of those two lads, and one became a chemist and a few years back he was elected president of the Chemical Society, and the other won a scholarship of money, made by that Mr. Rhodas that I had heard of in of a South Africa, and he went to Oxford and in time became the head of a college. I wrote them both a few years back, when I heard of their success, and asked them if they remembered Mat and me and the Arethusa and the Ardmore, though I'm no great hand at writing letters. I told you, Rosalie, I get paralysis of arm and brain as soon as I take pen in hand, as sailors say. They both wrote back nice letters and thanked both Mat and me—they didn't know that Mat was gone—and said that of course they remembered the Ardmore and that the salvage money had given them their start in life."

"What a lovely story," said Rosalie, especially that part about heaving up the great anchor by the strength of your minds."

"Mat would have got her off somehow, even if we hadn't been able to break out the anchor; Mat was very resourceful in anything about a ship. There was a donkey engine on board to hoist with, but you see we hadn't time to waste getting up steam; Mat told me afterwards he planned to saw through the chain with a hack-saw and buoy out the chain and anchor. He always knew a second way."

"That's a great thing in life, I believe," said Rosalie, "to have a second way if the first way fails."

Twelve

Winter days flew by like magic, the snow was deep, the cold steady, paths had to be kept clear, chores and wood attended to. Men came and hauled birch and maple logs from the woodlot, cut them into stove lengths and heaped them in a huge conical pile. It reminded Rosalie of Hercule's woodpile. There was always dressmaking or cooking to fill any hours in daylight that might have been idle. They looked forward to the coming of evening.

One night Rosalie read in her sweet lilting voice;

Napoleon, before ordering the charge of Milhaud's cuirassiers, had examined the ground, but could not see this hollow road, which did not make even a wrinkle on the surface of the plateau. Warned, however, and put on his guard by the little white chapel, which marks its junction with Nivelles road, he had, probably on the contingency of an obstacle, put a question to the guide LaCoste. The guide had answered no. It may almost be said, that from the shake of a peasant's head came the catastrophe of Napoleon.

Still other fatalities must arise. Was it possible that Napoleon should win this battle? We answer, no. Why? Because of Wellington? Because of Blucher? No. Because of God.

For Bonaparte to be conqueror at Waterloo, was not in the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of facts was appearing in which Napoleon had no place. The ill-will of events had long been announced.

It was time that this vast man should fall.

"Oh, Old Lady," said Rosalie eagerly, "do you think there's a great Destiny that rules all human affairs?"

"Of course, the centuries swing along, Destiny shapes the big events; old men cannot see the new things that are coming and become useless and young men with open minds take their places.

Napoleon had played his part, and at Waterloo he was old-fashioned and out of date. Events had marched past him."

"But is there a destiny, a fate for each man and woman?" asked Rosalie.

"A little, when they march on the road of advancement for all men; when they flow with the great river of God's progress. If they get into a backwater or bayou of their own little desires, for such there is no destiny."

"How shall I ever know?" said Rosalie.

"You will know, you must only wait patiently, and work at whatever work, even the commonest, that comes to your hand. Men must march with the events of their times."

"What do you mean by that, Old Lady?"

"Well, I have seen it all about me in my lifetime. When the time of wooden sailing ships was past and steam and iron ships began to replace them, certain stubborn old men hung on to their wooden ships and died in poverty. The full-rigged ship was such a tall and beautiful thing; it is no wonder they loved them. But no one had wit enough in our province to begin a new industry of building iron steam ships, though we had plenty of coal and iron nearby in the ground. So from the richest province, we have sunk to the poorest because we did not march with Destiny. Mat might have done it, though he had no training in iron ships, but fate took him."

"I hope I shall find my destiny," said Rosalie. "I hope I shall march with events. Tell me more Old Lady, about you and Mat, somehow that helps me to find myself."

"Mat said to me one day, 'It's always bad luck to salvage another vessel so sailor men say; it looks like a lot of money, but it often brings bad luck.'

" 'Nonsense,' I said to him, 'we've sailed the seas in safety for ten happy years; there's no such thing as luck'—I was young then—you make your own luck in life by being careful and watching the weather, and having a sound well-rigged ship under you. Mat used to say that I was better than any barometer, because I could always tell by the feel of the air, when a gale was coming up.

" 'You're wrong about that Kitty,' Mat said. 'No matter how careful you are, and no matter how good a sailor-man you are, you can always have a run of bad luck.'

"And Mat was right, for on the run over to Liverpool after we salvaged the Ardmore we ran by night plunk into a big whale. That sounds impossible doesn't it? He must have been sick and lying half submerged on the surface. Well, you know it's no joke running into a whale that weighs twenty or thirty tons. It didn't hurt the Arethusa much, but it shook her from stem to stern and almost jarred me out of my berth. I thought we'd struck a reef, though I knew that was impossible in mid-ocean. I expect we almost cut the whale in half for there was a good breeze, and we were doing seven knots. The trouble was to get clear of the whale for we'd struck it fair in the middle, gone deep into it, it was fast to our stem and that made it almost impossible to steer the ship. Mat hove the Arethusa to till daybreak, and then in boats they hacked the monster off with axes. All the sharks in mid-atlantic gathered for the kill.

"There was a great scar on the Arethusa's stem where she'd struck the whale's backbone and some of her forward timbers were started so that we had to pump three hours every day to keep her clear till we reached Liverpool.

"From Liverpool we went all right to Shanghai, and there we shipped a bad crew. They were put aboard by runners, and a Finn was among them, a Finn with his fur cap, that he hangs on to even in the tropics, always, it is said, brings bad luck to a ship, and that Shanghai crew was surly and half-mutinous from the time they sobered up. The runners you know, Rosalie, often put a crew aboard half-drunk.

"Everything went wrong that voyage. We had very weak first and second mates that we'd picked up in the port of London when the beef-barrels were broached, the meat was found to be bad—we'd been sucked in on that beef—and the biscuits were so full of weevils that the men could scarcely eat them.

"Mat put in at Cape Town, and took on beef, biscuits and water but he didn't allow the men to go ashore, for desertion in that year

was common, and it wasn't easy to pick up a fresh crew. That further annoyed the men who had troublesome leaders.

"Before we reached the Line, we had a half mutiny on our hands. Our first mate was in a panic, and said that he'd heard from the bos'n, that the crew had arms, and some night they were coming aft to murder us all and seize the ship for themselves. He was a coward, and kept crying out 'Oh, Mister, what will we do?'

"But Mat knew what to do. He got out his revolvers and loaded them, and told the mate to order all men in both watches at noonday to the break of the poop. Before he went on deck he handed me a brace of loaded pistols and said, 'Stand in the companion-way, Kitty, but don't show your head. If you hear me shoot or shout Come on deck, pop out quick and blaze away.' I stood in the companion-way, trembling but not afraid and listened to Mat's words; they were as simple as some of the talk in the Old Testament.

" 'I hear', said he, 'there's been some talk of mutiny among you, and that you've got arms and ammunition hidden in the foc's'le; and this I say unto you, that I intend to shoot and kill the first man who disobeys an order, and to hang from the yard-arm any man I find guilty of leading or inciting to mutiny.' I was trembling with pride at Mat's courage. He went on, 'Now as you know, it is not common for the captain or officers of a ship to enter the foc's'le for that in a way is your home. I have lived in the foe's'le and I know the unwritten laws, but now entrance has to be made; stand stock still there in the waist of the ship; any man or men who move will die in their tracks. First mate, go forward and search the foc's'le and bring any hidden arms or ammunition to me.' The craven first mate did as he was bid, laws, waist Hirst and the men stood still looking awkward and foolish—Mat was a commanding figure especially with a revolver in each hand. Presently the mate came back with three revolvers and a sawed-off shotgun. How they managed to get these arms we could never imagine. Mat took them and tossed them into the sea. 'Now,' said he, 'Chief Mutineer Hopkins,' and to the mate, 'put the irons on him and lock him in the brig.' And that was the end of the mutiny. I

never had to come on deck, but I wanted so much to stand by Mat in danger, that I almost rushed out.

"But that wasn't by a long shot the end of our bad luck. In the North Atlantic we struck a hurricane or rather a hurricane struck us. It came on us suddenly and for once, the barometer and I were both caught out, much the worst gale of wind we'd ever been in. First it blew hard from the south-west and kicked up a nasty sea of short steep rollers: then all of a sudden it fell almost dead calm, as far as the wind was concerned, though the sea ran high and battered us about with scarce steerage way; then suddenly it began to blow twice as hard from the north-east. That's the way with hurricanes, they're circular storms, you get a blast from one quarter, and then another twice as hard from the opposite corner.

"It took the foremast clean out of the Arethusa, though we had only a scrap of sail on her and what a mess of wreckage that was, with the broken spar and yards and jib-stays and jibs all trailing to leeward with the yard arms—we had steel lower yards—doing their utmost to punch a hole in the side-timbers of the Arethusa. Of course, we couldn't steer her; there she lay and wallowed in the trough of the sea, with the wind howling at its worst, and the waist of the ship half full of water as the big seas struck her. Wind and sea can be cruel; they have no pity for men. Mat and the sailors set to work with axes to cut stays and rigging, to let the wreckage of the foremast float clear. I could hear them slashing and pounding in the lulls of the gale as I clung to the sides of my berth. It seemed hours and hours, though perhaps it was only a little while, till I heard a pounding at my cabin door. I opened and there stood the craven mate with his silly mouth hanging open.

" 'He's gone Missus'

" 'Who's gone?' cried I.

" 'The Old Man, the captain, your husband.'

" 'Gone!' I cried.

" 'Gone,' said he, 'a big wave struck him, and an end of rigging whipped round him just as we got the foremast clear.'

" 'Get off a boat,' I shouted.

" 'No boat can't live in that sea,' said he, 'and he's a mile to leeward by now.'

"I pulled on some oil skins and dashed on deck. I could barely stand by holding fast by both hands as the blast of the hurricane struck me and I had sense enough to know that for once the craven mate was right; no boat could live a minute in that gale and sea. I stared to leeward, the sky was clouded with wind-blown water, there was no wreckage within the range of my vision. Mat was gone, gone for good and all. Gone forever. Somewhere far to leeward he was perhaps clinging to a piece of rope, and I heard his voice, or so it seemed through the fury of all that gale 'Get a rag of sail on her, Kitty, and heave her to.' I was stunned but I gave that order to the mate, and we hove the wounded Arethusa to with her foremast gone. You don't need head sail on a ship to heave to.

"Then in two hours as if by miracle the hurricane left us, and the sun burst out through ragged clouds, and the Arethusa headed into the seas, still running high.

"I lay in my berth saying to myself; 'What shall I do?' What shall I do?' I guess I grew many years older in those few hours. And presently something said to me: 'Be brave and strong as Mat would expect you to be.' So in the early afternoon, when the mate came aft, with his silly mouth hanging open and said, 'I guess I'm master of the Arethusa now.' I answered, 'Bring all the revolvers and ammunition here to me in this cabin.' He did as I told him. 'Now, mister mate,' said I, 'you've made a wrong guess. I'm owner of this ship and I appoint myself master of the Arethusa. I can work out a position, and take a sight and calculate on it, far better than you can and I'll bring the Arethusa home." His jaw dropped an inch. 'And you and the crew will do exactly as I say. I have all the firearms locked in my cabin do you understand that?'

" 'Yes Missus,' said he, 'but I never yet heard of a ship sailed by a woman master.'

" 'You're hearing about it now,' said I. 'There has to be a first time to everything. Remember, one disloyal step and you're for it first of all plump through the belly.'

“ ‘Yes Missus,’ he said quite humbly, ‘I’ll take your orders and do exactly what you say.’

“And do you know that the crew, mutinous a few days past, were all for me and did everything to help me. We rigged a jury-mast on the stump of the foremast, got some jibs and head sails on her, and shaped a course for home. I hardly slept, I kept the deck, I shot the sun and worked out positions, I read the log and checked against the dead reckoning. I was so tired and weary and busy that I had no time to grieve for Mat lying somewhere full fathom deep. Not yet, not yet. It was only when I was idle at home, and had sympathy heaped upon me, that I fully realized my loss and knew a vast emptiness in life. We had no fog, but sunshine and fair winds all the way and in fifteen days I saw the hills of home. A flood tide swept us through the Gut, a stubby tug hooked on to us below the drawbridge. I stood behind the bos’n as he steered the Arethusa up the little crooked river, he foremast gone, a flag at half-mast on her mizzen. So I brought the Arethusa home.”

“That,” said Rosalie, “is the saddest story I have bear ever heard. I’m so sorry you lost your lovely Mat. How did you ever to bear it, Old Lady?”

“One learns to bear anything. Only cowards fold up and want to die when trouble comes. Time wears the edges off grief, especially when there are happy memories.”

“Little Old Lady,” said Rosalie, ” I think you are the most wonderful lady in all the world.”

“I brought the Arethusa home anyway with a broken spar, and a tough crew. Don’t ever let men tell you women can’t do everything. They can. They’re weak helpless creatures no more.”

“I’ll remember,” said Rosalie.

“They’re not so strong in body as men, but they’re often stronger in character and mind; mind is what really counts, and they have a kind of wisdom through intuition that men never get.”

“I’ll remember,” said. Rosalie.

“They’re not just breeding heifers,”

“That’s what I think,” said Rosalie.

"Nor just dish-washers or scrubbers either. Come along now, let's forget our little sadness in a little minor gambling and then to bed."

Thirteen

It was a blustery night in March when Rosalie and the little old lady came to the end of "Les Miserables" in that passage beautiful in its simplicity, that describes the last resting place of Jean Valjean.

There is, in the cemetery of Pere Lachaise, in the neighborhood of the Potter's field, far from the elegant quarter of that city of sepulchres, far from all those fantastic tombs, which display in the presence of eternity the hideous fashion of death, in a deserted corner, beside an old wall, beneath a great yew on which the bind-weed climbs, among the dog-grass and the mosses, a stone. This stone is exempt no more than the rest from the leprosy of time, from the mould, the lichen, and the droppings of birds. The air turns it black, the water green. It is near no path, and people do not like to go in that direction, because the grass is high, and they would wet their feet. When there is a little sunshine, the lizards come out. There is, all about, a rustling of wild oats. In the Spring linnets sing in the tree.

The stone is entirely blank. The only thought in cutting it, was of the essentials of the grave, and there was no other care, than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man. No name can be read there. Only many years ago, a hand wrote upon it in pencil these four lines, which have gradually become illegible under the rain and the dust, and which are probably effaced;

Il dort. Quoique le sort fut pour lui bien etrange,
Il vivait. Il mourut quand il n'eut plus son ange.
La chose simplement d'elle-mene arriva,
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va.

"I'm sorry to come to the end of this wonderful book," said Rosalie. "It will always be my book, perhaps it is more wonderful than "Don

Quixote". I suppose it has to come to an end with the death of the hero."

"No great book ever comes to an end, it simply pauses with death or marriage. It cannot end; even when the hero and other chief characters are gone, it flows on in the lesser people in it. You always want more; you are satisfied and yet hungry."

"And I suppose," said Rosalie, "it flows on in people's minds too. It will always flow on in mine."

"A great book, flows on like a big river. It seems to be lost in the sea, but fifty miles off shore you can dip up a good bucket of water from the Amazon, a little brackish perhaps but still fresh water. Then the burning sun catches up the waters from the sea, and the clouds carry them back to the mountain streams, and the river of great and lovely thoughts flow again through the minds and hearts of other, inspired writers."

"I've learned a lot from you Old Lady," said Rosalie, "I think you're better than a year in college. I never had anyone talk to me about great books before."

"You will only fully understand them when you've lived your life. My life on the infinite sea, my ten years of learning and practicing—for that's the only way one really learns—taught me all I know. I've had many years to reflect and hash it all over."

"How could you ever bear to marry again after you'd had Mat?" Asked Rosalie, "How could you bear it, Little Old Lady?"

"Shall I tell you about my two other husbands, Rosalie?"

"Please do," said Rosalie. "Only I'm afraid they'll be a bit of a come-down after Mat."

"They certainly were. Their stories are what writers call an anti-climax—I know plenty of big and learned words; I fooled you at first, didn't I, when I talked rough country words over killing the skunk—and a good story should be told the other way about; the best should come last."

"You did fool me at first, Old lady. I thought for a little while you were only a little whizzened up-country woman, but I knew you were kind, and I must have been sent to you."

"Well, I was home and a widow at twenty-nine, and it seemed I'd lived all my life. I was very well off too, for I had a third of the Arethusa, Mat's savings and his insurance money. But soon I was bored to tears, for the life of my home village, after what I'd seen and enjoyed and suffered, seemed dull and trifling. For five years I lived with father and mother till they died within a month of one another, and I was left alone in the big house on the hill. Five years of boredom and stagnation, I can tell you, and I missed Mat more every day and the thrill of excitement on the sea, and I could see no way of escape.

"So I married Charlie Chisolm. He had a store and was comfortably off and I'd known him ever since he was a boy. He was fat and good-natured, always laughing; good company but no good as a lover; he never wanted me that way at all.

"He never asked me to marry him, perhaps I decided and suggested it to him. He just said one day, in a kind of joking way, as we were talking on the bridge; 'You're lonely Kitty. You're well off, and I'm pretty well off too. Why don't we hook up and join fortunes?'

" 'Charlie,' I said, to him, 'I don't love you at all, you know I couldn't really love anyone after Mat.'

" 'Sure, Kitty,' said he, 'I understand that, but we've always been good friends and had fun together.'

" 'I'II do it Charlie,' said I, 'if you'll move me away from this pinching small-talk little village, if you'll move to the University town near the sea.' For I was not only bored with village life but tired of the little river, and the hills pressed in and cramped me. I wanted to be near a great library and listen to some talk by some people who understood that our world was only a little planet circling round a second-rate star and more than six thousand years old.

"He agreed and sold out his business in the village, and we moved away to the town I had suggested. Really, I married Charlie because I needed company, and wanted to get away. There were some things I liked about him. I could depend on him, he was no liar, he was industrious and liked to get up at the crack of dawn—you'd expect a fat man to be lazy, wouldn't you—and he had a passion, not for

women, but a passion just the same. People with a passion for something, whose minds are set one way, are the interesting people in the world."

"What was Charlie's passion?" asked Rosalie.

"Guess."

"Liquor?"

"No."

"Gambling?"

"No and he never caught a fish or built anything in all his life."

"Horses?" asked Rosalie, remembering Johnny Allen.

"He was too fat to ever mount a horse; he hardly knew one end of a horse from the other. And when we talked of ships and boats, he was a dead loss, he never could remember which end the bow-sprit was on."

"I give up," said Rosalie, "You see I don't know so much about the world yet."

"Well, his passion was trading. He had a passion moving about and trading anything; he always wanted to try his wits against somebody else and he was a keen one. He always had a store with reliable clerks, middle-aged men, that he could trust and he always made money. But that wasn't enough, he had to be on the road early and late in his big red truck, and his delight and was to haul a load of wood to some place where there was a scarcity, trade it off for a load of fish, sell that, and then carry a ton of potatoes from somewhere to somewhere else. That was his flair, trading.

"He travelled along the roads for a hundred miles to and fro buying and selling. He had hardly any general knowledge at all. Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Napoleon were all Jim Spinks to him, but he was kind, laughing and generous. HHHe always brought back funny stories from the road, roared with laughter at his own jokes, and let me alone. I spent those years pretty well for I read every day in the great library and listened to plenty of lectures, and learned all I could about mathematics, science, the stars and the races of men. I even learned to look through a microscope, Rosalie, and see the little world, for you must know, my dear, that there's the great

universe of the stars and then innumerable little hidden universes so tiny that most people are not aware of them at all."

"Oh, Little Old Lady," said Rosalie "I'll never be wise like you,"

"I always had a thirst for learning. Charlie used to laugh at me and tease me good-naturedly; all he wanted was to get a load of spuds from a farmer and to lug them to some rocky place where fishermen lived, and where potatoes didn't grow. Once I said to him, 'Charlie, what's your principle in trading?'

" 'It's very simple,' said he, 'I buy as low as I can and sell as high as I can.'

"He never pretended, you see, he was just a good business man. That's how the business world gets on, by buying low and selling high. 'You see' he explained, 'I always have more knowledge of markets than the fellow I'm buying from or selling to, and that's why I get on. I love to make money, Kitty. People are great fools about buying. The ordinary person thinks an article is no good unless it's got a high price.'

"He had a natural genius for buying, and just before Christmas he used to go over to Boston and buy trinkets for the Christmas trade in his stores, for after we married he had a chain of little stores. Once he told me he got a bargain in good neckties that were a little out of fashion; five hundred of them at fifteen cents a piece. He had them put in the windows of his stores and marked them thirty cents. None of them sold. He took them down, put them away for a month, and showed them again in the windows, this time marked one dollar and a quarter. They sold like hot cakes.

"I couldn't help but be amused at Charlie's tricks, he was good-natured, full of smiles, and in ten years we never quarreled—that was because I never loved him. You always quarrel at times with those you love or care about intensely. I used to often pitch into Mat because I loved him so.

"They were ten comfortable but rather gray years that I spent with Charlie. He had a bad heart, and one day they found his truck by the roadside, fifty bushels of potatoes aboard, and Charlie smiling but dead, holding fast to the wheel. Poor Charlie, he was a good soul.

"So here I was again a widow at thirty-nine, richer than ever and with thirty-one years to live in the normal span.

"Lonely again I was, and that's why I married the preacher, that's why I live here, in this little yellow house, that's why the church by the gate has a scorched and twisted tower.

"He taught in the college, and was by way of being a scholar and that attracted me, and I was sorry for him, for he was in many ways a child. He was a tall, gaunt man with a wandering eye, a little older than I, and he had a passion too, and that was to Christianize the whole world in one generation.

"He decided to give up his teaching and wanted to be a kind of missionary preacher and live among the poorest people. That was all right and an idea clean out of the New Testament.

" 'Very well,' said I, 'I'II try anything once; we'll see if it works.' So we came to this poor settlement. He wanted to be a good man but he was really very lazy and sensual. He'd taught so long that he was all theory that he never could apply.

"He never had any sense of saving up for a great event. Every night he was after me and when he had finished as a lover, instead of lying quiet and breathing in great breaths of peace and contentment, he'd begin to groan and call upon God and say, 'I am not a man of God; I am a carnal man and love the things of the flesh.' 'Never mind,' I used to say to him. 'Be happy, that's the way God has made men and women and the whole of creation. There's no harm in that. Doesn't the Bible say 'Be fruitful and multiply,' 'It's only pure pleasure.'

"But he'd groan and call upon God, until his mind changed and like Oliver Twist, he was asking for more.

"This was indeed a poor lonely circuit, and truly I soon tired of my bargain. I don't know what I should have done but for my books—I'd bought a great many by this time, they're all stored away in the attic, my eyes are dim now for reading—and the restless sea that washed our shore.

"He thought by hard labour and living among the very poor he could conquer what he called his carnal desires, that it seemed had

pestered him all his life. But I was still pretty and well-formed at forty-two, and poor man, he had his work cut out for him.

"He tried hard to labour, to tend a garden, to cut wood and haul kelp and eel-grass like the others, but he was really bone-lazy, and soon tired of labour. That's half the trouble with preachers, they're lazy and don't have enough to do. He really loved to pray and groan and call upon the Lord, for the sins of this ungracious generation. He'd never lived among sailor-men, nor knew their ways as I had. He used to sit by his study window, that looked out over the sea to the big island, and there compose strange complicated sermons full of high-sounding words. At first, he used to call on the fisher people and sit and chat with them as they mended their nets or overhauled trawls, but after a while he tired of that, because as he said, they were carnal and worldly. 'They understand nothing of the life of the spirit, he used to say.

"When he was young he had planned to be a medical missionary, and go forth to carry the cross to the Chinese or Malays or Zulus, races that he knew nothing about. I should have liked to have seen him converting Benguela. However, he'd picked up some slight knowledge of drugs, and as half the fishermen and members of their families had asthma, he set himself to cure them. 'God,' he said, 'has revealed to me a magic formula in a dream,' and he mixed up his foul-smelling medicine in a wash-tub in the cellar. I don't know what he put in it but he certainly achieved the world's worst stink. Skunks were pleasant perfumes compared to his asthma cure. Some of the drugs were expensive, five or six dollars a pound, but that didn't matter for I was rich, and looked well after my money, and really treated him as if he were a child with a toy. Asafoetida, I remember, was one drug he used. I tell you, Rosalie, that the days of the medicine-man, faith-healer and witch-doctor are over, though many people don't know it. We're coming in to the age of science and knowledge. Do you know that, Rosalie?"

"Not very well," said Rosalie. "You see I was brought up on charms, candles and miracles."

"In the middle ages, religion and the finest knowledge were one.

Now ever since men found the earth was not the centre, religion has lagged behind. Learning and religion are far apart now; the parsons had better hop to it, for the world can't afford to lose any remnant of saintliness."

"Can we be religious and read great books and know science, too?" asked Rosalie, anxiously.

"Of course, the laws and rules and order of science are the thoughts of God.

"Poor Eric, that was his name, poor feckless man with a feckless name—don't ever name a child Eric, Rosalie.

"Eric mixed and stirred and mixed again his evil-smelling purple medicine, and carried it about to the fisher people. He used to get raging wild with them if they didn't respond, and get well after two bottles of God's Formula. And do you know, I believe some did get better through sheer fright of his rolling hypnotic eye. The mind has a great effect on the body and even the best doctor can't cure a patient that's determined to die. He mixed and mixed and filled the house with foul smells, certainly God had a strange taste in odours. Then when his medicines began to fail, he suddenly tired of the whole business, and began to preach wilder and wilder sermons and rail at the people, and shout that a sacrifice was necessary, perhaps a human sacrifice, till people were quite afraid of him. He began to get queerer and queerer. One evening he rushed into my sitting room, his eyes all dilated and said in an excited voice, 'Did you see the little black man that ran in here? He was about that high,' and he held his hand a foot from the ground. 'No,' I said, 'no black men of that height have come in here.'

" 'Well' he said, 'he certainly left my study and popped in your door, Kitty'—this very sternly—'you don't have m n about the house do you?'

" 'None but you', I said.

"For an hour he hunted, the house from attic to cellar for that little dark man a foot and a half high. I was not in the least afraid; I had passed too many dangers to fear a half-mad parson, but I got out one of the Arethusa revolvers, oiled and loaded it and put it

in a drawer by my bedside. There had been a good deal of talk of human sacrifice being necessary to cure the world and please an angry God, and I didn't propose to be the lamb led to the sacrificial altar."

"Oh, Old Lady," said Rosalie, "I should have been afraid and run away."

"How would I be afraid after I'd brought the Arethusa home with a driveling coward mate and a tricky crew? Not me!

"He used to keep his sermons tied up in bundles, and one day I noticed that he was beginning to carry these sermon bundles down to the church.

" 'What are you doing?' I asked him.

" 'I'm storing my sermons in God's house,' he replied.

"He got queerer and queerer, but still I had no fear of him. He was always gentle with me, but he kept calling upon God in a loud voice for a sacrifice, and he seemed possessed by a spirit like a demon of evil. Then one day he carried to the church at the foot of the lane his last bundle of sermons and a can of oil. He said, 'I'm going to fill the lamps of the sanctuary.'

"A half hour after he left, the cry went up that the church was on fire, and the men of the neighbourhood rushed in with buckets and ladders. The tide was high and they formed a bucket-line to the shore, and got the fire out when the church was half-burnt. But Eric was charred and dead; he had piled chairs, pews and his bundles of sermons all around him, thrown oil over all and his own clothing. That was the end of Eric, half-mad, of course. A fanatical passion for the forms of any religion—not goodness, not saintliness—is the worst kind of passion, and has caused half the trouble in the world.

"The people wanted that church no more; they were afraid of it. So I bought from them church and land and manse, and let the half-burnt stand with its crooked, twisted tower pointing awry at the sky, not fair on the zenith, for it seemed a fitting memorial to him.

"That was thirty years ago; I was forty-six then and I seemed to have come to a time in my life when my whole nature changed. I was well-off and I wanted no more men; three I had had and three had

met tragic death. Perhaps I was fatal to men; perhaps I too was 'the face that sunk a thousand ships.' At any rate, I was now content to be alone and work and read and live far from people. I had no relatives and I was half-forgotten in the village of my birth, moreover I could not return and live among smug village people. Even at forty-six most of your contemporaries who have been friends have died or have disappeared. A woman can have but one great lover, Rosalie, perhaps two lesser ones, but certainly not more than that. I have not been lonely here, only lately, only in the last two or three years, I have craved company and I have been waiting for you to come."

"Perhaps I'll stay always," said Rosalie.

"No, no, I have still a thousand stories to tell you but May will move you on

"Rummy?" said the old lady, "gin or Oklahoma?"

"Gin", laughed Rosalie.

There was an exchange of twenty cents that night before they put out the lights.

Fourteen

"Can you drive a car, Rosalie?" The old lady asked one day when spring was on them.

"I can drive a light truck," said Rosalie. "I've often driven the light fish-truck. Two or three times I've tried a car, it's just about the same. Why?"

"Oh you might be walking the roads sometime, and get a pick-up, and the driver fall ill, and you could bring him home."

Rosalie laughed, "You do imagine funny situations, Little Old Lady."

It was after all the gardens and shrubs were weeded—Spring came in early April that year—that the little old lady sprang her surprise. One day an agent arrived with a new Ford sedan and a license, and an operator's license made out in the name of Miss Stella Star, "It's mine, I bought it, I can afford it; you can drive it, and while you're here we'll tour around a bit, and I'II see again what this tiny bit of the world looks like before I die."

They did; the little old lady hired a man to weed her garden and tend the stock, and they drove together over the whole peninsula in trips that lasted from two to ten days. They put up at the best hotels. "It's a little like me and Mat, being grand when we went ashore from the Arethusa," the little old lady explained. Rosalie had never been in a hotel before, but nobody would have guessed it. She was well dressed, she had a flair for putting her clothes on properly, and she had natural dignity.

The little old lady wanted to look at all the bays and basins and harbours. One day when they were driving along a bit of desolate coast, she said to Rosalie, "Do you see that big island, and the little island nearby with the fixed light? That's where the Ardmore went ashore. That was fifty years ago. All my life, Rosalie, was lived long before you were born."

They drove out on long rocky headlands, and looked at the

lighthouses and waited till sunset and watched the great yellow rays revolve.

"It's wonderful how men progress, Rosalie. Three hundred years ago, there wasn't a light on this coast, nor a chart worth starting a fire in Hell. The world's getting on, Rosalie. It's no longer a world of charms and guesses and miracles. No one any longer steers south till the butter's gone and then west to hit Trinidad."

From headland to headland they drove. "There's coffin's Island," the old lady would cry, "there's Bacaro and there's Little Hope, and there far up to the eastward is a flash of Green Island off Ironbound."

One day they drove down the rocky ridge past Champlain's Mansions to look out through the Gut through which the old barque Arethusa and the new ship Arethusa had passed on their outward and homeward voyages. Out through the Gut they looked far over the yellow Bay where the tides churn and rush more fiercely than any in all the world. Here the old lady stayed a long time dreaming. "I should like to see a tall full-rigged ship come in again through the Gut, coming home after five years at sea, with the sailors on the yards furling the sails and tying down the gaskets. But now it is nothing but fishing boats with diesel engines, and an odd steamer. Ah well, machines now help men, and they hardly know how to swing a brace or sway down on a halyard. Well, perhaps it's all for the best. I mustn't get weepy; I never was much of a crier, Rosalie."

Then after a pause, she said; "Now I must do it, now I must show you my home village, and the house where I was born, if it is still standing. It is only a few miles from here."

Thither they drove over the hilly road, across the bridge that straddled a fierce muddy river, over more hills till suddenly coming down a curved hill of especial steepness, they dropped as magic into the heart of a little white drowsy village. It was mid-afternoon and warm; nobody seemed to stir. "Stop on the bridge, I want to look at the river", said the little old lady. The tide was out and the strip of fresh water between the wide mud banks was only a shallow ribbon that caught the blue of the sky.

"It is just as I thought. It is very small. There, do you see, there

were the shipyards. The rotten posts are still standing, and that brown building was the forge, where they forged out the anchors and ships irons. There on the hill is the cemetery where father and mother lie buried, and there far up river are the little huts of the Indian Reservation. Poor dying Micmacs! We had a Micmac with us once on the Arethusa. Now drive up the hill and see if the house is still there." It was not, it had either been burned or demolished, and a little hotel for tourists stood on its site. "Gone, better so. Here I was born nearly eighty years ago, perhaps the important young lady of the place, and today not a soul knows me. We are soon forgotten, Rosalie."

They drove slowly back to the bridge. A very old coloured man was staring idly down at the eels that swarmed and played at the foot of the bridge's abutments. "Why," cried the old lady, "it's John, it's John, the cook on the barque Arethusa. John come here." John ambled over leaning on his cane.

"John, don't you remember me?"

"I can't say as how I rightly does Missus. You see I'se gettin' old and my eyes is dim."

"Don't you remember, John, you were cook on the barque Arethusa."

The music of that word caught his ear, "Arethusa, Arethusa" he muttered. "I bin cooks on so many vessels, I gets them all mixed up. My brains is all mixed up like hash these days."

"But you must remember big Mat Decker, the master of the Arethusa."

"Oh sure," said the negro, scratching his grey curls and anxious to please as negroes always are. "Sure I remember big Mat, big Mat, oh yes I remember big Mat, he big man."

"And don't you remember me? I was a little girl here when you were a boy, don't you remember me? I was Mat's wife, I was the woman that brought the Arethusa home."

"Sure Missus, I remember you. You had pigtails, maybe now. Arethusa, Arethusa, I bin cooks on so many ships I'se all clear twisted up."

The little old lady pulled out a ten dollar bill. "Here, John," she said, "buy yourself two bottles of rum and a pound of tobacco, that's what sailors like."

"Thank-you kindly, Missus, thank you," said the old negro, "but I don't drink rum no more, I'se a free-will Baptist now."

"Let's get on, Rosalie; you see it's always sad to come back after a long time to the place of your birth."

Then when they arrived home in the little yellow house the little old lady made another astonishing move. She sent to the near-by little city and instructed her lawyer and an official of the trust company to pay her a visit at her expense. They came quickly since she was a wealthy client, and they had learned that they could not trifle with the little old lady's demands. On their arrival, she spoke to them in tones she had used when in command of the Arethusa. "You see this young woman here, her name formerly was Rosalie—but for good and sufficient reasons she has changed it to Stella Star. You will see, Mister Lawyer that the change is made legal and with haste. I will pay you a fat fee in accordance with the speed of your action."

The lawyer nodded approval. "It can be done, and it will be done quickly."

"You will also see and know, both of you, that I am well and in my right mind, and that this young girl has asked for nothing and has exerted no influence upon me. You can swear to that in a court of law?" They nodded approval. Now look at her closely, so that you will not mistake her for someone else."

They did as they were bid.

"She is not hard to look at," said the lawyer.

Rosalie laughed. She did not know what the little old lady was up to, but she asked no questions. Rosalie throughout her life was very good at minding her own business.

The little old lady then withdrew with the lawyer into the privacy of her own bedroom. Witnesses were fetched from the straggling village, and the little old lady re-wrote her will.

Rosalie laughed and chatted with the trust company man in the kitchen. He was a dried-up little man, but he had an eye for beauty.

“If you ever come to the city,” said he, “I wish you would give me a ring, and have dinner with me.”

“Thank you”, said Rosalie, “I’m nearly always hungry.”

“You will of course keep the trust company informed of your address,” said he, guessing what was in the wind.

“Of course,” said Rosalie. “Why not?”

Four years later, in fact just after Rosalie’s graduation, the little old lady died and the will revealed that Rosalie was her sole heir.

Fifteen

It was about mid-May when Rosalie saw that little notice pinned on the kitchen wall; "My head aches a little, Rosalie. Your loving little old lady." Rosalie took a pencil and wrote below, "And my big toe is prickling. Your loving Rosalie."

When the little old lady came in from the yard Rosalie said, "Dear little old lady, we must pack today."

"Yes. We must pack. Isn't it too bad? Get those two leather trunks from the attic."

"How shall I ever ship them." said Rosalie, "when I don't know where I'm going? I may be half way round the world in another month."

"You won't have to ship them," said the little old lady. "You will take them in the Ford."

"In the Ford, in the new Ford?" gasped Rosalie.

"Of what good will the Ford be to me with you away? I can't drive it, it would only rust to pieces in the barn. I'm giving you the Ford, Rosalie, so you can come and visit me on your vacations."

This was too much for Rosalie, and she sat down and covered her face with her hands and burst into a passion of weeping. The little old lady went out in the yard, fussed about the wood-pile, and at last returned with an-armful. Rosalie was still crying quietly in her chair. "Stop it now, Rosalie. Stop it at once, or you'll have two bawling women. Stop it and go fetch the leather steamer trunks."

Evening came, the trunks in mid-floor were strapped and labelled, on the little old lady's insistence, with Miss Stella Star.

They looked at one another with desolation in their faces, but the little old lady was determined to be gay on this their last night together for ever so long.

"We can't play cards yet it's too early in the evening. I plan to become an expert at solitaire when you are gone, Rosalie."

"I'll soon be back," said Rosalie, "soon as ever I get off, perhaps if I'm not too far off I could manage weekends."

"You've got to go, wherever you're going. You mustn't take me into account at all. There's a moron girl down below I can hire to stay with me. She's such a fool that she's quite interesting."

"And what if you're ill, Little Old Lady?"

"I'm never ill, though I must admit I'm full of gas tonight. Do you ever get gassy, Rosalie?"

"Never," said Rosalie.

"That's because you're young and have good digestion."

"What's it like," said Rosalie.

"You feel as if you were blown up like a balloon. That's the penalty for getting old. I was never gassy when I was young."

"It must be uncomfortable," said Rosalie. "I'm sorry, Old Lady."

"It is, and then you're disgraced by your entrails rumbling like a truck going over a bridge. There's a good limerick about that, Rosalie, that I learned many years ago. I never seem to forget anything."

I took out the Duchess to tea,
I knew just how it would be,
Her rumbling abdominal
Were something phenomenal
And everyone thought it was me.

Rosalie laughed, "You are a cure, Old Lady. I believe you're just trying to be funny tonight to keep us both from being sad."

"Nonsense, I'm talking about wind, because I'm full of wind tonight. It's the penalty of old age. You'll be that way someday, Rosalie, some sixty years off. Why I can hardly squeeze into my rocking chair to-night. Did you ever hear the story of Sandy MacDonald's bull?"

"No," said Rosalie, "was he too full of gas and wind?"

"He was, he swelled so with gas that his sides touched both sides of the stall, and a fine black bull he was. The neighbors were called

in for consultation. 'It's an enema he needs,' said a very old man, 'Give him an enema,' said all the neighbors in concert. They led the bull out into the yard—they couldn't get him through the stable door, but had to open the folding doors that led into the hay barn—and they lashed him securely to a big stout gate. But what to use for an instrument? Old grandmother MacDonald rummaged in the attic and found an ancient horn that had been used to call the men home from the hayfield, bell-shaped it was and curved upward in the stem. 'The very thing,' said Sandy MacDonald, 'there's nothing like the wisdom of old people. Mrs. MacDonald, fetch a bucket of steaming water and soap suds,' They poured it into the dinner horn, and the bull seemed pleased with the sudden glow of internal warmth. 'Mrs. MacDonald', says Sandy, 'fetch yet another bucket of steaming water and soap suds for he is a great bull,' Sandy poured in the second bucket. Now, the bull became restive and uneasy and stamped with all his feet and rolled his blood-shot eyes. Suddenly, he reared in his distress, and tore the great gate from its hook and hinges. 'Look out,' said Sandy MacDonald, and the neighbors took refuge in house or barn. The bull, however, galloped down the road toward the village dragging the gate with him. Suddenly the dinner horn began to blow great blasts. The village fire department mistaking the blasts for the fire-siren, turned out in brazen helmets, and drove fast up the road thinking in Sandy MacDonald's farm. The bull travelling at full speed met the fire brigade mid-way. The gate caught on the engine and carried away the two port wheels and threw the men on their beam-ends."

"Oh, Old Lady," said Rosalie, "where ever did you learn such tales, my stomach aches from laughing."

"The bull" continued the little old lady, "freed of the gate carried straight on, the horn still blowing. Now the keeper of the drawbridge was a man hard of hearing—a political appointee—and when he heard the horn, he thought it was a tugboat blowing to have the draw opened, so he hustled around and swung open the drawbridge. The bull rushed on to the bridge, fell into the gap and

was drowned. It is said that bubbles rose for hours from him lying on the bottom.

"Sandy MacDonald didn't like the half-deaf draw-keeper, and he was mad at the loss of his bull, so he wrote to the government stating that the drawbridge keeper should be dismissed, on the ground that it was no place for a man who could not distinguish between a tugboat's whistle and a bull blowing on a dinner horn."

There were tears of laughter in Rosalie's eyes. They played five games of Rummy and the little old lady won twenty-five cents. They went to bed early for they must be up betimes.

Rosalie sat in the Ford at the top of the grassy lane, the two leather trunks in the back seat. The little old lady stood beside her. It was a fine bright morning of late May, Rosalie was setting out she knew not where.

"I can't speak a word or I'll bawl," said Rosalie.

"Don't," said the little old lady.

Rosalie started the engine; the old lady clutched the side of the open window, "Don't forget Rosalie, what it took me a long time to find out: the world is very old, the first rains hissed on hot rocks in which there was no trace of life; men have been on the world a long time; we come from savagery in a few thousand years; listen to the preacher-medicine men with patience and sympathy; and remember, a strong mind, a steady purpose rules the body, and don't be ashamed to work at anything. Learn, Rosalie, learn."

Rosalie let in the clutch, waved her hand, trundled out by the half--burnt church, and turned eastward. Rather sick at heart she drove along briskly and when she came to the highway, she increased her speed to between thirty-five and forty miles. For five hours, she drove without any notable adventure, and by noon, she must have been two hundred miles from the old lady's house. She had come to a long stretch of straight road, and she was rolling along pleasantly, the owner of a Ford car, with over a hundred dollars in in her purse and two trunks full of clothing in the back seat. She was thinking, 'people would never believe about my good in a story, they'd expect a lonely wandering girl to meet disaster and ruin,' when she first

saw him zigzagging from one side of the highway to the other. As he was almost a mile ahead, he seemed at first about an inch high as he pursued this slanting and erratic course. As Rosalie got nearer, he rapidly grew into an erect young man about six feet tall, clad in brown shoes, untidy grey flannels and a plaid sports coat. He had on no cap, his hair was tousled, and Rosalie noted that he needed a haircut. When she tooted on her horn he paid no heed, but continued to zigzag and kick savagely at something in the roadway. She was obliged to pull up as she got almost abreast of him.

"Whatever are you doing?" asked Rosalie. She saw that he was a nice looking young man—very young, perhaps twenty-one—and that his thin face was bronzed by the sun. He wore glasses and his long untidy brown hair was faded in patches to a bronzy yellow. "I'm kicking a pebble. Can't you see? I've kicked this one over a mile, and it's never once gone off the cement."

"Is it a game?" asked Rosalie.

"A kind of game. You see if I can kick it two miles without it ever getting on the shoulder, I'll know what to decide. It's really quite important."

"It's a very dangerous game," said Rosalie. "You might get run over taking the whole road. I had to stop."

"They all stop," said, the young man. "Most drivers won't run over a pedestrian. It's only bad on curves and there I make short sissy kicks. Anyway, most of them think I'm drunk and hold up. They all say just like you, 'Whatever are you doing?' and when I reply, 'I'm kicking a pebble,' they think I'm loony, and they get pale and pull well to the far side of the road, and move on. You seem to be the first sensible person that has passed me in four days. I do this straight stretch every day, but I've never made it yet. Do you think I'm a loony?"

Rosalie had a sudden reminiscence of the little old lady's story, and in her mind's eye saw row upon row of sleeping sailor-men on a yellow deck, their heads wrapped in their coats against Luna the moon, but she said; "Of course I don't think you're a loony, I can tell that by looking at your eyes, but ordinary people who only saw you

at a distance might very well think so. A grown man can't go along the pavement kicking a pebble, you know."

"Why not? I'm a grown man; male, aged twenty-one, white, and I do. I think myself I'm pretty close to the line, but you see I've got to make a hard decision. I've got fifty more long years to live or forty-nine to be exact, and I want to get off on the right foot."

"Oh dear," said Rosalie. "It's dreadfully hard making decisions isn't it. I had to leave place number one, and I didn't want to leave place number two, and now I'm just rolling along the road."

"Where are you going to?" asked the young man.

"I don't know," said Rosalie. "I never know until I get there. Then I know."

"You're the most sensible young woman I've ever met," said the young man, "and you're easy to look at too, though that sounds rather flat, stale and unprofitable. Oh God, why should I repeat the sour tripe that men hand out to every pretty girl!"

"You should see me in my new red dress," said Rosalie laughing.

"You own your own car?"

"Yes," said Rosalie, "I do. It's registered in my name and the operator's license is in my name too. I suppose you think I've stolen it."

"I don't think anything about it," replied the young man. "It's none of my business, and I shouldn't have asked, the question just popped out due to atavistic curiosity."

Rosalie didn't know what atavistic meant and she resolved to look it up in the dictionary.

"I believe whatever people tell me. That's one of my serious faults, my old man says. It's none of my business if they lie, that's their business. Now why should you lie to me? I'm not a detective."

Rosalie laughed, "You might be, I'm so ignorant of the world. However, you're only a pebble-kicker as far as I know."

"And you're only a pretty girl driving a Ford along the highway on a warm May day, as far as I know. There's nothing like sticking to facts as far as you know them."

"I'm a respectable, that is quite respectable, married, woman," said Rosalie.

"You doubtless are a married woman if you so state, though that sets me back on my heels a bit, but surely it's hardly respectable to be talking to an unknown man on the roadside when we don't even know one another's names."

"I see you're the trustworthy kind, I've got wit enough for that. My name's Stella Star, at least that's what I call myself."

"An icy brittle name," said the young man. "Are you by any chance on holiday from Hollywood Miss Star, or should I say Mrs. Star?"

"No," laughed Rosalie, "I haven't made the movies yet."

"My name's Meister. Did you ever hear such a beastly name? It always makes me want to say, 'Meist, Meister, Meistest.' They call me Mice at college. Isn't that a degrading nickname?"

"I suppose you steer clear of cats," said Rosalie.

"Catty women, yes. But my first name's worse. I'll give you four guesses to choose the most revolting of masculine Christian names."

"Percy," said Rosalie provocatively

"No, thank God, not Percy."

"Albert?"

"No, God be praised, not Albert the Good."

"Eric?"

"No, your selection of stinkers is excellent, Miss Star, but It's not Eric or Little by Little."

"EImer?"

"No, I've truly never been in the bush leagues. No, fair lady, you have named four of the most repulsive of male names, but mine is none of these. By a hair's breadth you have missed the sixty-four dollar prize. There goes another bromide."

"I give up," said Rosalie. "What is it then?"

"Ferdinand, and mother calls me Ferdie."

"Ferdinand the Bull," laughed Rosalie.

"Exactly," said the young man, "that's another name I have at college, when they're not calling me Mice. What other Ferdinands do you know?"

"Ferdinand and Isabel."

"Exactly, and as soon as I begin dancing with a pretty girl, some nut taps me on the shoulder and says, 'May I relieve you of Isabel.' "

"There's Ferdinand of Bulgaria too. He was a very wicked king."

"You're quite a scholar, Miss Stella Starr. Only one other person has associated me with Ferdinand of Bulgaria, he was a tutor in history. He fancies himself as a humorist—weak very weak—and he calls me Bulgarian Butter Milk."

"You're too young and sensitive," said Rosalie. "You mind too much, that's why they call you nicknames. I've noticed the same thing with little children when teaching school. Don't let them know you mind, give them a playful punch in the eye. Ferdinand Meister is a grand high-sounding name. You should go far with that name, for the little old lady says that names have a great effect upon one's destiny and character."

"You're a very comforting young woman," said the young man.

"Moreover," said Rosalie, "when people make nice nicknames like 'Mice' or 'Ferdinand the Bull', or even 'Bulgarian Butter Milk', it's a sign of affection, a sign that they like you. Only you're too easily teased."

"I can run faster than any of them anyway. I'm the hundred-yard man and the full-back."

"There you are," said Rosalie. "Probably the people in the stands say, 'Look at Mice running back the ball! Can't that boy fly! Go on, go on Ferdinand the Bull!' They're all on your side. You can't expect them to chant 'Behold now Ferdinand Meister runneth with the ball.' "

The young man actually laughed, a real laugh from his stomach.

"You're a quick one," he said. "Do you know I believe you might help me make a decision."

"Maybe," said Rosalie. "It's a queer world but really an awfully nice generous world. You'd never believe the queer nice things that have lately happened to me. Perhaps certain people are sent with messages to one another."

"Nonsense," said the young man," people just meet by chance.

You're a medievalist, that's what you are—guardian angels and the Virgin Mary flying over the Allegheny Mountains in purple pyjamas—and all that sort of thing."

"Don't be ridiculous," said Rosalie. "I'm a fisherman's daughter. Do you want a lift? A kind man gave me a lift, the first day I was on the road, when I needed it badly."

"I might now," said the young man. "I've got three miles to go, and I don't feel like kicking pebbles anymore this morning. You're by far the nicest pebble I've seen on any beach. There I go again, I always get a pain in the neck when I talk tripe like that; flat, flat, stale and unprofitable."

Rosalie laughed, "Women, they say like even the stupidest and most worn-out compliments."

"I've got to find my pebble first. It's an excellent pebble, I've kicked it now for three days and it's hardly worn a bit." And with that he went weaving along the highway, till he retrieved his rounded stone and stowed it in his pocket.

"I don't believe you'll need that anymore," said Rosalie as he came back to the car and climbed aboard.

"How come?" said the young man.

"I don't know," said Rosalie as they drove along, "but I don't think you will. You see I've spent the winter with a very wise person, who lived a very full life, and I'm chock-full of second hand wisdom. We got through two good books in the evenings, one in English and one in French."

"You bi-lingual?" asked the young man.

"Yes," said Rosalie.

"Well, well! You're a more astonishing person all the time, a most alluring pick-up, as the bright boys say."

"I picked you up," said Rosalie, "please don't forget that."

"True and most unusual," said the young man, "I'm beginning to believe in miracles. Perhaps you were sent along to show me the path for my feet, perhaps the old girl did fly over the Allegheny Mountains."

"You're not a wolf are you?" said Rosalie. " You look too young and honest for that."

"No, no, not a wolf, I never howl at night. I'm only poor little 'Mice' or Ferdinand the Bull' or 'Bulgarian Butter Milk'."

"I think I'll call you 'Mice' if you don't mind. They're cosy, friendly little animals though very destructive. It's a friendly, comforting name."

"All right, call me Mice, but Stella Star, that name's too icy and distant for you. Haven't you got a nickname?"

"Let me think," said Rosalie "You might call me Rosalie, I'm not twenty yet."

"So young and yet so fair," said Mice. "Oh dear there's another flat-tire, another bromide."

"What do you say them for if you don't like them?"

"I don't say them, my real self doesn't say them. These vulgar common phrases just pop out of my outer vulgar shell."

"That's it", said Rosalie, "you're still in a shell, you haven't quite hatched yet. But you haven't told me how you like my name."

"Rosalie, Rosalie," said Mice, "why it's the prettiest name in the world and it's just right for you, plenty of health and sunshine and good nature in that name. Rosalie, Rosalie tripping so merrily, and he rolled the name under his tongue. What poems you could write about Rosalie. Wandering Rosalie, fresh wayside Rosalie, sprang from the sea-foam was Rosalie dawnily. All kinds of sentimental jingle you could make up about Rosalie."

"Are you a poet?" asked Rosalie "I've never seen a poet before."

"I want to be, that's where the old man and I don't hit it off. He wants me to be a doctor, and I want to be a poet. That's why I'm kicking a pebble along the roads."

"Oh," said Rosalie, "that's what is on your mind, that's what you're trying to decide."

"That's it," said Mice, "that's the problem, that's why the old pebble gets booted about."

"Aren't people different." said Rosalie. "Here am I just drifting to see what Fate does to me, and not deciding at all, and not even

worrying, and you go about kicking pebbles for days and days trying to make up your mind. Why don't you just drift for a little?"

"I can't drift, the old man holds the purse strings and it costs money to get a college education. He's a good old fellow, my dad, a country doctor, and he wants me as he says, to follow in his footsteps. Don't you hate hackneyed phrases like that, 'follow in his footsteps'?"

"Cliche's, we call them in French," said Rosalie.

"Cliche's, that's right. What a knowledgeable young woman you are! No girl at college would know that word. Cliche's bang on my ear like the slap of an open hand. I'm very sensitive to words."

"All honest words are good," said Rosalie. "It's only when people copy and repeat what they think is smart, that they become bad. Children say lovely natural things sometimes, and make their own phrases."

"I sometimes believe that education, mass-education, muddles the mind and makes it commonplace," said Mice

"Not if you get your education from a great-minded person," said Rosalie, "I've had six months with such a person, who never pretended. That's why I appear wise to you. It's only reflected wisdom and I suppose it will soon wear off."

"But you made one great decision all by yourself, didn't you?" asked Mice.

"I certainly did," said Rosalie, "and a hard one it was, but some force pushed me along. How did you know?"

"Can't say," said Mice, "perhaps I'm psychic too in spite of all my attempts at skepticism. I just knew as soon as I looked at you, I say!"

"What?"

"Perhaps you're the one that can tell me. We've got a bungalow, a few miles ahead by the river, and I'm there today all alone. Will you stop and have lunch with me?"

"Why not," said Rosalie smiling, "I'm hungry and you're no wolf, even if you were you couldn't wolf me for I'm a very strong young woman."

"I wouldn't attempt to wolf a flea. We're almost there. Do you see

that bridge way ahead? Pull in to the left fifty yards this side on the patch of green. I'll be a medievalist for the day and believe in miracles and the blood of Saint Januarius."

Rosalie halted the car where she was bid and got out. "My trunks," she pointed out with pride. I hope you've got something good to eat for I'm hungry."

"Materialist," said Mice, "don't you realize that you are an embodied guardian angel, that you are in the land of romance where fair women do not eat. However, I'm much obliged to you for not saying I'm hungry as a bear."

"What a heavenly place," thought Rosalie, as she stood before a gray and green bungalow, behind which lofty pines and hemlocks towered and cast a friendly shade. There were window boxes in which nasturtium leaves were already showing. Such a cosy, friendly little bungalow with wide white verandah seats, and above a red-shingled roof, from which a brick chimney sprouted. "It's just like the ginger-bread house," thought Rosalie. Such a place of peace and contentment, and yet here lives a young man whose mind is so torn with confusion and discontent, that he has to leave all this, and go kicking a pebble along the pavement. I guess the little old lady was right, peace lies in the mind and heart, and you can shift or change your environment if you hold your mind steady."

In front of the bungalow, spring grass stretched down to the boulders that formed the riverbank. The glory of the place was the river that slid out of a long calm silent still-water, split just before the bungalow on a gray cliff of rock as big as a house, lingered by the rock's margin in a stretch of smooth slick water, before it shattered itself in a rapid of foam and bubbles and unregulated ragged waves to swirl against the abutments of the red iron bridge. Rosalie knew by instinct that this must be a salmon pool, and even as she looked, a fin and a strip of black back showed itself in the slick water by the rock. Upstream the still-water was for the most part calm, ruffled and darkened in patches once in a while, by a gentle squall of down-river wind. Between the tops of the tall hemlocks on either bank she could see a strip of blue May sky, that threw down upon the

middle line of the still-water, a ribbon of silver light. The wild pear and wild cherry were in full bloom, in the intervals of the hemlocks, waving their slender trunks to and fro, and shaking their heads in a glory of cream and white. Every branch strove, upward for light, every root pushed downward for water; it was no wonder that some philosophers looking at the splendor of spring, had decided that light and water were the sources of life. 'This,' said Rosalie to herself, 'is as near Heaven as I shall ever be; perhaps I'll never make the real heaven now after leaving Hercule,' and she contrasted the lovely spot with the rocky fishing village in which she had been born. 'How beautiful the world is, and could be for everyone, if all men understood', she thought.

Then in her moment of happiness, she offered up a little prayer, 'O dear loving God, you know that I am a very wicked young woman, but please, dear Jesus, please teach me how to live beautifully, and then perhaps to help the world to be a little better and people happier.' Then she laughed at herself a little and looking again at the variegated still-water and the slick water that plunged into the furious rapid, she thought, 'what a donkey, what a contradiction am I!'

From the kitchen came a pleasant smell of grilling fish and presently Mice, who had no illusions about the necessities of women, said; "There's a toilet off the bedroom, luncheon served steaming hot in five minutes." Rosalie went in, noting as she went the well placed furniture, the paintings on the wall—she understood little but had a natural sense of colour, Mice explained later, mother's a painter—the little upright piano with a violin laid across the top, and the red brick fireplace in which of course there was no fire, since the day was warm. Somehow, she knew instinctively that it was all in good taste, and she gave a little sigh and felt a tiny tug at her heart.

When she got back to the verandah Mice was laying out the luncheon from a yellow tray. He was quite a skilled cook; he had split and grilled a small salmon, and there was homemade bread and marmalade, and coffee and a lemon split in two to squeeze over

the fish. There was as well, two tall glasses of foaming beer. “Light alcoholic beverage,” explained Mice, “continued proof that I am no wolf. Had I been wolfish I should have provided whiskey and soda.”

“And I’m no spring lamb,” laughed Rosalie, taking a good draught of beer. “I’m hungry and thirsty as a …”

“Don’t say it,” said Mice. “Just be hungry and thirsty. It’s a kind of cross between breakfast and luncheon. I haven’t any pie or pudding so I thought marmalade and fresh bread and butter might go well with the coffee. There’s plenty of salmon. I made the bread yesterday and caught the salmon last night. Poor lovers, poor desperate lovers, they’re running upstream now.”

“It’s just right,” said Rosalie, “it goes with the river and the tall trees and the wild pear.”

Then for a little while, they had no time for talking, for both were young and hungry, and they did themselves very well.

“I’m full,” said Rosalie at last, “full right up to the neck.”

“Good,” said Mice “and that’s good honest talk.”

“I’ll help with the dishes,” said Rosalie.

They carried the dishes to the kitchen and washed up together.

“Do you wash out your cup-towels and dish cloths?” asked Rosalie. “Never,” said Mice, “that’s women’s work, women must always have their own distinct functions.”

Rosalie laughed, “Men never can,” and she washed and rinsed them expertly and hung them straight on a little corner rack. They went back to the verandah, sat down and looked at the river.

“Now” said Rosalie, “let’s hear about the great problem, and why you have to kick a pebble along the highways of the world.”

“You’ve half heard it already. My old man is bound I’ll be a doctor, mother is on the fence, and I want to be a writer, a poet really.”

“Oh,” said Rosalie, “a poet, that would be fun. How do they manage to live and how do they learn? I never talked with a poet before.”

“I’m not a poet yet and I don’t want to be a half-assed poet. I want to be a great poet, like Chaucer or Shakespeare or even Heine or Matthew Arnold.”

“You’ve hitched your wagon to a star, haven’t you?” said Rosalie.

"Yes, I have, though it seems to me I've heard that phrase about the wagon and the star before. And if I can't be a great poet, I'd like to be a great novelist and do something as good as 'Wilhelm Meister', or 'Don Quixote' or 'Les Miserables' or 'Tess of the D'Ubervilles' or 'The Cossacks' or 'Tom Jones.' "

"Or perhaps 'Great Expectations', suggested Rosalie timidly.

"Yes, even as good as 'Great Expectations'. That was a favorite of mine when I was a kid. Why do you mention that one?"

"I read it out loud last winter," said Rosalie. "What makes you think you must be a poet?"

"Because my head is full of jingles, silly jingles I'll admit, from morning to night. Some days everything turns in rhymes. You see I can begin on you right at this very minute.

Rosalie, Rosalie
Sprung from the sounding sea

" 'Sounding sea' that's Homer of course.

Sweet as the dew-kissed rose
Blowing at dawn,

"Let's see now, what rhymes with 'rose' and 'dawn'? 'Nose' won't do, 'clothes' is better, and 'fawn' of course will go with 'dawn'.

Leaves for her rustling clothes,
Shy as a fawn.

"You see it's all nonsense, because you haven't come out of the sounding sea or any other kind of a sea, and you're not clad in leaves but in a perfectly good dress, and you're not a bit shy. There's no sense in any of my poetry yet, but my brain goes on jingling and rhyming from morning to night.

Rosalie Rosalie,

Now you have come to me,
Do not depart
Stay beating heart;
Watch the blooms quiver
Here by the river,
Stay till the twilight
Softens day's garish light."

Rosalie laughed. "That's enough for now," she said, "turn off the hot water tap."

"Please don't think," said Mice, "that I can't tell good poetry from my jingles, listen to this;

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

Mice halted to note the effect on his audience. "That's great poetry," said he.

"I'm afraid I don't know much about poetry," said Rosalie.

"Don't tell me," said Mice fiercely, "that you're wedded to 'The Burial of Sir John Moore,' 'Casabianca,' and 'The Wreck of the Hesperus.' "

"That's about my style," said Rosalie. "You see those are all in the school readers, and the children learn to recite them. But even when we were little we made some improvements;

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Eating peanuts by the peck."

Mice winced. "I know, I know, I've been all through those childish epidemics. They're like measles. The school books stuff the children's heads with mediocre and sub-mediocre verses in order to reduce them all to quiet orderly mediocrity. That's democracy for you. Rhyming and jingling have become a disease with me, and I can find no cure. In fact, I don't know that I want to be cured. Everything I look at starts me going. I look at that big rock in the river for instance, and here I go;

Giant rock you never quiver,
At the onrush of the river,
Fast and firm and bold you stand
Deeply rooted in the land."

"I don't want to seem too stupid or unsympathetic," said Rosalie, "but I know enough to know that there's good, bad and indifferent poetry. I read a little bit once and liked it so much, that I committed it to memory. Would you like to hear it? Of course it's sentimental, but there's one line in it about the empty room with the door ajar that I like very much. You'll understand, Mice, that I'm not saying it to you to vamp you, I'd just like to show that I'm a little better than a 'Casabianca' girl."

"Shoot," said Mice.

"*The day is lost without thee,*
The night hath not a star;
Thy going is an empty room,
whose door is left ajar.
Depart; it is the foot-fall,
Of twilight on the hills;
Return; and every rood of ground
Bursts into daffodils."

"I can't do anything as good as that yet," admitted Mice.

"Not yet, not for a long time, I expect," said Rosalie. "You'd have to be or have been really in love to write that."

"I've been in love fifty times," said Mice. "I love nearly every pretty girl I meet."

"That's only kid's stuff," said Rosalie.

"I know," said Mice, "and the provoking thing is, no one takes me seriously and I get very bad marks in English Lit—I've just finished my second year and done English One and English Two—and the instructor laughs at me and pulls my leg and says something silly like this to me, when we're alone;

You've got to be fit
To pass English Lit.
One can't see things right
Unless one is tight
And then farewell knowledge,
One's thrown out of college."

"I think he's a very good teacher," said Rosalie.

"Why?"

"He's trying to make you laugh at yourself, and not take yourself too seriously."

"He's a good scout," said Mice, "but he makes fun of me."

"You an only child?" asked Rosalie, "Did mother tell her darling boy he was going to be a genius?"

"Words to that effect," admitted Mice,

Mother found joy
In her wonderful boy

"Oh Mice," laughed Rosalie, "snap out of it."

"It's not so easy," said Mice. "The provoking part of the whole thing is that while I just pass in English Literature, I'm a whiz at chemistry

and biology, and get high marks in them, when I don't want to at all. They're both stinking subjects, but my marks in them confirm the old man's opinion."

"Of course," said Rosalie, "I'm not a learned person and not very wise yet, for I'm only nineteen and I won't be twenty till next September."

"Birthday date please," said Mice, pretending to pull out a note book, "so that appropriate present may be shipped."

Rosalie gave no heed to his nonsense. "But I had a great course with a wise person last winter and I picked up a good deal. Really, you ought to talk with Johnny Allen and the Little Old Lady."

"Where are they?" asked Mice.

"Miles and miles from here, I'm afraid you'll have to listen to me at second-hand. I'm not sure that they even exist. They may have been fairies, though a truck driver could never be a fairy could he? Perhaps they were just people made in my mind, but that's nonsense, for there's the Ford and that must have come from somewhere. In some ways I'm as loony as you, Mice, for my life seems only a dream and I think that someday I'll wake up and reach out and touch something real, something like a tree or a stone."

"Might be," said Mice, "maybe you and I are part of a dream right now. Shall I try you with pin?"

Rosalie laughed that away, and went on; "I can tell you what I've learned so far, and maybe it might help you a little. You see, you have to know a great many things about the world and people, and be able to size up their characters, before you can write anything true or worthwhile. The little old lady says it has to agree with an inner truth, that is truer than the apparent outside appearance. People who live by what they call facts are hardly wise at all. You have to have wisdom and understanding to see the truth behind the facts. Oh dear," said Rosalie, "I'm talking like a wise old woman and I'm younger than you. I learned all this from the little old lady."

"You talk exactly like the old man," said Mice, "only perhaps you're a shade more profound."

"Oh, Mice, stop teasing me," said Rosalie, "stop nibbling. I'm not a

bit profound yet, but give me time to grow. I'm sure of one thing, you've got to work and work hard at whatever you're doing, no matter how humble the task, before you can understand people. And you mustn't love money. The old country proverb says; 'Poverty, Labour and Humility maketh a man.' "

"I'm not so strong on humility," said Mice, "and I think you should add 'cold'. Snow and ice are good for the human animal."

"And struggle," said Rosalie.

"And 'getting around'," added Mice.

"I don't know much, about literature," said Rosalie, "and maybe I'm only a 'Casabianca' and 'Wreck of the Hesperus' girl, but I've read 'The Tempest' through four times."

"There," said Mice, "that tears it. I've been wondering who are; you're Miranda come to life again."

Rosalie laughed, "Little you know," said she, "but you can't put me off with nonsense. You see I liked 'The Tempest' so much that I read a life of the author."

"A well-known name, a triple A poet,

Never a muff
Never a bluff

"There I go again on the old jingle. What helpful lesson do you draw from him, for your infant class?"

"Well, he was a country boy with none too much education, but he looked at trees and flowers and fields and clouds and brooks and ordinary country people. And afterwards he was chore-boy and horse-holder in London, a ham-actor, a re-maker of old plays, ticket taker at the door, and at last part-owner in three theatres. He learned and laboured and watched people, and then he sat down often tired and discouraged, and made the greatest poetry in the world."

"I know there's nothing in my jingles now," said Mice, "they're all soft and punk;

Rosalie, Rosalie
You are the girl for me
but give me time."

"Here's something," said Rosalie, "that I've thought out all by myself since I've met you. The doctor's nearly always the best man in a place, and everyone depends on him. He knows everybody's troubles and keeps all their secrets. He knows the people inside and outside, and he delivers all the babies. Now, how could you ever learn about people better than by being a doctor, especially a country doctor who has an easy and welcome entry to homes of rich and poor. Then as you drove along the country roads, you could turn some of the stuff you'd really learned into verses."

"And they mustn't rhyme," said Mice thoughtfully, "blank verse is the stuff. It must scan and flow but not rhyme, rhyme makes even the greatest poets ridiculous. Look at Byron, he was the greatest rhymester of them all, and look at the amount of tripe he wrote. Rhyme is a disease."

"I don't know anything about Mr. Byron," said Rosalie, "but the little old lady told me that two English doctors had written great novels. I think their names were Cronin and Maugham."

"Almost thou persuadest me," said Mice, "How come you know so much?"

"Well," said Rosalie, with the egotism of youth, "I haven't had much opportunity, but I'm alert and listen and keep looking round me, and the little old lady says I'm well above the average. I don't know much yet, but someday I'm going to know quite a lot. I'm going to work hard in the world and look and listen. I guess you'd better try what your old man says, especially if you've got a natural flair for chemistry and biology."

"If I could only get over rhyming."

"You'll get over it," said Rosalie. "if you only set your mind on real things."

"Sure?" asked Mice.

"Certain," said Rosalie.

Mice took off his glasses and cleaned them on a handkerchief that was rather rusty. “Only sun-glasses,” he explained, “There’s nothing wrong with my eyesight.” He looked steadily into Rosalie’s eyes. “Well,” he said when he had completed his polishing, “I’m sold on miracles and medievalism forever. A pretty girl in a Ford car picks me up in broad daylight on a cement highway, and turns my mind around from north to south in two hours. I’ll believe in anything queer now, guardian angels, smelly dead men coming to life again, I’ll even swallow the story of the purple pyjamas flapping over the Allegheny Mountains.”

Rosalie smiled the slightly mysterious smile that all women employ when they reflect on the fact that men always remain little boys.

“Here goes,” said Mice, walking across the verandah to where his coat was hanging on a chair-back, “here goes the old ball-game.” He rummaged in his coat pocket, took out the pebble and flung it in the river, where it made a tiny and momentary splash in the slick of the rapid. “Never kick her again, said he. “I guess I’m on the road to being a saw-bones.”

Rosalie got up from her chair, “Thanks for a good lunch,” said she, “I guess I’ll have to be on my way.”

“Don’t you know,” said Mice, “that on a college essay, ‘I guess’ is marked ‘archaic, obsolete and illiterate?’ ”

“You just used it a minute ago,” said Rosalie.

“I, oh I, it doesn’t matter what I say. I am only a weakling that can be twisted around a woman’s finger. But you, now you’ll have to be careful because you have a touch of genius.”

Rosalie laughed.

“Where will you sleep tonight, Rosalie?”

“People always ask that,” said Rosalie. “At least you’re the second man who has asked that, and I’ll give you the same answer; I’ll be sleeping somewhere and wherever I’ll be sleeping, I’ll be sleeping there.”

“That sounds a bit like, ‘She sells sea shells’, or ‘Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers’. How will I find you again, Rosalie? You

see I'll have to report progress. You can't just cast me off after I've thrown my pebble away."

"I really don't know," said Rosalie, "perhaps we've completed the reason for our meeting."

"Would you mind kissing me before you go, Rosalie? Would you mind very much?"

"I'd like to," said Rosalie feeling that that is what Miranda would have replied. "I like you ever so much, really I like you better than any man I've ever talked to."

The parting kiss confirmed an idea that for some minutes had been lingering in the back of Mice's mind. "I think I'd like to marry you someday, Rosalie, in fact I'm quite sure I would. Of course, I haven't got any sense yet, you can see that."

"That's just it," said Rosalie, "we couldn't get married unless we fell in love with one another, and you're still a chick in a shell or wrapped up somehow like a cocoon, you haven't burst out yet and really spread your wings."

"I'm going to fly soon, though," said Mice. "I'm going to get out the Anatomy Book this very afternoon."

"Get your wings clear, Mice. You know we learn a good deal of Latin in our schools, and I remember one nice phrase, when a boy decided or somebody decided that he was a man, he put on the toga virilis. Put on the toga virilis, Mice."

Mice sprang up, seized a rug, draped it around his shoulders, and assumed the pose of a senator about to deliver an oration in the Roman Forum.

"It would be fun," said Rosalie quite frankly, "to marry a man like you because you're both serious and humourous, but it'll be a long time before you're a doctor—years and years—and perhaps I'll be blown about the roads of the world like a dead leaf. I'll only be Stella Star of Somewhere and you'll be learning to fly. Perhaps I'll learn to fly too."

"You can fly now," said Mice. "You've already got your wings clear."

Rosalie walked out to her Ford and climbed aboard. She had backed out to the, highway before Mice could pull his wits together.

"Rosalie," he cried.

Rosalie leaned out of the car window and shouted, "Don't forget to get your hair cut, Mice, it will help," and she was off.

Sixteen

Evening was closing in when Rosalie drove into the main street of a cosy seaside town. There were white cottages with neat New England porches and hawthorn hedges and here and there a grander house of brick; the streets were clean and well kept; there was a square with the town hall, the post office, and an old church with a tiny cemetery. These, although she did not know it, were the remnants of pioneer culture. When she got to the southern end there were little shops still open, with strange foreign people loitering about them. She turned by a fountain drinking trough and drove back along the main street. "This is where I stay," she said to herself, "but how and in what house". She turned again and on the third journey, saw a sign in the big plate glass window of a restaurant 'Girl Wanted.'

Rosalie halted her car by the curb, walked in, and asked the girl at the desk if she could speak with the manager. He appeared, a short thick-set solemn man in black, with hardly any neck and a round pale flat face.

"You want a girl?" asked Rosalie.

"Yes," said the manager.

"Will I do?"

"Have you had any experience in restaurants?"

"No," said Rosalie, "but I've had plenty of experience in housework. I'm neat and tidy."

"Can you wash dishes?"

"I'm a good dishwasher," said Rosalie.

"I might try you," The manager was a little dubious about this well-dressed girl.

"What wages?" asked Rosalie.

"Five dollars a week, and your meals, and your room."

"Can I have a room to myself?"

"Then I could only pay you four dollars a week, the girls usually double up."

"Right," said Rosalie. "I'll take the single room."

"Name?" said the manager getting out a black notebook.

"Stella Star."

He asked for no address or references.

"I have a Ford," said Rosalie. "What can I do with it?"

"There's a big barn behind, you can stick it in there."

Rosalie did as she was bid, put away her car and locked it. Two half-grown lads came and carried up her leather trunks.

"Quite a swell for a dishwasher", said one lad to the other, when he saw her car and luggage.

Rosalie alone in her meagre room, opened the window and looked out on a paved court, where lorries were parked; in the distance she could see the spire of a red brick church. The window she decided needed cleaning.

"Well, here I am sound in wind and limb," she said to herself. "I'm not dodging the hard things anyway. I wonder what will happen next?" Then she undressed, said a prayer, thought a little while about the little old lady and the strange undecided rhyming boy, then lay down on her narrow bed to sleep the sleep of youth.

Rosalie turned out at six, donned the rather raggedy cotton uniform that had been assigned her, and reported for breakfast. There were six other girls at the table in the very rear of the long narrow restaurant. Two of the girls looked to Rosalie as if they'd been out pretty late the night before, and, as breakfast for people who work is not a very chatty meal, no one at first paid any attention to her. After all, she was only a dishwasher and that is the lowliest of restaurant positions; there is in a restaurant, even as there is in little towns or big towns, a hierarchy; the dishwasher is the lowest in the social scale; the highest, the girl on the cash register. Rosalie was hungry, ate with a good appetite, and minded her own business. Presently, however, the big handsome blonde who sat next to her, yawned and said behind her hand, "What's your name?"

"Stella", said Rosalie.

"Why, that's my name, too."

"Then there'll be two Stellas," said Rosalie, and then realized instinctively, and perhaps by a little drawing away of her companion, that she'd made a mistake. Blonde Stella, as she afterwards learned, was on the cake counter. So Rosalie added, "Of course, I'm only a dishwasher."

"Tough job," said the big blond "Got a fella?"

"I only arrived last night," laughed Rosalie.

Rosalie found out as the days went by, that this was the theme song of the restaurant girls, "got a fella yet?" Well she'd had a "fella", and run away from him, and she didn't propose to become the chattel of any other. She only wanted to work, learn, and lead her own life under her new name.

"Where you from?" asked the big blonde.

Rosalie named a place far off, from which she did not come. She was sorry she had to tell those two lies about her name and place of origin. She liked truth and was not a liar by nature, still she had wit enough to know, that in times of stress and danger, necessity drives even the best and wisest into minor falsehood.

Breakfast over, Rosalie reported to the kitchen. Her helper, or perhaps her superior, instructed her in her duties. He was a fat middle-aged man, none too clean, clad in a long white coat, that had once been spotted, before the spots had run together into one continuous patch of grease; his face bore forever a moronic grin; his hair was sparse; his teeth brown and broken; it was inevitable that he should be called George.

Rosalie did as she was bid, scraped the leavings from the plates into a shoot that led to a garbage can in the basement, and then plunged the scraped dishes into a long coffin-shaped trough that was half full of hot soapy water. In this trough, George dabbled to and fro with a mop of dingy colour. On either side of this coffin-shaped trough, were long sloping fluted zinc shelves that led water back into the Black Sea over which George presided. Rosalie, when the trough was quite full, shifted from George's right to his left, took out the dishes, piled them in little racks, and shoved them into

a steam sterilizer that in two minutes not only sterilized but also dried them. The dishes were boiling hot as she drew the racks out of the sterilizer, and she had to guard against burns on arms and hands. She soon discovered the usefulness of rubber gloves. Meanwhile, George had pulled the plug of the Dead Sea and let a dark brown river flow into some desert in the basement. "It always swirls down the hole one way," said George. "I bin watching it now for years." George seemed quite proud to exhibit this bit of scientific information to his new assistant. "Now, how do you account for that?" he said. "I've tried a hundred times to start her the other way about with the mop, but she always swirls one way. Now, how do you account for that?"

"Due to the dip of the horizon," said Rosalie, merrily.

George looked at her with interest. "Do you really think so?" said he.

"I shouldn't wonder?" said Rosalie.

The work was intermittent; a great clatter of trays and dirty dishes as the waitresses carried them out of the dining room between eight and ten in the morning; then a lull with very little to do; another rush from noon to two; a rest; and then the busiest time of all from five in the afternoon to eight in the evening. "We got to keep her clear," George used to say as if he were pumping a ship.

During the first afternoon, one of the cooks pushed a stool toward her, "Rest yourself," he said, "or you'll ruin your feet. How about a movie tonight?"

"I've got a date," said Rosalie. Lie number three she thought, but a very useful lie, a magic formula that she employed a hundred times to avoid the male entanglements of her lowly environment.

Sometimes her back ached, sometimes her hands were sore, but she was quite happy in this humble employment, for she was a free woman, and she knew that even here she was learning about the inside of things and that she must wait patiently for whatever Fate would bring her.

In her off hours, she explored the hidden parts of the restaurant that were not apparent to the public eye; the vaulted store room in

the cellar, damp and rather musty for there stood the big garbage cans that caught what came down the shoots and often overflowed; the inner store-room was piled with bags of flour, boxes of patent cereals, big bottles of extracts, and cases of canned goods of every variety. Rosalie wondered where all this food came from, and since so many employees had access to this higgety piggety storeroom why some things were not stolen. After a while, she noticed in fact, that the cook's helpers and vegetable peelers were adept at petty theft. The cold room into which she peeked was a gruesome place, where dead, very dead looking meat was hung. It was fairly clean with white-washed walls and very cold. The meat-cutter entering, closed the door behind him quickly.

The most interesting place was the bakeshop, which was on the same floor as her dishwashing trough. She liked to watch the cooks stir up great messes in the mixing machines, and then with swift hands, scoop the batter into greased pans that were balanced against a weight. Their hands were often dirty and she smiled a little, as she compared the rough and ready methods of the kitchen, with the dainty manner in which the girls at the cake counter handled pies and frosted cakes in the presence of customers. There was some sham in this business; waitresses picked up a piece of toast that had fallen on the floor and stuck it back on a plate; what was unseen by the customer hardly mattered at all. Rosalie recalled a story the little old lady had told her of the negro cook—perhaps it was the very John they had seen on the bridge—who, when he had been teased by some of the sailor-men, would go to the galley and spit in their coffee. She made up her mind that at any rate, she wouldn't be a sham but the same in her methods in kitchen and dining room.

The moronic fat dishwasher who gradually had been translated from her superior to her assistant, for in spite of his observation of the swirl of dishwater, his I.Q. was very low, turned out to be a bit of a wag, and told her endless stories about himself and his wife, with whom he seemed to live in an atmosphere of continued skirmish and only intermittent truce.

"She fair beats Hell out of me," he explained to Rosalie one day.

"How much does she weigh?" enquired Rosalie.

"Only ninety-eight pounds, but God, she's got a strong mind!"

"What does she beat you for?" asked Rosalie, anxious to understand the ins and outs of domestic affairs as they approached zero.

"For anything, for any little thing she could start a row about or a pin.

"For instance?" asked Rosalie for fun.

"Well, if I come home smellin' of a drop of beer—I like a drop after washin' in this hot kitchen all day—then I'm for it."

"But how can she beat you?" asked Rosalie. "A ninety-eight pound woman can't take a two hundred pound man across her knee. Does she spank you?"

"No, she never done that. Last night she hit me with a piece of kindling wood. See that bruise on my forehead?" And the moronic one widened his grin and brushed back his scanty hair.

Rosalie looked at the bruise, and noting that George's grin expressed a kind of self-satisfaction, said, "I believe you like it, I believe you like your wife to beat you."

"I don't mind much," said he. "You see she's little and not very well, and it keeps her contented. She has something to look forward to." Rosalie thought of Joe Gargery at the forge and broke into a peal of merry laughter.

It was at this very moment that the stocky manager, whose neck was so short that his head grew directly out of his body, pushed open the swinging doors, that the waitresses always kicked with deft foot, and came into the kitchen. Rosalie was flushed with the heat and was showing her even white teeth in laughter. The manager saw that she was pretty and good-natured, and from the first he had been impressed by the new Ford standing in the barn. He called her aside.

"How would you like to be a waitress?" he asked.

"More pay?" enquired Rosalie, who had some instinct for bargains.

"Seven dollars a week and tips."

"And time?" enquired Rosalie.

"Ten hour day, five in the morning, five in late afternoon with a rest-period in between."

"And a room to myself?"

"A room to yourself and every other Sunday off. You'll meet more people as a waitress."

"I'm not sure I want to meet more people," said Rosalie, "I'm best at just knowing one or two that I can trust."

"It's a promotion," said the manager.

"I'll be quite sorry to leave George," said Rosalie. "I'm sure he'll miss me. He's not very bright but he's a good dishwasher, he never tries to be fresh and he makes me laugh with his comical stories."

"George is all very well in his place," said the manager profoundly, as if he were a God speaking from Olympus, "but he'll never be anything but a dishwasher."

"I wonder how smart he is himself?" thought Rosalie, and then added aloud, "I hoped there be more pay for a waitress job."

"We'll raise you each month toward the ceiling price if you're efficient," said the neckless one.

Rosalie thought; "How Mice would hate that phrase 'the ceiling price,' perhaps he'll walk into the restaurant someday and I'll wait on him."

"All right," said Rosalie, "I'm on. When do I start?"

"Now," said the manager. "We're a waitress short this morning."

George's jaw dropped when Rosalie told him she had been promoted to waitress. "I'm right sorry to lose you Stell'" said he, "you're far and away the best helper I ever had. Maybe now you're making a mistake, maybe if you stayed here a long time you'd get to be head dishwasher."

"Then I'd be taking your job away from you George. No, I couldn't do that. Did your wife beat you again last night?"

George glowed with pleasure; Rosalie knew this was his favourite theme. "She gave me a hell of a beatin' up last night, she beat me with the hearth broom, but it didn't hurt much. Afterwards she made cocoa for me, real good hot cocoa."

Rosalie was issued a smart new uniform, white with green collar and green cuffs, and a little white cap with a narrow band of green. She had her own stockings and black walking shoes. In her room, she took in her dress a little at the waist to make it snug, tucked up her hair in the conventional fashion, fastened her rather trifling cap, and looked in the glass. "I'm quite pretty in this rig," said Rosalie to herself, "I wish my eyes didn't look as if they were on the point of laughing all the time. I suppose I'll have to keep on saying, 'I got a date, I got a date.' Dear me, how I should like to talk this job over with Mice, and Johnny Allen, and the little old lady."

The restaurant was a glitter of shining wood and metal and great wall mirrors; the floor was of red and yellow squares that were smooth and easy to clean—Rosalie sprinkled coffee grounds on her section and swept up four or five times a day—there were tables with shiny tops and stalls for lovers; the ceiling too was in squares like the floor, only the ceiling squares were cream and white; two long counters, one for bread and cake, one for soda and coffee drinkers took up a good deal of the floor space there were a few discouraged and melancholy century plants set along a shelf by the stairs that led to the washrooms, the office, and the upstairs dining room. Rosalie decided that the century plants needed water, as they did; when no one was looking she poured a glass of water into their bowls, and they visibly improved under her treatment.

Rosalie at first was a little confused by the glitter and her lack of experience, but she soon learned to make out slips and look interested, while dull slow customers fingered the menu cards, pondered, and slowly made up their minds. After a little while, she knew exactly what each regular customer would order, but she had to smile and wait patiently till the palate and stomach of the orderer telegraphed to his slow brain, what calories were necessary for his bodily well-being.

She learned quickly how to jerk the counter pulls, and to estimate the requisite amount of coca-kola in a glass, how to make banana splits and sundaes, and ice-cream sodas, and sodas with malted milk, and sodas with both malted milk and an egg. Who was Horlick,

she used to wonder, for she had no knowledge of Jimmy Horlick or Christ Church or the famous Bullingdon Club in Canterbury Quad; and she little guessed that with each spoonful of malted milk she ladled into a glass, she was helping to support the Bullingdons, that splendidly destructive society. She smiled back at people who smiled at her, but gave them no 'come-on' eyes, and she was forever busy about her business. Her social position was now better; she had risen in the hierarchy and the girls now talked to her freely at the breakfast table. Their talk was still about 'fellas' and their adventures of the night before, about which they were astonishingly frank. "There must be something wrong with you, Stell, though you look healthy," they used to say, "You're an icicle." Rosalie would laugh and say, "I guess so, everyone can't be the same."

Of course, everything did not go along smoothly. There were always a few pushing, cross and unreasonable customers, and petty jealousies among the employees. One day when Rosalie was in the kitchen preparing an order, Stella the big blonde, bumped against Susan, the sullen brunette. They put down their trays for this slight bump was the climax of an aggravation that had been growing between them for some time; they were both after the same 'fella'; they fought there in the kitchen. Rosalie had never seen women fight before, and a chill of terror crept into her heart and along her spine. There among the dishes, and dishwashing machines, and hot stoves and tables laid out with sliced bread, pies, cakes and meat, they joined battle, hammer and tongs. Plates and cups clattered to the floor and were broken, bread and meat spilt—it was all picked up later and fed to the customers—a pot of potatoes upon the glowing stove was overset and sent up a cloud of steam. Women apparently have no great instinct to strike, but rather to pull and scratch, and in these days of long scarlet painted fingernails, a woman's hand can be a dangerous weapon. Both contestants had their caps pulled off and their hair pulled down, Stella's cheek was deeply gouged and Susan had a black eye, before the men cooks, who rather enjoyed this diversion from the monotony of pot and frying-pan, pulled them apart. Then both began to cry hysterically.

Rosalie felt quite sad all day about this fight, but she realized that it was all a part of life, and that even through this rowdy incident she had learned something.

It was soon after this fight, that Rosalie made a friend—not a confidential friend but a kind of companion—of Mary, the laughing brown-eyed girl on the cake-counter. Mary had a steady 'fella' who worked in Boston, and she was going to marry him as soon as he'd found a house and saved two thousand dollars. A wise, happy girl was Mary with her head screwed on properly. Sometimes in the summer evenings, Rosalie would drive her in her Ford to Friday Point, where they would sit and talk, cool off, and look out across the sea at the fishermen's boats chugging homeward.

One Sunday when both she and Mary had the day off, they packed a lunch and drove off to the nearby valley of the great river. The valley was spacious and beautiful and the broad river rushing to the sea changed its moods and colours with the moods and colours of the sky. Rosalie had never seen a big river before—this was five times as wide as Mice's river—and its strength and beauty filled her heart with gladness.

Mary did not want to look at the river very much, for she had grown up in the valley, and was used to the river; she wanted to talk about John and his letters and her hopes for the future. Rosalie told Mary nothing about herself but listened, with half her mind—she had that faculty of half-concentration—and said 'yes, yes, isn't that grand' at appropriate intervals. Her eyes, however, were on the river and she thought a little bit about Mice, and what fun it would be to be with him. She was sure he would kick the pebble no more.

Mary's people lived further up river, and with them they had tea. Rosalie listened to the family talk and learned that the river valley was a great source of wealth to the people who lived there. Perhaps it was on that day that it began to dawn in her mind that things, rather than money, made real value and that men could advance little without friendliness and co-operation. If they burned their pastures in common, there was a wealth of blueberries in August; the sea fogs that rolled up the valley were a benison to their acres

of straw-piled strawberries; the wooded hills gave them wood and timber; in May the river was crowded with spawning kayaks that they dipped and sold for bait to the lobster fishermen; guides were well paid in May and June by the sportsmen who came to take the salmon; there was a run of silver-bellied sea-going eels in October, that Italians wanted in New York, and spawning smelts to be taken through the ice of January and February. "How gracious God was to some people," she thought, and how proudly and freely lived the dwellers in the valley with their fierce independence. But all had to be organized; there had to be net makers, and punt makers, and packers, and truck drivers to haul and ship the fish. Men had to trust one another and could do little without cooperation. Money, she began to see, had no value in itself, but was only a convenience in trade and an insurance against old age. Rosalie listened and learned a great deal on that day and other days in the valley.

The work in a restaurant is tiresome and the employees are changed frequently: sometimes a tired waitress has a flare-up with the manager, sometimes one marries, sometimes one gets in trouble. The last was the case with the rather shy brown-eyed girl at the soda fountain. Rosalie had hardly spoken with this girl, but she liked her gentle, quiet manner. Her 'fella' claimed that he was not the only one, and refused to marry her. The girl was kept on till she became too bulky for public appearance. Rosalie was on the cash when this sad girl, battered suitcase in hand, came to draw her last pay. Rosalie followed her through the door to the sidewalk and thrust into her hand a ten-dollar bill. "Here," she said, "here's the ten dollars Johnny Allen gave me, when I was on the road." She never saw this girl again and often wondered what became of her.

So because of these intermittent vacancies, Rosalie, because she was industrious and pleasant, was after three months of waiting promoted to the bread counter—she enjoyed wrapping up the loaves of fresh warm bread—and thence to the cake-counter—she knew how cakes were made in the kitchen—and before Christmas, she was put on the cash, and became the reigning queen of the

establishment. All these promotions carried with them increases in pay; Rosalie saw to that.

Every week she wrote a letter to the little old lady and told all she could about her life in the restaurant. Rosalie could write a very amusing letter. But the old lady had no gift for literary composition. She merely replied from time to time; "I am well, the moron is still with me. Come soon, the house is empty without you."

But it was while she was still a waitress that she had the encounter that coloured the rest of her life. There used to come into the restaurant in mid-afternoon, a stooped man with a shock of grey tousled hair. His age was hard to calculate for when he walked, stooped and with bad balance, he seemed well over seventy, but when he sat down in a stall and his stoop was not apparent, he seemed much younger for his face was unlined and fresh and friendly. He had an eye that was roving yet intent, and it was obvious that he liked pretty girls. Rosalie did not mind this quality for she had learned that all healthy men, young or old, like pretty girls. Rosalie had a friendly feeling for this old man, and sometimes, when she could catch his eye on his entrance, she would nod him to one of her stalls. After a while, he needed no nodding, but always came to be waited on by her and always left a tip. He drank a lot of coffee and ate little. For a long time he did not speak to Rosalie except to give his order. Often this old man would bring along an exercise book, and write and write as he sipped his coffee and smoked a cigarette. Rosalie used to wonder what he wrote and wrote forever in his book, and sometimes as she made her rounds, she gave a quick glance over his shoulder, but his writing was difficult, and she could discover nothing, except that he wrote with a large soft pencil on un-ruled paper.

One day, however, when she brought his coffee, he asked abruptly, "What's your name?" "Rosalie," she said instinctively, "I mean Stella." "It can't be both," said the old man looking at her closely. "I think it's Rosalie."

Rosalie glanced around to see if anyone was listening, then she

looked straight in the man's face to see if she could trust him. She decided she could.

"You're right," she said, "it's really Rosalie but they call me Stella here."

That's a bit of a mystery," said he. "Stella a star, Rosalie a little rose."

"I know about the meaning of Stella," she said, "but I'm afraid I'm very unlike a little rose. I've only lately been promoted from dishwasher."

"I think Rosalie suits you very well," said he.

"It seemed," said Rosalie, "that you had something to tell me."

"I have," said the old man, "but not now," and he went on with his coffee and his writing. That was all of their first conversation. After that, they had many scraps of conversation, and always passed the time of day with mutual smiles. Rosalie was certain he had something important to say to her, and his delay increased her confidence. As she rang up the cash register, smiled and handed out the correct change, she felt something strange in her heart as if a far-off spring were already close at hand.

One day when they were almost alone in the restaurant, he leaned his elbows on the glass tobacco case before paying his bill, and said;

"What are you doing here, Rosalie?"

"I'm working and learning," said Rosalie. "The little old lady, who is the wisest person I've seen, told me I had to work at common work and learn about people, and wait patiently for what would happen to me."

"Just so," said the old man. "I won't ask who the little old lady is, for that might take too long in the telling. How much education have you had?"

"I've passed grade eleven, and taught a country school for two years."

"And how old are you?"

"Twenty."

"Then you're just ready for what I propose. I've had you in my mind for some time."

"Oh, but I'm not ready," said Rosalie, "that's the hard part of it. I know you can keep a secret."

"I can keep a secret," said he. "I have kept many of my own and other people's secrets."

"Well," said Rosalie, "I didn't do anything bad like stealing or murdering but I had to run away, I couldn't take it, and all my school standing is in my first name. I'd have to begin all over again. I'm Stella Star now, and I've lost all my standing."

"Too bad," said the old man, "but not impossible. Have you a good memory? Do you like to study?"

"Yes," said Rosalie, "I think my memory is pretty good, and I'd sooner read and study than do anything else."

"Do you think you could pass those examinations again?"

"I'm sure I could," said Rosalie, "I taught some of the work for two years and I read some in both French and English last winter."

"You'd have to go over your work," said he "You'd have to have a good tutor in the evenings."

"I've got plenty of money," said Rosalie "and I could pay for a tutor, but what does that lead to? When I pass as Stella Star, I'll still be a cash girl in a restaurant."

"It may lead to many things," said the old man. "That examination is the gateway to all the professions. I had to tell you this because something within me told me to tell you. I don't go about upsetting people for fun. Will you trust me? Would you like to try?"

Rosalie reflected hardly a minute. She was throughout her life always Johnny-on-the-spot mentally, and could make quick decisions.

"Get me a clever girl to help me and I'll start this very evening. I have a room to myself," said she.

Rosalie liked Claire, her tutor, and worked faithfully. In June, she passed fourth highest in the county. It was then that the old man revealed his intention. "Now," said he, "I will enter your name as a candidate as a student in training at the local hospital. I have some influence there; you will be admitted."

"Oh," said Rosalie, "I should like that."

"I don't know whether it was you flitting around the restaurant in your white uniform that put the idea in my mind or whether some earth spirit whispered it to me. But it seemed to be your destiny.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy"

"Hamlet!" said Rosalie "I've just passed in that."

"Good," said the old man. I hope you remember more of it. It is the best thing ever written. Your destiny, I believe, is to be a nurse, to tend the sick and afflicted and perhaps care for little children."

"I have often dreamed of being a children's nurse," said Rosalie. "You are the fourth person who has helped me along the road."

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So in July, Rosalie left the restaurant, regretted by many. George came out front wiping his hands on his unspeakable apron, "Come back and see us Rosalie." "I will" said Rosalie, "I'll come out in the kitchen and see you."

"She don't beat me no more," said George, "she got converted this winter in the new Reformed Emmanuel Church. She prays over me now. I don't know but what it's worse than beatin'."

Rosalie drove off along the road by which she had entered the town. After three hours she came to the river, the iron bridge, and Mice's bungalow. She halted, got out of her car, and went in on the pretext of asking a direction. A pretty but rather sentimental looking woman was seated on the verandah. This, Rosalie decided must be Mice's mother. The lady answered her question politely and gave her a friendly smile. Nothing more; there was no sign of Mice. She drove off almost hoping that she would overtake him kicking a new pebble along the road, though this would represent a surrender of his new principles. But there was no sign of Mice along the highway.

At last she drove up the lane by the half-burnt church to the little yellow house, and the little old lady, a little frailer now, was at the

back door to welcome her. “I saw you coming for miles and miles,” she said.

The moronic maid was given indefinite leave; Rosalie spent six weeks with the kittle old lady. They drove about the country; they talked without ceasing, for now Rosalie had some stories to tell. In the evenings, as formerly, they indulged in minor gambling with great earnestness and pleasure. Rosalie did not tell the little old lady about Mice, but revealed the name and residence of the old man who had helped her.

“That,” said the little old lady, “was one of the boys that helped salvage the Ardmore.”

“Oh, come now, Old Lady,” said Rosalie, “that’s too much of the good thing, that’s too much like a story-book. Affairs can’t go around in circles like that.” But the old lady protested that it was true, “I know all about him” she said. “He lives in that very town and his back was hurt in the war.”

Rosalie never quite believed that this was true, but perhaps it was. She had to take the little old lady’s stories at their face value, even though she was getting very weak and old and perhaps a little faulty in memory.

The little old lady still had plenty of stories in her bag and an evening would begin thus;

“Once I remember we were coming up through Sunda Strait and we passed quite close to a little island, for the water was bold, that had a feathery crest of palm trees. Evening was coming on, and I was standing behind the steersman, a very old, very black, purple-black negro sailor-man. He was a big Jamaican negro and he had gold earrings in his ears, ‘Missus,’ he said to me, ‘you see that island? There’s a Nova Scotia woman buried there. I helped bury her when I was a young man.

“ ‘What ship, John?’ I asked, for his name was John.

“ ‘I don’t rightly remember the ship’s name,’ said he, ‘I sail on so many ships But she was the Master’s wife.’

“And then I asked, ‘What happened?’

“ ‘She had a baby, Missus, she had a baby before we got where the

old man expected to be. She died, and that little baby live and grow up I guess. I helped dig her grave and I cover it all good with shells. Dey say shells keep off hants.'

"Well," said the little old lady to Rosalie, "I decided to find out about that ..." and then she rambled off into some half-forgotten tale of the sea.

At last in early September, Rosalie had to go. The little old lady who dreaded sentimentality, said to her in parting, "I knew you were honest and that you were going somewhere when I saw what a neat hole you made for the skunk. I put a new cross up for him this spring last, winter's snow had beat the old one down."

In mid-September Rosalie was entered at the hospital along with fourteen other girls.

Seventeen

The years flew by like minutes now, like a flight of swift birds that wheel in the sky and are gone. There is nothing like regular routine to make time fly. Rosalie got up with the others now at half-past six—quite dark in winter—made herself tidy and was at the breakfast table at a quarter to seven, then on duty or in the classroom from seven to seven with a three hour break at noonday.

The little hospital of one hundred beds, stood on a green hill, and from its south windows you could look far down the wide harbor; Rosalie liked this and when her back ached, she looked out to sea and thought of the men who tugged at the lobster pots. There was nearly always a flock of black ducks in the reedy creek at the foot of the hill, diving, standing on their heads, their tails wagging, in search of food, the mothers quacking incessantly as they taught their young the art of living. Rosalie enjoyed the quack of the ducks, the honk of the wild geese. She had a sympathy for all migratory things, she was herself a migratory being. Past the smoke of the waterfront buildings, she could discern the dim shape of Blue Island and the speck that was the Lurcher Lightship.

The window of the room in the nurses dormitory, that she shared with two other student nurses, looked out upon all the best in the Nova Scotian landscape. The two girls with whom she shared the room were of better class and more intelligent than those she had rubbed shoulders with in the restaurant. Still they had the same interest, 'fellas', though now that interest had of necessity been subordinated to their work. Rosalie knew of course, by this time that this was Nature's major law, and that men and women must mate, even as the birds mate.

On their bureaus, her companions had set out the framed photographs of their best young men, sometimes two or three, and of these they often talked. Rosalie had no photograph on her bureau, nothing but a first-class brush and comb, some good soap,

toothpaste and her toothbrush. She had to admit that she had no 'fella'.

"You'll get one soon Stella, you're pretty, you'll get one soon."

"I hope so," said Rosalie brightly, I'm going to keep my eyes peeled."

Rosalie found her chief pleasure in the classroom, where she spent the morning hours. She liked her instructress from the first, a tall, pale, gentle nurse, who never raised her voice, but who knew how to give a reprimand or exact a penalty, with no show of irritation or vindictiveness. She's a disciplined woman, thought Rosalie, she knows how to control her emotions; that's what I must learn to be, a disciplined woman.

The pile of books with which she was issued during the first week was rather frightening. There was so much to learn: Physiology, Anatomy, Materia Medica, Principles of Nursing, The Care of Children, Dietetics. Still these books with all their difficulties made her happy; she was burning to learn, she was a natural student, she had the inquiring mind. She resolved that she would solve all the mysteries of these books, and know them from cover to cover.

But it was not easy going, for when she looked into them she found them full of long mysterious words of which she had not the slightest idea of the meaning.

Rosalie did not know that the study of medicine, and in a lesser degree the study of nursing is cursed with a jargon that has its roots in the Middle Ages, in fact long before the Middle Ages, and that its terms are as much obscured as the terms of Medieval theology.

Of course, she observed as she got on, that this jargon was of use to the doctors in mystifying patients and preserving the tradition of the tribal medicine man. The less intelligent ones employed it more than the highly intelligent. In the Middle Ages all learned men wrote and spoke in Latin, that was the root of the trouble. Rosalie was glad that she had learned a good many Latin words in school for that gave her a little clue to the mystery of some words. But alas, many of the roots were Greek. She bought an Oxford Dictionary; she became wedded to her Oxford Dictionary. She found out that derma meant skin, and osteon, bone and arrived at the meaning of

dermatologist and osteomalacia. But she could not yet guess that the English language was littered with fossils, like bilious, sanguine, melancholy, choleric, tiny shells like diatoms that once lived as part of a great mass of medical knowledge now long outmoded; nor that the ancient accepted theory regarded bile as the major fluid of the body, and the barber surgeons of the Charlemagne's time and later, bled everybody to relieve this bile pressure regardless of diagnosis or disease.

The classroom was sunny, the instructress's voice was pleasant; she knew her stuff; she did not fumble, Rosalie dug into her books and was happy she was getting somewhere; her wings were getting disentangled from the web of the cocoon of ignorance and were spreading and growing.

In the afternoons, she was assigned to a ward under a senior trained nurse. Here she learned to do the simplest kind of duty properly. If she failed to make a bed smoothly, with the corners tucked in after the approved hospital system, her senior told her to throw back the clothes and make it again. Rosalie did not pout over such a reprimand that she came to regard as just, but did as she was bid. She learned to clean out dubious corners, fetch and carry bedpans, set out and arrange trays and change the position of a sick and querulous patient. She watched men die and later saw babies come into being.

When on her vacation, in the first summer of her course, she told the little old lady of all this, the little old lady gave approval.

"That's the way to learn properly," she said, "books in the morning, practice in the afternoon. Learn the compass one week and see if you can do a trick at the wheel the next."

"I believe it is a good way to learn," said Rosalie.

"It is, I know it is," said the little old lady vehemently. "That's half the trouble with boys and girls in schools and college; they get crammed with fine theories that they never have to apply, and when they come out into the world, they find that the jig-saw puzzle of life won't go together. Some of them never grow up. They fail in what they attempt and then go around lecturing on how to run the

Government and the Bank of Montreal. That's the way socialists are bred."

"Once the old man said to me," replied Rosalie, "if you're not a socialist at twenty you have no heart, and if you're a socialist at fifty, you have no brains. He was wise, too, though not quite as wise as you."

"That's quite right," said the little old lady, "you've got to be wild-eyed at first; wild-eyed as I was, when I went off with Mat."

"I suppose I'm at the wild-eyed stage now," said Rosalie

"Just coming out of it," said the little old lady. "They can talk as much as they like about courses and angles and degrees and deflections, but you've got to do a trick at the wheel and hold her average on the lubber line, when the wind's aft and the ship yawing, before you're a true sailor-man. You don't know much till you have the feel of things."

"I'm getting the feel of things," said Rosalie, and soon I hope my eyes will be more certain and steadier."

"That's the way it goes for those that learn," said the little old lady. "Eyes wild and dreaming in youth, steady and firm in middle age, sure and certain when death is near."

That was the last bit of conversation that Rosalie had with her little old lady.

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Rosalie was well liked in the hospital, she kept her minor troubles to herself, she spoke ill of no one and was always laughing and good-natured. She was healthy and strong, and those qualities are the great backers of good nature as opposed to malice and envy. She respected the superintendent of nurses; who did not attempt any simpering sweetness but was fair and just. Twice Rosalie was on the carpet in the superintendent's office; once accused justly of a minor offence. She had been very tired and, sitting down for a moment had dropped off to sleep when she should have been walking, and once accused of something that might have been serious, since a doctor's

orders had not been fully carried out. This time she was accused unjustly, for Rosalie knew that the fault lay with another student nurse who had not transmitted the order to her correctly when she took over. She took the reprimand without welching on the other her girl and felt no animosity against the superintendent, since she had wit enough to know that no executive, who has to decide many things, can make decisions a hundred per centum perfect. She remembered the little unwitting injustices she he inflicted when teaching children in the village school.

Sometimes, she thought, I don't seem to make friendships that get me on in the world, the friends that have helped me come to me by chance I seem to have the faculty of getting on with the most inappropriate people. She was thinking then of the man who shifted the garbage and peeled the vegetables. He was a hump-backed and half-witted little man who was industrious and forever busy. He was just the man necessary to wheel the garbage to the pigs and rinse out the garbage cans. He was Rosalie's slave and followed her about whenever duty took her to the basement. He had a merry twinkling eye, but always a ground of complaint against society.

"They don't pay me enough," he used to say, "where could they get another man to shift garbage at my price."

"How much do you get?" Rosalie asked.

"Forty dollars a month and my room—a rotten room—and my meals."

"That's a lot of money for a bachelor."

"Ay," said the garbage-man, "but I got my eye on a nice, plump girl, an I'm goin' to ask her soon."

"Goodness, Sampson" (for that was his name) said Rosalie, "I hope you haven't got your eye on me, I'm spoken for already."

"No, Miss," said Sampson, "she's far fatter than you. I got a fondness for fat women."

Rosalie laughed.

"I bin under a curse since my birth," Sampson explained. Nobody ever appreciated me and I never had no luck. For one thing there was the matter of my name."

"Sampson," said Rosalie, "why that's a good name, it's a strong name."

"But I ain't strong nor yet big and the boys on the street holler 'Sampson, Sampson, don't get your hair cut.' "

"Don't pay any attention to them" said Rosalie.

"But if I ain't got strength of body, I got strength of mind, I got great strength of mind. Once I was on the sea alone for two days and two nights."

"Were you a sailor-man?"

"A kind of sailor-man. I was a fisherman on a banker, on the Grand Banks you know. And I was off under-running trawl, and the fog shut down sudden and I couldn't get back to the vessel. There was I alone in my dory upon the mighty deep and the fog thick as mud. Sampson, my boy, ses I, you're in a box, a fix, a jam, and you've got to think this out. There was a short spar in her with a brown leg o' mutton sail so I stepped the spar, and set the little triangle sail. I ses to myself, if I keep on sailin' steady I'm bound to hit the land somewhere and then I'll jump ashore. Then I remembered there was an old box compass under the after seat and I got that compass and looked at it, and see a big W on one side of it. Ses I to myself, that's west, and if I steers west I'll hit either Nova Scotia or the Boston States. And I steered west two days and two nights, and by gum where do you think I struck?"

"Where?" asked Rosalie.

"Blue Rocks! Not twenty miles from home."

This was Sampson's only story, his epic, his saga, and during her years of training Rosalie listened to it for at least fifty times.

Five months after her entrance Rosalie wrote her first examination. The papers were examined by the surgeon who had lectured to them and Rosalie passed third from the top. Someday, thought Rosalie, as she looked at the posted list, I'll be at the very top and she was not mistaken in her prediction. Then came the capping exercise, when the student nurses first got their caps. It was very exciting and dramatic, the lights were low, the audience of friends and relatives were half-hidden in the dusky light; the

nurses marched in in procession, graduates and seniors in front, students behind bearing in their hands unlighted candles. They were seated in rows upon the platform facing the audience. Rosalie felt a little tug at her heart for there was no one there who was especially interested in her. If only kind mother or hard-working simple father, or Johnny Allen, or the little old lady, or Mice, could smile at her from the audience, how glad she would have been. Strangely enough, she wanted Mice most of all, the boy of but three hours acquaintance. Nearly always when she opened a book to study at night she said to herself, "I'm learning now what Mice is learning, I'm so glad if I helped to start him off."

Then there were speeches by officials and the brown-eyed surgeon whom she admired because of his reputed skill. His speech was encouraging for it told how responsibilities of the nurse were widening, how they were no longer simply makers of beds and carriers of trays. Without them he said the doctor would often fail. Rosalie's heart beat high. Then they stood up and repeated together the nurse's pledge, one of the most solemn and beautiful of all pledges. Rosalie in turn was kneeling before the superintendent and her cap was being pinned on. She had achieved the first step; this Rosalie felt was one of the greatest moments of her life. She arose from her kneeling position with exaltation in her face; now she felt she could lead armies and conquer the world. Then they lighted their candles at the mother candle—an inspiring bit of symbolism—and marched out to music. Afterward they sang together and laughed and danced and went to bed much later than was their custom.

Roslie registered a vow that night that she was going to learn everything she could and as thoroughly as she could. One summer there came to the little hospital a young intern, a Jewish boy, who was still a student in the Medical College. Rosalie watched him closely; in the first place she had never talked with a Jew, though she had often heard strange stories about people of the Jewish race. They had been the murderers of our Saviour, and it was said that in the Middle Ages they had offered Christian children as living

sacrifices. They were reputed to be usurers, sharp in practice, and said to control all the money in the world. All these defamatory stories Rosalie had heard of them, but as her mind was fair in spite of lack of experience, she reflected that after all, they had made that wonderful book, The Old Testament, and Mary whom God had chosen to be the mother of Jesus had been a Jewess. Surely, there must be something good about such people. This young Jewish student's name was Samuelson and Rosalie resolved to make his acquaintance. But her reason for this resolution was not solely to investigate the morals of the Jewish race, she secretly hoped that she might hear some word of Mice and of his progress. She would not ask, but Samuelson might inadvertently mention, something about his fellow student.

Samuelson never made any mention of Ferdinand Meister, but the acquaintance she fostered had its rewards and compensations. Samuelson was the first man she met who had the scientific mind and the true spirit of scientific investigation. He was restless, tireless, indefatigable in his quest for learning. Rosalie talked with him as often as she could and often spent an hour of the evening with him.

"Why don't you take a rest, why don't you go to the movies sometimes?"

"I have no time," he explained, "I have no time for pleasures. I am going to be a doctor; I am a Jew and under a handicap of racial prejudice; I must be among the best and better than most; moreover, I have no money for pleasures."

Rosalie sighed, "Oh, isn't money or the lack of money a nuisance."

"My father is a tailor," he explained, "and there are seven of us. I am the eldest and three of my sisters work to put me through college. I should be a poor thing if I squandered their money. Later I will help them. We Jews have great family feeling, but very little national feeling. It is a matter of indifference to us whether we live in San Francisco, Montreal or London. We only strive to find a place where we can be free."

Samuelson never tried to flirt with Rosalie nor with any of the

pretty nurses. He wanted to know everything about a little hospital. He worked as assistant to the X-ray technician, he peered through microscopes in the laboratory, he had himself put on the switchboard to learn the duties of admissions clerk and office technique, he thrust himself upon the crotchety dietitian and helped prepare trays for diabetics, he invaded the laundry to examine motors, washing-machines, tumblers, electric mangles and drying rooms.

Samuelson learned a great deal that summer and Rosalie learned a great deal from him. "Someday," he said, "I may be a great hospital executive; a little hospital is a great place to learn, for affairs are easy going and the authorities let you have a shot at anything."

In the evenings, he often told Rosalie stories about Darwin and Huxley and Pasteur and Lister. "Darwin was the greatest of them all," he cried, his eyes shining. They defamed him in his life and buried him in Westminster Abbey. That's where the English win, they have a sense of greatness and justice. They may abuse their Great while living, but they bury them with pomp and honour. It is said that a portrait of the sectarian, John Wesley, hangs in Christ Church dining hall, a hotbed of the Established Church. That's why the English win."

"Do you know what Darwin told the world, Stella?"

"No", said Rosalie, "I'm very ignorant."

"He set men free by his knowledge. He told them that the world was enormously old, millions of years old, and that men have been on it for a very long time, and that the first life on this earth evolved from tiny organisms in the torrid estuaries of tropical rivers. Do you know that Stella?" he asked eagerly. "Do you know about the azoic rocks?"

"No," said Rosalie. "I don't even know what 'azoic' means."

"It means without life. There are whole ranges, strata upon strata of azoic rocks laid down when there was no life upon this planet."

"It's rather frightening, isn't it?" said Rosalie. "It's no wonder simple
people want a religion that's comforting and cosy."

"You must read, too, about Lister and Pasteur and the beginning

of the knowledge of Bacteria, and how the London doctors fought Lister and his antiseptics, and about Doctor John Stewart, the great Nova Scotian, who was Lister's assistant. The world may come to great things; we are only a hundred years out of bodily slavery, and we are not yet free from slavery of the mind. I mean to add a bit to scientific knowledge, even a bit as big as a pin's head, even if I have to starve for it."

Rosalie was very sorry when Samuelson went back to Medical School in September. She thought she would like to give him a little money, but she dared not make the offer. She never forgot Samuelson, though she never saw him again after his departure. He had been a kind of supplement to the wisdom of the little old lady.

She profited by Samuelson's example and in the later years of her training, got permission from her instructress and the superintendent of nurses, who was always anxious to promote ambitious students, to work by turns in the X-ray room—the X-ray technician was friendly and well informed—in the laboratory, in the kitchen with the dietitian, as admissions clerk in the office, in the children's and infants' wards and even in the laundry. She broadened her knowledge. "Someday," she said to herself, "I shall be an expert in one of these departments. Someday I might go to a great school and learn biology and bacteriology." She had a great teacher in Claire, who had tutored her through her High School examination and who now in her summer vacations worked in the laboratory. Rosalie learned to do blood counts and blood grouping and the simpler forms of analysis.

Rosalie never forgot two of Samuelson's maxims: 'Ignorance is not a virtue' and 'Surely the laws of science are the thoughts of God.'

It was in her third year, and as she was approaching graduation, that Rosalie got two pieces of information. She learned from the papers that Hercule's marriage to her had been annulled on the grounds of her disappearance, and that he had married again. Cecile would just suit him—she remembered her well—she was just Hercule's type. She was not sure that this made her legally free, but she felt at any rate that she was in reality free and her own property

again. Although she had never worried much about Hercule, she felt as if a moral load were lifted from her shoulders. The other news was from a doctor: the little old lady was dying. Rosalie got leave as soon as soon as she could be relieved of her tour of duties, and drove down to the little yellow house by the half-burnt church. As she drove up the lane, she noticed that the blinds were all pulled down; the little old lady was already dead and laid in her black coffin.

Rosalie dismissed the tearful moron who acted as maid, and politely refused the offer of neighbours who wished to sit up with her. She brightened up the fire in the kitchen stove, got herself some supper, and went in and lit a lamp in the bedroom where the little old lady lay. How tiny and transparent she looked as she lay there, like a silvered moth of the night. What peace there was in her miniature face! All the wrinkles seemed gone now. What peace!

Rosalie said a little prayer over her; "O kind loving God," she said, "please bring Mat's soul from the depth of the ocean floor wherever he was washed to and fro, and let him and Kitty be young and brave together again, in a paradise of barques and tall sailing ships."

Then she went into the kitchen and read awhile . She was not in the least timid or nervous; she had never loved anyone so much as the little old lady. Later, like a sensible girl, she locked the doors, went to bed and slept soundly till dawn.

Next day, they buried the little old lady by her half-mad parson husband in the little cemetery behind the church. The cemetery was old and half the stones broken, with the legends worn off by erosion. 'It is not by stones and monuments that people are remembered', reflected Rosalie.

The house and property were hers she knew; she would keep it as a haven; perhaps someday she too would be a lonely little old lady. She put things away neatly; hired and paid a native whom she believed to be honest, to go through the place twice a week, locked everything securely and drove back to work.

Rosalie was graduated highest in her class and spoke the valedictory speech. She spoke it well too in her pretty lilting voice. As there were several Acadian French girls in the class and a few

French speaking persons in the audience, she was gracious enough to conclude with a few sentences in French, which had been her native tongue.

She wrote her Registered Nurses' examination and passed with ease. Then she elected to take a couple of years graduate work in a big hospital in Montreal. She had been there before as a student nurse in the Children's Hospital in the natural course of training, so that the big city was not new to her. But it is impossible to relate Rosalie's adventures in Montreal, or we'd never get on with our story. Rosalie was the kind of person to whom adventures always happen; she was bright within and hence found a bright world without. Little things about people always seem to Rosalie to be adventures, and hardly a day passed without some thing that amused or taught her.

After her two years in Montreal, she elected to return to the little hospital where she had trained, because it was such a friendly happy place. She was a graduate nurse now on the staff, and the student nurses entering seemed like children. She was kind to them and laughed with them and helped them in their little troubles,

Now she was senior nurse in charge of the operating room; she admired the work of the two surgeons she served, one blue-eyed, frank and outspoken; the other more emotional and sensitive, both skillful and honest in their work.

Eighteen

Intermittently chaos descends upon our earth; the second cousin of a third rate king is snubbed at a garden party; a Georgian peasant reads Karl Marx and the New Testament; the King of Sardinia is not seated on the right of the hostess; Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gorky and Turgenieff write novels; an American president dies sick at heart with the death of the League of Nations; an Emperor with a withered arm believes himself a God; America proclaims the doctrine of isolation; a wild-eyed student shoots a grand duke; an Austrian house-painter believes himself Napoleon; the Mikado is as well a major diety; the roots of war are grounded in the soil of ancient grudges and past defeats; the mob roars as their betters mutter; man is a pugnacious animal; only a little while ago he fought in the jungle; it is good to be away from home for a while on any pretext, to get drunk in the Savoy bar and pick up a pretty girl on Regent Street; the noble English rush out to bear the white man's burden and secure the available oil leases; God Almighty groans on his golden throne and is either indifferent or impotent; His under-study, the Holy Ghost, sulks somewhere behind a thick black curtain; the loving Jesus and
the tender-hearted Virgin weep but have no control; the crowd roars:

We don't want to fight,
But, by jingos, if we do,
We've got the men,
We've got the ships,
And we've got the money too.
or, *It's the Soldiers of the Queen, my lads.*
or, *It's a long way to Tipperary.*
or, *Roll Out the Barrel.*
or, *There'll Always be an England.*

The black lowering clouds at last are lighted up with jagged flashes of lightning; off they go, foot, horse, and artillery; chaos is come upon the world again.

Rosalie, at first, was not greatly moved by this earth-shaking chaos, for she had daily duties to perform that were close to life and death. But when an urgent call came for trained and competent nurses, she, on the advice of her superintendent, gave up her position in the operating room and enlisted with the rest. Truly war reaches far down, and disturbs the peace of quiet lives.

Rosalie was twenty-seven now, and her eyes were calm and steady. She was more beautiful than she had been at twenty, for she had lost none of her freshness and laughter, and had added to these maturity and knowledge.

She, one of fifty nurses, went aboard the Olympic on the afternoon of Friday the thirteenth of the month. One bad luck date, it is said, offsets the other.

An infantry brigade from Nova Scotia was going aboard, and four battalions from the west, eight thousand men in all. What a coil, as these half-disciplined troops crowded up the gang plank of the great steamer. Off to adventure they were going, going in turmoil and confusion. Some had lost their kit-bags, some their great-coats, mothers had lost their sons, sisters their brothers, and girls their sweethearts; one regiment had left its colours aboard the troop train, a score of men had been lost altogether between Edmonton and Halifax, so that nominal rolls were wrong and a correct count impossible; on the wharf-head the agent of a commercial printing company was making a fruitless effort to get aboard boxes of illustrated books that they had printed at the order of the battalions. Men in forage caps and caps comforter, with rifles slung over their shoulders milled about the decks, thronged the rails, or slung their hammocks above the dining room tables; some that were tired and a little drunk bedded down under the tables themselves; the ship was soon a litter of papers, broken meat and cheese, peanut shells and pop bottles; far forward a hundred brown men crept aboard.

Rosalie got her contingent of forty-nine nurses aboard, led them to the little hospital, and assigned them to the cabins—three to a cabin—that were almost amidships on the boat deck. Rosalie was the senior nurse; she was only twenty-seven, but she felt at least a hundred.

"Don't go wandering about the ship," she said to them. "Stay where you are; there are some eight thousand men aboard and fifty women; one hundred and sixty officers and men to every single woman; don't let anybody push you into dark corners."

Presently in the early evening, they felt the big ship throb and tremble as she edged away from the pier; a band began to play, what is perhaps the most tragic of all common songs, 'The Girl I left Behind Me.' There were yells and hoots of good-bye, a great trampling about the decks; a town in five layers, a sadly disorganized town of people who had to have food and beds, a town without Mayor or Town Council has grown up in four hours, and was moving out to sea. Silently, save for the throb of her dynamos and diesel engines, the great black ship moved slowly down the harbour with her 'freight of human courage till she felt again the heave of the sea.' The turmoil, the shouting, and trampling, ceased about midnight and save for the men on the bridge, the look-outs on mast or foc's'le head, everyone slept.

The thirty beds were filled quickly in the morning and stretchers were laid on the floor; men with broken heads; drunks recuperating but very ill; men with incipient pneumonia; men who seemed to be dying of sea-sickness. And besides this, dozens of out-patients were waiting in the sick-bay. Rosalie demanded and got two orderlies from each battalion. Rosalie's nurses were new to her, but they recognized a leader and her hospital was the one clean place on that crowded ship.

On the third night out, a night clear but black, Rosalie was coming back late from the sick-bay; a man had jammed his hand in a rack and it had to be dressed; Rosalie did not send one of her young nurses but went and did the job herself. The decks were still partially thronged but the men made way for her. She passed close

to the officers' lounge, and paused and glanced in through an open window. Some of the officers were drinking at the bar, but about a hundred of them were seated on the floor in a semi-circle, before a standing officer already flushed with drink. In defiance of all military regulations his tunic was unbuttoned, he wore a green tie, and his feet were thrust into slippers without socks. But he had a fine eye and a mobile mouth, and he kept his audience eager and spell-bound ready to laugh at his lightest word or gesture. Rosalie recognized in him a natural raconteur; he held them with the lightest story in the palm of his hand.

"Once," he said, "there was a lazy bee, just like you and me perhaps even lazier. He was so lazy that he could hardly fly from flower to flower. He would suck what honey he could, and then drowse and drowse till he got hungry again. He never carried any honey back to the hive. One day he was sitting on a daisy; the wind swayed the daisy to and fro and rocked him into a gentle sleep.

"But along came a hungry bull, and nipped off the daisy stem and flower, and swallowed the bee. When the bee woke up, he was in the vast cavern of the bull's stomach. He was a bit frightened at first, but it was so warm and comfortable and the lining of the bull's stomach was so soft, that he settled back and went to sleep again. When he woke up the bull was gone."

There was a roar of applause, laughter and cries of 'More, more.'

"Once," said the drunken raconteur with the silver tongue, "there was …"

Rosalie moved along, she could not be seen loitering or peeking into the officers' lounge. "Men going to war," she thought. "Children most of them, reckless, good-natured children, that's what they are. Instead of studying their military books, they are listening to silly stories. Poor courageous, reckless children."

She hurried along, anxious to reach her cabin for she was tired after a long day of tending the sick. But she was destined to have a strange encounter that night.

When she had almost reached the hospital, she saw a young

officer in a colonel's uniform standing in the open doorway of what had been in time of peace a millionaire's suite. He hailed her.

"Sister," he said. "I'm sick."

"What's the matter," said Rosalie.

"I'm worn out," said he, "and I've got a splitting headache, a real splitter."

"I'll run along to the drug room and fetch you some aspirins; perhaps you need a stimulant, a drop of whiskey."

"I don't take whiskey," he said, "I reckon I'm the only total abstainer on this ship."

"You'll have to take it, if I say so," said Rosalie rather pertly.

She returned with the aspirin and whiskey and entered his sitting room—he had a sitting room that would seat twenty, and a bedroom and bath beside—leaving the door ajar. "He must be quite a swell", thought Rosalie, "to have quarters like this."

He took the three aspirins and made a wry face as he gulped down the whiskey at Rosalie's direction.

"Maybe you need a number nine," said Rosalie directly.

"No," said he. "I'm all right that way; I'm only worn out and my head is splitting."

"You'll feel better in a few minutes, when the aspirin and whiskey get working," said Rosalie.

"What do you think," said he. "I'm only thirty-three, and I'm the senior colonel aboard. The western fellows don't pay any more attention to me than if I were a mosquito. The captain says I've got to keep this ship clean. Clean, Hell! My second-in-command and two of my company commanders are drunk, and my adjutant thinks he's dying from having taken too much Mother Sills. Half the time I can't even find my sergeant-major. Everybody is either drunk or sea-sick."

"I suppose we'll win the war," said Rosalie laughing.

"Without a doubt," said he, "we're making a fine start. On, on, you noblest English, and all that sort of thing. But my worry is that the captain and first officer are forever ragging me about keeping the ship clean and clear; you can't keep the men out of the hammocks

above the tables in the day time; poor devils, they're sick as dogs, I turn them out of hammocks on one deck, and they turn in again as soon as my back's turned."

"It's very difficult," said Rosalie.

"It came to a head this morning," said the mournful officer. "The captain said to me 'Why aren't you looking after those Lascars up in the eyes.' That word 'Lascars' was the last straw. I turned on him and gave him an earful that I'd picked up in the foc's'le."

"You know about ships, then."

"Yes, but I don't know what Lascars are; never heard of them; what do you think, I threatened to put the old boy under arrest after he'd made a few rude remarks about colonial troops. You should have seen him turn purple or rather purpler. Do you know what Lascars are?"

"I think they're East Indians," said Rosalie. "I've read in some book that they're often stokers. You'd better be careful with threats of arrest; I suppose you lost your temper. He might put you under arrest. The little old lady told me that a captain is almost a king on the high seas."

"High seas or low seas, I don't stand any more cheek from him; I've left a good job and my wife and family to fight a war. I'm not a slave. After all, I've got eight thousand men under me and he's only got a couple of hundred."

"You'd better pipe down," said Rosalie, "you'd better cool off."

"And now, on top of all he tells me I've got to decode all the military messages that come to the ship. I never decoded a message in my life; thank God I've got a code-book. Here's one I've just done three times over, "Goshawk to Olympic." There's no sense in that, that's what made my head split."

"Let's see," said Rosalie. "Goshawk, Goshawk; that's the name of a bird they used to hunt with long ago. I've seen that name in books. Maybe now it's the name of a ship, perhaps the name of a destroyer that's coming to guard us."

"God, you're right," said the mournful officer, "I'll rush it straight up to the bridge. I was afraid of being wrong."

He started from his chair,

"Just a minute," said Rosalie. "Have you any prisoners locked in the brig? I've been thinking of the sick and prisoners. We're coming into the submarine zone aren't we? Everyone should have a chance with open doors; no one should go to the bottom locked up in the brig."

"Good God," said he. "I forgot all about them. You're right; no one should be locked up in the danger zone. I've got at least twenty toughs in the brig." He rose, paper in hand. "I'll attend to both these things at once. Say," he said, "there's something very odd about you. Were you sent along here to me?"

"I don't know," said Rosalie. "Perhaps. People have been sent to me when I needed them. Good-night."

Rosalie did not again speak to the mournful and earnest young officer who was labouring to keep the ship clean, but she thought of him and contrasted him with the laughing crowd and the raconteur in the officers' lounge. Doubtless both types would die bravely.

The voyage was happily over in five and a half days; the Goshawk, looking like an impudent terrier, met the great liner as scheduled, and circled around her as if proud of her speed.

When Rosalie and her detachment disembarked, he was standing at the head of the gangway as battalion after battalion filed ashore. Somehow they had got sorted out and were herded into appropriate trains by English staff-officers. He looked at her closely.

"You did me a good turn," said he. "The headache never came back. I slept like a log."

"That's good," said Rosalie. "Bonne Chance."

"Bonne Chance to you," he replied. He did not ask her name and address. Rosalie liked that; since he was the senior officer onboard, she knew his name and regiment, and it was with sincere sorrow that a year later she saw his name in the casualty list.

Eventually she and ten of the nurses assigned to her, arrived at the little hospital that stood on the sandy hills, and among the pine trees, near the village of Whitley. There was a whole reserve division stationed there, so that there was plenty of work to do. Rosalie and her nurses—for she was the senior—were housed in a little white hut

near the hospital. It was early English autumn, and while there was not the bright colouring of the similar Canadian season, there was a quiet charm to the landscape, that brought peace to the spirit. The only drawback was that they were near the great Portsmouth road and that often at nights, long convoys of lorries rumbled by.

She assigned the tours of duty to her subordinates in firm, distinct terms. She informed them—most of them were in their early twenties—that unless special leave was granted, they were all to be in by last post, that they were not in camp to be cuddled by junior officers, but to tend the sick, and as a last warning note, that there was probably plenty of V.D. in the division. Rosalie never had any trouble with discipline, because she was now herself well disciplined.

Now that they were settled down, she began in her off-times to look about her. She missed her Ford, but she was a good walker and often there were buses. She explored the near-by village of Whitley, looked through the White Horse Inn, a remnant of the Middle Ages now conducted with a minimum of food and guests by a portly but friendly old man, who had been somebody's butler. She visited the ancient village church, where the battalions had hung their colours—only a detrimental piece of impedimenta in actual fighting—and there found a friendly vicar, who seemed to have plenty of time on his hands, and was only too glad to explain the difference between Norman and early English architecture to an intelligent colonial visitor. She returned to this old church many times and when she found it empty sometimes knelt at the altar and prayed there. She prayed for Mat in the depths of the ocean, for the little old lady, for Johnny Allen and Mice; she prayed for the general peace and happiness of all men, but she asked no favours for herself. She felt that so many prayers had floated up to heaven through the centuries from this little church, that somehow the road might be clear and hers more easy of access.

One day as she entered the church, she saw the vicar in conversation with a handsome red-faced man well over sixty; Rosalie imagined that this must be the typical English Gentleman.

The vicar introduced him as Mr. Maitland, Lord of the Manor. Mr. Maitland was gentle and polite and asked her to come and have tea with them one day. Rosalie, curious to see the inside of an English country-house, accepted the invitation.

To her astonishment, on the day of her first visit she found the Lord of the Manor in a very rough and shaggy suit of tweeds, sawing up a log.

"Goodness," said Rosalie frankly," I thought that English gentlemen never worked with their hands."

The Lord of the Manor laughed; he liked Rosalie as did everyone who met her.

"We've been a lazy lot, it's true," said he, "but we must work now when our men are off at the wars."

"Necessity drives us, doesn't it," said Rosalie.

"I saw wood every day," said he, "it's good for me, and I carry the wounded three nights a week at Waterloo when the hospital trains come in."

She passed the manor house many times thereafter, and nearly always saw the old man at his woodpile. He used to wave his hand and she gave a friendly wave in return. He and his wife had made her feel a helpful comrade who had come to their aid.

"No wonder," said Rosalie to herself, "that the English always win."

She explored the nearby market towns of Godalming and Guilford, looked in the shop windows and tried to appraise the faces of ordinary English people and the life of these little market towns. She took tea one afternoon at a little shop run by a woman who, by a sign, advertised Spirella corsets for sale. Rosalie came away from that visit a little unhappy; the woman had given her short change, and Rosalie set her right though she was sorry for her. "There are honest and dishonest everywhere," Rosalie decided, "even among the English." She wandered out over the sandy plains, where hillocks were clad in purple heather, out as far as the Lion's Mouth and even to Frensham Pond and looked in wonder at ancient burial mounds heaped up by early men on the flat lands. These gave her the first impression of the antiquity of England as compared with the land of

her birth. She turned southward and went as far as the Devil's Punch Bowl. Had she had her Ford she could have covered a much greater area.

Then for a fortnight, she was transferred as a relief supervisor to the great military hospital in Bramshott. It was there that, on her second night of rounds, a patient spoke from a bed and said, "Hi, come here, Sister."

It was not a very respectful summons but Rosalie answered it and stood by the sick man's bedside.

"Aren't you Rosalie?" said he.

Rosalie looked at him closely. It was Johnny Allen.

"What are you doing here, Johnny Allen, you're far too old to be in a war?"

"I dyed my hair, what was left of it, and said I was thirty-five. I'm in the Army Service Corps; I can drive a truck with any man. I've got a son in the air-force."

"Are you in bad shape, Johnny Allen" asked Rosalie.

"No," said he. "I only got a busted leg; a shell detonated near my truck and turned me over in the ditch. They're sendin' me home when my leg knits. I'm all right."

"Well," said Rosalie. "I'm right glad to see you again. You were the first one to help me, you know."

"Forget it," said Johnny. "I only gave you a lift."

"And ten dollars. I haven't forgotten that I owe you ten dollars with about ten years interest."

"I'm all set with money now," said Johnny, "but you might try me once in a while on a package of cigarettes or an orange or banana or a bit of salt cod-fish."

Rosalie laughed, "I don't believe the English know about salt cod-fish."

"No," said Johnny. "They're always a little behind the times like a dog's tail. I like 'em though. I fought two wars for them."

"How's the family?" asked Rosalie.

"Good," said Johnny. "Old MacDonald's livin' with us now. He's come out from Scotland. What do you think, he's a changed man, he

laughs from his stomach now, smokes a pipe and goes with me to the races. He's a holy Willy no longer."

"And did you ever get a sleek race-horse, Johnny?"

"Say," he said. "You won't be mad at me will you. You're so grown up now; I'm a little scared of you."

"You couldn't be scared of me, Johnny Allen."

"'Well, not exactly scared, but you've got to be quite a grand person and I'm still Johnny Allen, the truck-driver. Well, here goes off the deep end. I bought a horse two years before the war, and I trained her good and ran her in the free-for-all, and she won by two lengths. You should have heard the crowd roar, and old MacDonald, who was sitting next to me, bit through the stem of his pipe and said, 'God Almighty'."

"Wasn't that fine," said Rosalie. "What's wrong about that?"

"What do you think I named that horse though, what do you think I gave her for a name?"

"What?"

"Rosalie," said Johnny, pulling the cover up over his face.

"Oh, Johnny," said Rosalie, as near crying as she had been in years.

Rosalie saw Johnny two or three times a day, during her tour of duty in Bramshott. He had always something to tell her; she kept him well supplied with smokes and all the delicacies she could collect. He was almost well enough to be shipped home when she had to return to her original post of duty.

"Good-bye, Johnny," said she. "You'll soon be seeing Margaret and the kids."

"They're kids no more," grinned Johnny. "They're grown."

"That night of wetness in Scotland was a lucky night for you. Don't you remember you told me you got married through wetness."

Johnny nodded.

"By the way," said Rosalie. "What did Margaret say about the name of your horse?"

"I never told her where I picked up that name," said Johnny.

When Rosalie got back to her own little hospital in Whitley, she had an unexpected bit of good luck. One of her patients was the

major who commanded the detachment of Army Service Corps attached to the Division. The Army Service Corps and the Quartermasters Department seem to get everything they want in the army. The major had had a bad case of pneumonia, and he was now gradually recuperating in the sunshine of English April. Rosalie had looked after him in his critical time; he liked Rosalie and he was in a generous mood. One day when she was telling him how she rambled about the countryside on her off-hours, he said "Look here, we've got a fat lazy piebald pony in our stables, that does nothing and is eating his head off. It is said that about the time of the Franco-Prussian war he was a polo pony. You can have him to ride whenever you like; then you could get further afield."

Rosalie laughed; "I can't ride; I've never been up on a horse; I'm a nurse not a jockey." But all the same there flashed through her mind a distant memory of 'Horses, fast running horses, horses with muscles quivering under their velvet skins, horses tossing their heads and blowing steam from their nostrils'.

"You don't have to know how to ride to mount Musk-ox—that's what the grooms call him, though I don't know why—to ride him is just like sitting in a well-cushioned rocking chair by the fire-side." said the major.

"I don't know a thing about horses," said Rosalie "but I once had a horse named for me, and he won the free-for-all."

"Good," said the major. "I suppose he was a 'star' horse."

"There you've got another guess coming," said Rosalie, "for he wasn't named 'Star' at all."

"Well, well," said the officer, "If you've had a trotting horse named after you, you can certainly manage Musk-ox,"

The upshot of this trivial conversation was that Rosalie bought a riding habit and went out on Musk-ox whenever she had a half-day free. Musk-ox was very knowing and very lazy, and when Rosalie got a little confidence she found that she had either to apply a switch or kick him vigourously in the ribs to get even the gentlest amble out of him. She called him 'Musk' and used to feed him apples and lumps of sugar. 'Musk', the knowing one , who was quite aware that

he had found a good thing, was very fond of his new mistress, and Rosalie would pull his ears and say, "Now Musk you must be a good boy today; you know you are very lazy, but you mustn't try to turn around and make for the stable, when we are a mile or two from camp or pretend you are frightened by bits of paper that blow-up. I'm on to your tricks you old rascal, for you're exactly like a fat old lazy nurse."

As she rode about the English lanes when the Almond trees were blowing, she often wished she could meet Johnny Allen; how his eyes would crinkle up at the corners and twinkle; she must go and see her namesake Rosalie when she got home.

One sunshiny Saturday morning when she was free for the day, Rosalie rode Musk into the village of Shackelford where she had never been before. Musk was thirsty, Musk wanted a drink, and of his own accord he turned in through a stone gateway from which the roadway, led up to a fine grey stone country house. Virginia Creeper and a small leaved ivy clung close to the stone and softened any harsh angle. Garden and house were inviting and Rosalie felt that Musk had been right, and that she had something to do here. At any rate she could ask for a bucket of water; the English were horse lovers. A middle-aged gracious looking lady was digging weeds out of a flower border. Rosalie rode up to her and said; "Good morning, my pony is thirsty; could I get a drink for him here."

"Of course," said the lady standing up and looking full at Rosalie. "I'll call a groom to water him—we only have one groom now and he's lame; Phyllis, my daughter, does most of the stable work. Come in and rest a little while, while the man looks after your pony. You're a Canadian aren't you?"

"Yes," said Rosalie. "I'm a nurse from Nova Scotia and I work in the divisional hospital in Whitley. You're very kind I'd like to go in for a little while."

The house was cool as they passed from the hall into the long drawing room, well furnished, hung with big pictures and with a fireplace at either end. Before the further fireplace stood a tall slim girl in riding clothes, one elbow leaning on the mantle-piece.

She was dark, very handsome and obviously a thoroughbred—in fact, Rosalie at first glance at her, thought of one of Johnny Allen's trotting horses. But she had a rather sullen look in her face and a petulant twist to her mouth. "This is my daughter Phyllis," said the gracious lady. "I have a few things to attend to and I'll leave you two together; you are about of an age."

"I'm twenty-eight" said Rosalie.

"Never admit it", said the English girl "I'm twenty-seven myself."

"I suppose now," said Rosalie, "though I never thought of it before, that I'd be classed as an old maid."

"There are twelve thousand officers and men in a division aren't there." said the English girl, "and you're very good-looking."

Rosalie laughed her merry laugh, "I know I am" she said. "I was born in a fisherman cottage, but centuries ago our ancestor was a count of France, and I'm quite fussy about men. I hold their hands when they're very ill, but I never bend and kiss their fevered brow as devoted nurses do in novels. I'm very professional in the hospital."

The English girl's face was lighted up for a moment with the shadow of a smile. "There's something very refreshing about you colonials," she said. "You're so direct; you're not afraid; you get acquainted at once."

"Perhaps we're neighborly; we've had to struggle and work hard and help one another. Necessity makes customs different. I'd never have got along if strangers hadn't helped me; we're not afraid of strangers, my first friend was a truck-driver who gave me a lift along the road."

"And I was born in this house," said the English girl, "and I'm tied by all the petty rules and regulations and conventions that go with it."

"It's a lovely country you live in," said Rosalie, "now my home is mostly rocks and battered wind-blown spruce trees and little villages with little grey houses set down anywhere higgledy-pigglety, but here there are blossoming trees along the lanes, and the mowing fields are laid out in neat squares, and enclosed with hedges; it's all finished and perfect."

"That's the trouble with it," said the girl, "it's too finished, it's too perfect, too conventionalized; there's no more adventure; I'd like to sail away and be a pirate woman on the Spanish Main."

"Or go to sea with Mat on the "Arethusa", said Rosalie.

"That's right," said the English girl, "I don't know what that means exactly, but that's what I want. You see I'm quite useless; oh, yes, I can ride a horse, and play the piano and sing a little and play tennis and make polite conversation, but I can't bake or sew or wash or mend; in fact I'm a purely ornamental human unit."

"It's hard starting when you're twenty-eight," said Rosalie "It's hard to begin a new way of life then, but maybe it can be done."

"Come out into the stable and let me look at your pony, we can't talk here; this stone house presses in on me."

"What's his name?" said the English girl.

"Musk" said Rosalie, "the groom's named him Musk-ox, but I shortened it to Musk."

"And a very good name too for a pony."

"He played polo ages ago," said Rosalie.

When they reached the paved stable yard that was full of sunshine and were quite alone, the English girl caught Rosalie by the arm and wheeled her about so that they looked straight into one another's eyes. "Now," she said eagerly, "tell me."

"Well," said Rosalie "you have to labour and sweat and get to know the inside of people before you can really get the feel of things."

"They want me to be a V.A.D." said the English girl, scornfully. "That's all very well," said Rosalie, "but you'd still be an amateur." "That's right," said the girl "you've got to get it in your bones, you've got to be professional, go on."

Then 'Goodness Far Off,' breathed an inspiration into Rosalie's heart. "You've got to learn yourself in the hard way, you've got to learn self-discipline before you can teach and control other people. I've only been to London twice and both times I went into the East End to see how poor people lived. They're over-crowded there and the children haven't any chance. You're the best race in the world. Why doesn't somebody teach these children and ship them out to

Canada or Australia or Rhodesia where there's plenty of room and sunshine?"

"Oh God," said the English girl.

"I read a book once," went on Rosalie "about a man named Fairbridge who tried to do this. He went to one of your great colleges and was the middle-weight boxer, why doesn't somebody carry on his work?"

"God," said the English girl "I've been dreaming of such a thing."

They led Musk reluctantly away from some oats he was munching.

"Now" said the girl "I'm going to say an impossible thing for an English girl to say. I'd like to kiss you."

"I'd like it too," said Rosalie.

"And what name shall I remember you by?"

"Rosalie, and please thank your mother. And this perhaps is what the little old lady meant me to tell you; it isn't enough to know the compass; you can't be a real sailor-man or do a trick at the wheel with a yawing ship in a following wind and sea, until you've got the feel of the ship."

Two days after this episode Rosalie was posted out to France, to a big hospital near the ever-changing front. She was busy in departure, and never saw the English girl or rode Musk again.

Nineteen

The hospital was an irregular building or mass of buildings of wings reaching out to get the maximum amount of sunshine in the wards. It was but one story, built of cement and well sandbagged. Beneath it were many tunnels and caves, bombproof shelters to which ramps led from the ward floors. It was set in a little valley or rather oval depression, among wooded hills and it was well camouflaged with nets and painted canvas with broken designs and the branches of trees. You could pass quite close to this great hospital and scarcely notice it, although over fifteen hundred wounded lay there. But the Boche knew exactly where it was, and one day an exalted house-painter wrote as an amendment on an order; 'It is of the utmost importance to the Reich that their bases and military hospitals be destroyed.'

Here Rosalie saw the real harvest of war, the broken, the maimed, the legless, the blind, strong fine men from whom all the hope and colour and zest for living had been stolen. She was in charge of a ward and assistant in one of the operating rooms to the blood-stained surgeons. She had little time off, she rested when she could, and drove herself to the limit.

It was only after three months that she saw Mice; of course, it was inevitable that she should see him again. He arrived with a group of young surgeons, tall and straight and grown into a man. Rosalie spotted him at once—she was glad as she knew at first glance that he had emerged, that he was no longer tangled in the cocoon of youth—but Mice did not see her, and for several days did not recognize her or even look her way. He was busy with a new kind of intense concentration in his work, and she just one of the nurses who swiftly handed him the proper instrument.

Rosalie bided her time, but one day when Mice had an hour of rest, and was standing looking out a window, looking at the somber French landscape, she stepped up behind him and said;

Isn't it nice
To find you, Mice.

It was truly an inane couplet, but nonetheless the appropriate remark. Mice wheeled around and stared at her.

"God in heaven," he said. "It's Rosalie. Sprung from the sounding sea. Where have you been?"

"I've been handing you instruments for three days, and you've never even looked my way."

"Concentration," said Mice, laughing. "Profound thought and all that line, you know. But where really have you been? I never could find out."

"I've been a dishwasher," said Rosalie, "and a waitress, and the girl on the bread counter, and the girl on the cake counter, and the girl on the cash. I went back to school—at least I mean I had a tutor at night."

"Man or woman?" inquired Mice.

"Woman. And I've been a student nurse, and a graduate nurse, and I've learned a little, and people have helped me, and now I'd like you to know, I'm in charge of this ward, and I'm not at all sure that I should allow handsome young surgeons idling about and staring out my windows."

"And I," said Mice, laughing, "I am a young surgeon full of knowledge—as yet undigested, I'll admit—and applesauce. And because of my rank I am the boss of all nurses; all nurses have to bow down before me and pay homage to my greatness."

"I told you what the little old lady did to the skunk, didn't I," laughed Rosalie.

"No," said Mice, "I don't remember that tale. You were only there three hours, you know, and a woman can't say much in three hours. Still, at that, it was the most illuminating three hours of my life."

"The little old lady said, 'You gotta be kinda quick, to hit a skunk behind the ear with a hoe.'"

"A good adage," said Mice. "You certainly gotta be kinda quick

round here in wartime, and if you'd ever feel like using the hoe on me, Rosalie—I won't take it from everyone—I'd like it."

"Do you still rhyme?"

"No," said Mice. "I've given up trying to make John Masefield look like a penny stamp. I graduated from rhyme to blank verse and now I'm trying to learn to write intelligible prose."

"And you never kicked the pebble again?"

"Never again. You know I threw it in the river."

"And the hair cut?"

"That very night. I got a country barber; he put a bowl over my head and scissored all around it. Mother said I was a sight when she arrived."

"You're just the same 'Mice'."

"And you're just the same 'Rosalie', only grown and with steadier eyes."

"I'm not 'Rosalie' here, you know."

"And I'm not 'Mice.' I got rid of that degrading nickname years ago. We'll sneak off and have luncheon and tea together whenever we can, and then you can be 'Rosalie' and I can be 'Mice'."

They did; they had many happy laughing times together. Then the bombers came, the great gray ugly monsters of the sky, unearthly product of an age of mechanism, crude instruments of destruction to life and youth and hope. On the first few nights they did not get very near the hospital, but only tore great raw brown craters in the little valley and shattered the forest trees. Always there was an alert, everyone on post and sometimes the wounded wheeled down the ramps to the shelters.

But one night they got very near, for the first bomb shattered many of the hospital windows. Rosalie cleared her ward, gave orders to her nurses, herded the walking wounded down the runways and helped wheel down those that were bed-ridden. When all were under cover in the cellar bomb shelter and the beds and stretchers placed in orderly rows, she ran back up to the ward, to make sure that no one was left, and to fetch a necessary case of medicines. A voice spoke out of the half-light,

"That you, Rosalie?"

"Yes."

"Got your ward cleared?"

"Yes, Mice."

"Then come quick with me, they're going to get us tonight." he grasped her by the arm and hurried her towards the ramp.

"Wait a minute," said Rosalie, and she grabbed up her flashlight and shoulder satchel. Then she went along with him. She was glad Mice was with her.

They had hardly got to the foot of the ramp and into the narrow corridor that was on a level with and led to the safety caves, when two frightful crashes came and their part of the hospital tumbled down about their ears, like a child's house made of cards.

When Rosalie came to, for of course the shock stunned her, she was lying flat on her back on a cement floor in utter darkness. "It's a nightmare," she thought, but gradually consciousness of reality dawned on her. She sat up and moved her head, her arms and legs; she was bruised and sore, but not broken. "I'm all right," she said to herself. "I'm Rosalie all in one piece." Then she suddenly remembered about Mice, where was he?

"Mice," she said in a weak voice, "Mice, where are you?"

There was no answer; she could only hear from somewhere the groans of the sick and wounded. It was deathly still otherwise, after those awful blasts. She got her flashlight from her satchel, and began to crawl along the corridor. She must find Mice, that seemed, a thing above all other things, now. As she crawled there was but a scant two feet of clearance above her back. She found him; he, too, was lying on his back, his legs jammed against the cement floor by a piece of broken floor-joist. She felt his forehead and his pulse in wrist and jaw; it was faint but he was living. She tugged frantically at the heavy floor-joist, but she could not budge it. Then the spirit of her fishermen ancestry, the spirit of people who move impossible weights, people who by the sole strength of their hands have met the challenge of forest and sea, arose in her. "Dear God," she cried. "I've never asked many favours before, but do help me to shift that

beam." She crawled back along the corridor, whence she had come; she must find a lever and something for it to bite on. A 'bite', that was a good old country word. She found a shattered two by four, and a shattered lump of cement; somehow, she dragged them back to where Mice lay.

"It's something now," she thought, "like Mat and Kitty together in the old Arethusa; Kitty standing in the companionway with the pistols." She pried and she levered; she fixed the bite that slipped fifty times, to get more strength, she braced her back against the sunken wall of the corridor; she was inhuman in her strength; she had the power of the insane. At last the floor joist trembled, then gave and was no longer wedged between the walls; she shifted it little by little and at last lifted it from Mice's legs and dragged it down the corridor. Then in the darkness, she sat down by Mice, trembling in her weakness after her fury of strength. She put her hands under his head and raised it gently and so held him. Presently she heard a feeble whisper.

"That you, Rosalie?"

"Yes, Mice. Can you move your legs?"

"No," he said, after a trial. "I guess both my legs are busted."

"Lie quiet, then, they'll get us out."

"Maybe. Got any morphine? Give me some. Doctor's orders. I don't care what happens if you stay with me."

She gave him the morphine and he was easier.

"You my girl, Rosalie?"

"Yes, Mice."

"I'm your man, Rosalie."

"Yes, Mice." With that he dozed off into restless sleep.

Rosalie sat there in the pitch darkness by Mice's side; sniffed and sniffed; there was no smell of smoke. Presently her hands beneath his head got cramped and tired, She groped about, found two short pieces of broken boards, tore off six inches from the hem of her skirt, wrapped it about the boards, and made a kind of pillow for Mice's head. Through the night she listened; she could hear no sound of rescuers; there was a vast pile of cement and wooden

debris above them. Sometimes she dozed, leaning her back against the wall; her wrist-watch was still going, and whenever she woke she looked at it. The hours dragged on slowly; morning would never come to them there; it would always be pitchy night. "I wish the little old lady were alive," thought Rosalie. "I'd have a story of living to tell her now, or a story of dying," she added illogically.

About six in the morning Mice stirred and woke up.

"You there, Rosalie?"

"Yes, Mice."

"All right then."

She flashed her flashlight on him; he was very white. She reached out and took his hand.

"I'm awful hot. I've got some fever."

"Of course, you're hot. What would you expect with two broken legs?" Rosalie fumbled in her satchel, got out her thermometer, stuck it between his lips, and after a minute read it by the flashlight,

"It's only a hundred and one," said Rosalie. "You're all right."

"I'm all right," said Mice, "but I'm awful thirsty."

Now, all through the night as Rosalie had listened for the sound of rescuers, she had imagined that she had heard the drip of water.

"I've got to leave you a few minutes, Mice," she said.

"All right," said Mice. "Don't get caught anywhere; don't push against anything. You'll come back, won't you."

Rosalie took her torch and on hands and knees crawled down the corridor towards the ramp, now blocked with rubble. The corridor ran beyond the ramp, but with the wall crushed in, there was only a space of eight inches to go through. Rosalie, careful to displace nothing, managed to wiggle through, and drew audibly nearer to the sound of a trickle. She flashed her light upward; there it was, a tiny trickle of water oozing down over broken cement. It might be from a broken pipe or a bathtub drain, or even a toilet. "Thank you, dear God, for that," said Rosalie.

But how to get it back to Mice, that was the question? There was no tin can or twisted mug available. "Well," said Rosalie, "there's only

one thing to do," and she tore another six inches off her skirt and added to it a sizeable piece from her slip. "I'll be a naked savage when they find us," thought Rosalie. "If I'm dead I'll go down in history as a wild woman."

She soaked the wad of cloth under the drip till it had attained the saturation point, then cupping it in her hands she crept back to Mice.

"Open your mouth wide, big as you can; this is straight from the bathroom drain."

"I don't care if it's out of the pig-sty; this germ theory is all blah, isn't it, Rosalie?"

"Certainly," she said. "What does a poor nurse know? You must know, you're a surgeon."

"I want water however foul," said Mice

Rosalie squeezed the water from the rags into his mouth. "Just like feeding a little robin," she said. In the next twenty-four hours, she made twenty trips to the trickle of water.

After a while Mice said, "Do you think it's compound or simple, Rosalie?"

"I don't think it could be compound with a beam falling on you on hard cement; the cement floor would give your legs support."

"You'd better give me some more dope and have a look," said he.

"If it's simple, knead around in the muscles and see if you can get the bone ends to click together; you'll hear a crepitation, and perhaps if you can find some bits of sticks, you better lash on some rough splints."

"There goes more of my costume," said Rosalie. "I'll soon have nothing below the waist line. Perhaps I should have begun at the upper end."

"I'm sure you'd look best in nothing at all," said Mice. "I'll know some day perhaps." Then he drowsed off again.

Rosalie did as she was bid. She worked the muscles with her long skillful fingers, then tearing out some pieces of lathes from a lump of shattered plaster, she devoted some more of her skirt and slip to bandages and lashed on the splints as securely as she could.

Then she found a lump of cement that had a deep hollow in it and collected a reserve of water.

Mice woke again, and said, "Got me lashed up?"

"Yes," said Rosalie.

"It doesn't hurt much now. Do you suppose we'll get out of this?"

"Sure," said Rosalie. "The English are slow but they dig steadily. I do wish they had a dozen Cape Breton miners with them though, and another dozen lobster fishermen. I wish fog-horn MacDonald was bossing the job!"

"Us Nova Scotians are very pleased with ourselves, aren't we."

"We are," said Rosalie. "Only you should say 'we' instead of 'us'."

"All right, school marm," said Mice. "Got a bit of wire?"

Now Rosalie had always carried in her purse, ever since Johnny Allen had told her the story of the horse race—what was that horse's name; it wasn't Tamar. That was the horse out of the milk-cart, 'Lightnin' that was it—a little piece of haywire for good luck, just as some people carry a rabbit's foot.

She fished it out and handed it over to Mice.

"Flash your torch and hold it on for a minute," said he.

He felt carefully in his pocket, produced a pair of pincers and fashioned the haywire into a rude ring, twisting the ends closely.

"We may not get out of this, Rosalie. I want to marry you now."

"How can we?" said Rosalie, "without a priest or parson."

"We'll marry each other," explained Mice. "Here, hold out your hand, and we'll say after each other all that we can remember."

In the pitchy darkness, with a mountain of rubble above them, they plighted their troth. Who dare say there is no courage in human hearts?

"With this ring"

"With this ring"

"I thee pledge"

"I thee pledge"

"For better or worse"

"For better or worse"

"For richer or poorer"

"For richer or poorer"

"Till death do us part "

"Till death do us part"

"We'll be poor as rats if I lose my legs," said Mice.

"Have another guess," said Rosalie

They were in the tunnel forty-eight hours before the searchers found them, and they were both pretty far gone. But Rosalie had not lost her sense of humour even when near death. When Mice had been lifted out on a stretcher, she said to one of the nurses, "Fetch me a barrel or a sheet or a window blind."

They shifted Mice to a ward that was still intact, and as soon as he was half-well he insisted on being properly married.

"Why this undue haste?" said the Army Chaplain, who was a solemn young fellow who believed in Apostolic Succession, the Divine Right of Kings, and touching for the Kings Evil. He was not more than three hundred years behind the times.

"Haste," said Mice. "You don't know how long I've waited. Get a move on, fetch your book or I'll call in the Methodist padre. You don't know when the Boche might drop another egg on us. You gotta be kinda quick these days, as the old lady said, when she hit the skunk behind the ear with the hoe."

So Mice sat up in bed and Rosalie came in to the Officers' Ward and they were properly married, And all the nurses and doctors came crowding in and brought little presents. And some gentle soul crowned Rosalie with a little wreath of myrtle. They all liked Rosalie, because Rosalie had love in her heart that induced affection in others.

~ ? ~

So that is what happened to Rosalie, believe it or not. And if you like her as much as I do and want to find her, you must search for a woman who wears as a wedding ring a twisted bit of haywire. Moreover, you can always consult the Surgeons' Register. But if you find her, do not tell her secret. She is now to her own folk, only a fireside story in the village where she was born.