MARY ELLA WALLER

A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS

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Содержание

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

BOOK ONE
THE JUGGERNAUT

A Cry in the Wilderness

I

"You Juggernaut!"

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

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

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

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

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

"But *I* won't—I *won't*!"

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

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

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

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

I found the flag-paved court upon which the shadows were already falling. It was not an easily discoverable spot, and I was a little in doubt as to entering and inquiring further; I didn't like its

look. I took out the advertisement; yes, this was the place: "No. 8 V– Court."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the woman stood by the window reading the slip in the fading light, my eyes never left her face. It seemed to me—and strangely, too, for I have always felt my independence of others'

personal help—that my life itself was about to depend on her answer.

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

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

"What hospital?"

"St. Luke's."

"What was the matter with you?"

"Typhoid pneumonia with pleurisy."

"How long was you there?"

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

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

"Ain't you well?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes."

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

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

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

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

"Yes, to him; I'm only a go-between he trusts. He 's in Europe now and is n't coming home till late this year, so he left this with

me," she indicated the advertisement, "and told me not to put it in till a week ago. I ain't had many applications. Folks in this city don't take to going off to a farm in Canada, and those I 've had would n't have suited. But, anyway, Doctor Rugvie is reference for this place that's advertised, and I guess he 's good enough for anybody. I thought I 'd tell you this to relieve your mind. 'T ain't every girl would come down here to this hole looking for a place.– Where was you born?"

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

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-six next December—the third."

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

"No; she died when I was born."

"Any father?"

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

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

"What was your father's name?"

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

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

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

"Oh, yes—yes, she was."

"Before you was born?"

"Yes."

"What was her husband's name then?"

"Jackson."

"Christian name?"

"George."

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

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

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

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

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

I could not answer.

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

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

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

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

she 's like."

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

"Now we 'll see," she said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

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

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

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

the applicants and try to get the right one,—but I can make it all right with him. It's a longer story than I wish 't was, but I 've got to begin at the beginning.

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

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

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

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

"Well, that woman mothered me. She took in washing and ironing in two rooms on Tenth Avenue. She never left me night or day for a week running till my baby come. And all she 'd say

to me, when I got sort of wild and out of my head, was:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The Sound steamer had n't gone out, the night was so thick and bad, and the cabin lights alongside shone out bright enough

for me to mark her as she dodged this way and that trying to get to the end of the pier.

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

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

"A deck-hand on the steamer heard me screech, and together we got her on the floor of the lower deck. We did what we could for her, and when she 'd come to, they got me a hack and I took her home, laid her on my bed, and sent the hackman for Doctor Rugvie. He 's been my right-hand man all these years. He stayed with her till daylight. He told me she 'd never come through alive; the heart action was all wrong.

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

you say was your mother's husband's and the message said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And sure enough, a little after two, a young feller come to the door. He did n't look more 'n twenty, but it seemed from his

face as if those twenty years had done something to him 't would generally take a man's lifetime to do, and said he 'd come to claim her who was his wife. That's just what he said, no more, no less: 'I've come to claim her who was my wife. Where is she?' And he give me the telegram.

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

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

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

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

"I told him the last thing 'fore he went that his wife had given an envelope with some papers to Doctor Rugvie, and that they

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

She was silent. I drew a long breath.

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

She sighed. "My dear, this great city is full of just such mysteries that no human being can fathom. I, for one, don't try to. I can only lend a helping hand, and ask no questions; 't ain't best. Well, I 've been talking a blue streak for a half an hour, but I 've had to. When you laid there on the cot, you was the living image of that other, only thinner, smaller like. You told me you was born in this city twenty-six years ago come the third of next December; that you did n't know who your father was, but that your mother was married. Her husband's name was the same as the one on the telegram. I 've put two and two together, and perhaps I 've made five out of it. Anyway it's your right to know. I 'm sure Doctor Rugvie will back me up in this."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, you don't know what this means to me!" I exclaimed, lifting my face swollen with weeping to the kindly one that looked down into mine. "You don't know what this means to me—it

has lifted so much, so much—has let in so much light just at a time when I needed it so—when everything looked so black. Sometime I will tell you; but now I want to know when, where, how I can get hold of that marriage certificate. It belongs to me —to me."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What was you christened?"

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

"Delia Beaseley."

"And your daughter's?"

"Jane."

"And when does Doctor Rugvie return?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He might tell you if he was here himself, and then again he mightn't. You see it's this way: he trusts me to use my common sense in accepting an applicant, and he expects the applicant to trust his name for reference to go to the end of the world if he

sends her there, without asking questions."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

according to the certificate.—I can't think of that name!

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

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

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

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

III

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

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

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

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

When I said good night to the woman, who twenty-six years ago saved another woman, "one who had missed her footing",—those words seem to ring constantly in my ears,—in order that I, Marcia Farrell, that stranger's child, might become the living fact I am, I began to realize that during the last hour I had been acting

a part, and acting it well; that, without sacrificing the truth at any stage of the evening's developments, I had been able to obtain all this information, which pointed to a crisis in my life, yet had given but little return in kind. I felt justified in withholding it.

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

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

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

intensified this feeling.

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

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

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

I was thinking of all this as the car passed with frequent haltings along the noisy Bowery, and of that first experience of this city: its need-driven herds of human beings, the thoroughfares crowded with traffic, its nightmare crossings, the clank and deafening roar of the overhead railroad, when, suddenly, mingled with the steam rising from the pavements, that were cooling rapidly after the recent shower, I smelt the acrid heaviness of fresh printer's ink. That smell visualized for

me the column of leaded "Wants," the dismal waiting-room, the uncompromising daylight that spared no wrinkle, no paint, no moth-spot on the indifferent faces about me. That was nearly seven years ago—and now—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I took off my hat. The night was cooling rapidly after the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

East, and north-east in the direction of the Sound, great cloud masses, the wrack of the tempest, were piled high towards the zenith; but beneath them there was a clear zone near the city's level. A moon nearly two thirds to the full, was heralding its appearance above them by lighted rifts, bright-

rimmed haloes, and the marvellous play of direct shaft light that struck downwards behind the clouds into the clear space above the city and shot white radiance upon its roofs. The sky, also, while yet the moon was invisible, was radiant, but with starlight.

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

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

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

There were others on the promenade, and I was withdrawn from thought of myself by hearing voices, a man's and a woman's, below me on the winding walk that leads down the

slope past the poplars to the level of the Harlem streets. The woman's was pleading, strident from excitement; it broke at last in a dry hard sob. The man's was hateful; the tones and accents like a vicious snarl.

I turned away sickened, indignant.

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

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

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

The air was close and hot after the outer freshness; the lights few. The stained-glass window behind the altar was a meaningless confused mass of leaded opacity. I knew that the

daylight was needed to ensoul it, to give to the dead unmeaning material its spiritual symbolism. And because I knew this, I realized, as I sat there, what a long distance in a certain direction I had travelled since that morning in the Grand Central Station, seven years ago.

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

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

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

I saw that the car was over full. The platform and steps were black with human beings clinging to the guard rails like

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

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

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

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

IV

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

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

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

country.

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

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

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

cot, began to read.

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

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

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

me. It's awfully cold here to-night, but Mrs. Turtelot has given me a lamp, till I can get one, and that warms up some. Anyway, I feel safe here from that other kind. I 'll soon earn enough to fix up a little.

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

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

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

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

Nov. 9. Since I came here I have answered fifty-two advertisements. I get the same answer every time: "You have n't been trained and you have n't had any experience." How am I

to get training and experience if I don't have the chance? That's what I want to know.

Nov. 10. I 've bought the cot and the mattress. I paid four dollars for them. There is a small stove hole in the chimney on one side of my room; when I get to earning, I 'm going to have a little stove here and do my own cooking. Thank fortune, I can cook as well as chop wood if I have to! So far I 've heated my things on Mrs. T.'s stove. She lives, that is, cooks, eats, sleeps, and washes in her back basement; the front one she rents to a barber. He makes his living from the students round here and the professors at the Seminary. She says the students cook most of their meals in their rooms on their gas stoves. I wish I had one.

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

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

saves something to ride.

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

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

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

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

Friday. Now I have just four dollars left; for I bought it to-day and set it up myself. A little second hand one with one hole

on top—and no coals to put in it! I don't dare use the last four dollars, for the rent is due soon and I have to pay in advance. I suppose it's all right to secure herself, but it's hard on me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I know I looked at him; I think I saw him, or perhaps the beast that was in him. Then I saw queer lights before me, red

and yellow—if I had been a man I would have taken him by the throat. When, at last, I could see again, the man was gone. Good riddance! There is such a thing as day nightmare.

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

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

Afterwards I walked up to Twenty-third Street, and lost myself there in the holiday crowds. What throngs!—jostled, pushed, beset by vendors, loaded with bundles, yet so good natured! No one looked hungry. I stood on the kerb to watch the men selling toys and birds; to listen to the strange cries, the shrilling of the wooden canaries and the trill of the real ones; to peep into the rabbit hutch, and the basket of kittens; to stroke an armful of sleeping puppies; to smell the fragrance of roses and violets and carnations; to smile a little at the slow-moving turtles, the leaping frogs, the Jack-in-the-box, the mechanical toys of all kinds that performed on the sidewalk, each the centre of a small crowd. Then, at twilight, the flare from the chestnut vendor's

stand, the little electric lights of the Punch and Judy sidewalk show, the electric torches that the children were carrying, the brilliant whirligigs for advertisements, gave to the whole scene a strange unreal appearance. Men, women, children, Christmas trees, dogs, birds, electric cars, rabbits, kittens, a goat, cabs, automobiles, express carts, surged into the flare and glare, first of one light then of another, till what was shadow and what was substance I failed to make out.

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

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

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

Jan. 15, 1903. The coal strike is on. It is cold in the loft, for we have to be saving of fuel. It takes all I can save to buy three pailfuls of coal a week for my little stove. I kindle my fire at night, heat water, cook my cereal, or bean soup, and am comfortable till morning; the room is decently warm to dress in. I am off to work at seven. Fuel and rent and some necessary underclothes

leave little for food. I cannot redeem my petticoat, and gold beads which my grandmother had from her mother, Marcia Farrell.

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

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

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

The extra time for study at night will take more fuel and oil, but I can make that up by living a few more days every week on bean soup. I 've made living on four dollars a week an art this last year. An art? Yes, rather than a science; and, like an art, it accomplishes surprisingly satisfactory results—results that science, with all its proven facts, from which it deduces laws of hygiene, fails to produce.

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

I would have respect for them. We all have to earn our living in one way or another.

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

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

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

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

March 16, 1908. How I gloat like a miser over my savings-bank book! Just one hundred and seventy-five dollars to my

credit. I have visions of—oh, so much in ten years!

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

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

For housing:—

Room, $1.50 a week.
Fuel and oil in winter, $ 0.75
Oil in summer, .26

Now for my art:—

I have allowed for my food exactly one dollar a week and allow the same now. I go down to the Washington Market early in the morning. I revel in the sight of the fresh vegetables, of the flowers and fruits. The market-people know me now, and many a gift-flower I have brought back with me to my room, and several times a pot of herbs or spring bulbs; now and then a few sprays of parsley or thyme. These I look upon as my commission! Without leaving the market, I buy a loaf of bread for ten cents; a knuckle of veal, or a beef bone, a pound and a half of sausages, or a pound of salt pork, for fifteen cents; I vary my purchases from time to time that I may have variety. Ten cents for vegetables—I vary these, also, as much as possible; these, with a pound of rice,

nine cents, a half a pound of butter, eighteen cents, and a quart of beans for another ten cents, give me satisfying combinations. When eggs are cheap I vary this diet with them, lettuce and bacon. I buy things that are cheapest in their season. In summer, I drop out all meat and substitute milk. I allow myself one pound of sugar a week; no tea, no coffee; the city water is the only thing of which I can have enough free. With what is left of my hundred cents,—for in my art it is the cents with which I reckon, not dollars,—I buy fruit in its season, a bit of cheese, sometimes even a Philadelphia squab! At times, they are cheaper than meat in the Market. In the season I can get one for ten cents.

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

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

by this confession. He was serving me at the time, and his two hundred or more pounds, his red face and his cordiality were delightful. My butter-egg-and-cheese man also confides to me that he is a commuter; has purchased a home on the instalment plan; has three children, and his wife runs a private laundry.

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

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

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

Johnny is my favorite. There is little theological nonsense about him, and there is an inquisitive disposition to see New York and make the most of his time here. He 's from the north part of the state; likes books, likes people, likes a good time, whenever he can get it, on his limited income to which he adds by helping

the basement barber two days in the week, canvassing for books in the summer, and on Saturdays waiting on the patrons of a book stall in a corridor of one of the big hotels.

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

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

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

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

"But are there two kinds?" I was asking myself again, when Johnny, who has an eye for good clothes on man and woman,

called my attention to a woman's opera cloak. It was worth a man's ransom. From a deep yoke of Russian sable depended the long cape of pale green satin covered with graduated flounces, from eight to fourteen inches deep, of Venetian point. And taking in all this, I saw—

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

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

And I was shown in that Vision the Calvaries of maternity common to all, whether the conception be immaculate, so-called if within the law, or maculate, so-called if without the law. I

saw, also, the Gethsemanes of motherhood common to all. I saw, moreover, the three Dolorous Ways which their feet—and the feet of all women, because women—are treading, have ever trod, must ever tread, that the seed which shall propagate the Race may be trodden deep for germination.

Moreover, I saw in that Vision the women treading the seed in the Ways. One of the Ways was stony, and those therein walked with bleeding feet for their labor was in vain; the land was sterile. And the second was deeply rutted with sand, and those therein labored heavily with sweat and toil; the fruition was but for a day. And the third Way was heavy with deeply-furrowed fertile soil, and those that trod it toiled long and late that the seed might not fail of abundant harvest.

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

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

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

April, 1909. I am beginning to be so tired of the confusion of the streets. The work at the Library has become irksome. I am

tired of reading, too, and feel as if my last prop had been taken from under me, when I have no longer the desire to read.

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

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

*****

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

But how can I make the break? Where can I go? How begin

all over again in this awful struggle to get work, and succeed in anything? My courage has failed me.

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

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

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

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

And underneath:

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

V

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

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

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

"How did she send the passage money?"

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

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

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

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

"Would I own to being a woman if I did n't?" She laughed her hearty laugh; then, with a little hesitancy: "And, my dear, I 'd think kindly of you for writing me, and I 'd like to know that all is going well with you, but you know there's Doctor Rugvie

to reckon with, and he won't hold to much correspondence, I 'm thinking, between me and—what's the name of that place? I can't pronounce it—"

"Richelieu-en-Bas."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

what you make of it up there."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delia smiled indulgently upon me.

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

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

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

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

"There, there, my dear, I 'm the one to be thankful. I 've been reaping a harvest just from one little seed I sowed near twenty-six years ago—and I never thought to see so much as a blade of grass! That's all. I 'm wonderful grateful it's been given me to see such a harvest."

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

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

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

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

For a little while after entering the luxurious sleeping car, I

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

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

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

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

I looked at the few people I could see over the high sections. Three women were opposite to me, two of them young. I found myself calculating the cost of their dresses and accessories, their furs and hats. I reckoned the amount to be something like my wages on the farm for six years. How easily and

unconsciously they wore their good clothes! One of the two younger held my attention. She was fair, slender, long-throated, and carried herself with noticeable erectness. I caught bits of their conversation carried on in low pleasing voices:

"It will be such a surprise to them."

"… the C. P. steamer—"

"Oh, fancy! They must have known—"

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

"Where is it? …"

"Somewhere in Richelieu-en-Bas—"

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

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

"When is Mr. Ewart coming over?"

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

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

Since my illness I had squeezed out from my earnings enough for the passage money, fourteen dollars, and eight besides. I did n't want to begin by being indebted to any one in the Seigniory of Lamoral for that amount; and I did n't want it deducted from my first wages. I pleased myself with the fancy that, soon after my arrival, I should give the money into some one's hands with

an appropriate word or two, to the effect that I had chosen to pay my own travelling expenses. That sounded better than passage money which was reminiscent of the steerage.

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

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

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

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

At the sight, my enthusiasm, which I thought quenched forever in the overwhelming flood of adverse circumstance, was rekindled; my imagination stimulated. Dawn was breaking clear and golden behind the mountains across Lake Champlain. Green those mountains are in the October sunlight, green and yellow

and frost-wrought crimson; but now they loomed dark against the horizon's deepening gold. A few small dawn clouds of pure rose and one, gigantic, high-piled, of smoke gray, hung motionless above the mist-veiled waters of the lake.

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

BOOK TWO
THE SEIGNIORY OF LAMORAL

I

"Richelieu—Richelieu-en-Bas."

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

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

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

This salute was the signal for the appearance of what appeared to me the entire population of the place. There were people under

the lindens, people at the doors and open windows, people in boats rowing towards us; one man was poling a scow in which were a cow and two horses. There were men with handcarts, boys with baskets, old women and young girls, all talking, gesticulating freely.

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

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

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

purity and strength.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He hoisted it endwise with one hand on to the front seat; took

his place beside it; gathered up the reins, and said to the boy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes, I 'm a stranger here."

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

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

He turned to look at me, evidently surprised at my short

silence. He saw that I was being jolted about on the broad back seat, owing to the uneven road.

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

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

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

"It's a large place?"

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

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

"I was born in New York City."

"Great place—New York."

He chirrupped to the colts, and we drove for the next fifteen

minutes without further conversation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

hoofs. Pete took his place at their heads.

"*Marche!*"

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

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

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

That quarter of a mile seemed long to me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

"I hope you will soon feel at home in the old manor." With these words I was made welcome. Mrs. Macleod led the way into the house.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Do you speak French?" she asked me.

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

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

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

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

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

background of faded crocus yellow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The four leaped towards me; snuffed at me with evident curiosity; licked my hands and were about to spring on me, but

a word from their master sent them back to the rug.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Please call me Marcia."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Because that sounded safe."

Again we laughed, it seemed at almost nothing. The dogs whined as if wanting to join in what fun there was; the fire snapped merrily on the hearth, and the large coal-oil lamp, at the farther end of the long table, sent forth a cheerful light from

under its white porcelain shade, and showed me the old room in all its simple beauty.

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

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

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

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

We crossed the passageway, which I noticed was laid with

flagging and unheated, to the room opposite the dining-room.

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

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

There were sconces on each side of the chimney-piece, but of gilt bronze. Each was seven-branched, and it was evident that

Marie had just lighted all fourteen candles.

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

III

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

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

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

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

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

"You say you do not know Doctor Rugvie?"

"No; only of him."

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

"He will be coming out here later on in the winter—are you cold?" she asked quickly, for I had shivered to cover an involuntary start.

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

"It is. Cale said we might have heavy frost or snow before morning. You will find the changes in temperature very sudden and trying here in spring and autumn. About Doctor Rugvie;

he is a good man, and a great one in his profession. We made his acquaintance many years ago in Scotland, in my own home, Crieff. He had lodgings with us for ten weeks, and since then he has made us proud to be counted among his friends."

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

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

"You really don't look strong enough."

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

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

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

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

"I want you to remain with me as companion and assistant here in the house; the service is large and, as you will soon find," she added with a smile, "extremely personal. They are interested in us and our doings, and we are expected to reciprocate that

interest. It will be a comfort to Jamie to know you are with me, and that I am not alone in this French environment." She interrupted herself to say:

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

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

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

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

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

"And what is the owner's title?"

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

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

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

"Are the farm buildings occupied now?"

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

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

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

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

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

How lovely she was as she sat by the fire in the soft radiance of candle light! "Elderly"!—She could not be a day over fifty-

seven or eight. The fine white cap rested on heavy, smoothly parted hair; the figure was round to plumpness; the dress, not modernized, became her; her voice was still young if a little weary, and her brown eyes bright, the lids unwrinkled.

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

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

"Is she a widow?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Now, look here, Marcia," he said solemnly, "we will call a halt right now and here." He settled his long length in the deep easy chair on the other side of the hearth, refilled and relighted

his pipe. "Doctor Rugvie is my friend, my very special friend; whoever enters this house, enters it on the footing of friendship with all those who are my friends—"

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

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

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

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

"Doctor Rugvie?"

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

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

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

"The man who owns this house, Miss Farrell,"—he was speaking so earnestly and emphatically that he forgot our agreement,—"the man who owns these dogs, the lord of this manor, such as it is, and everything belonging to it, lord of a forest it will do your eyes and lungs and soul good to journey through, the man who is master in the best sense of Pete and little Pete,

of Angélique and Marie, of old Mère Guillardeau, of a dozen farmers here on the old Seigniory of Lamoral, my friend, Doctor Rugvie's friend and friend of all Richelieu-en-Bas, is Mr. Ewart, Gordon Ewart—and you missed my pun! the first I've made to-day!—and I hope he will be yours!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And who is André?"

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

Mother," he spoke abruptly, "it's time for porridge and Cale."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You really must know Cale—"

"I thought I made his acquaintance this afternoon."

He laughed again his hearty laugh. "I forgot; he drove you out. We did n't send Pete because we thought you might not understand his lingo. But you must n't fancy you know Cale because you 've seen him once—oh, no! You 'll have to see him daily and sometimes hourly; in fact, you will see so much of him that, sometimes, you will wish it a little less; for you are

to understand that Cale is omnipresent, very nearly omnipotent here with us, and indispensable to *me*. You will accept him on my recommendation and afterwards make a friend of him for your own sake."

"Who is he?"

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

"Is Mr. Ewart lord of Cale too?"

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

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

"How did you happen to get him here?"

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

he replied that Cale was coming east in the spring and he had given him my name. That's how."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I must have lain there hours with wide open eyes; there was no sleep in me. Hour after hour I listened for a sound from somewhere; there was absolute silence within the manor and without. I had opened my window for air, and, as I lay there wide awake, gradually, without reason, in that intense silence,

the various nightly street sounds of the great city, five hundred miles to the southward, began to sound in my ears; at first far away, then nearer and nearer until I heard distinctly the roar of the elevated, the multiplied "honk-honk" of the automobiles, the rolling of cabs, the grating clamor of the surface cars, the clang of the ambulance, the terrific clatter of the horses' hoofs as they sped three abreast to the fire, the hoarse whistle of tug and ferry; and, above all, the voices of those crying in that wilderness.

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

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

IV

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

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

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

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

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

that sounded the vanishing of the "feather-snow".

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marie's rap and entrance with hot water, her voluble surprise

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

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

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

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

A path partly overgrown with bushes led around the house;

following it, I found that the main building was the least part of the whole structure. Two additions, varying in length and height, provided as many sharp gables, and gave it the inconsequent charm of the unexpected.

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

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

What a wilderness was this Seigniory of Lamoral! And yet—I liked it. I liked its wildness, the untrammelled growth of its trees,

underbrush and vines; the dignified simplicity of its old manor that matched the simple sincerity of its present inmates. I felt somehow akin to all of it, and I could say with truth, that I should be glad to remain a part of it. But I recalled what Mrs. Macleod said about our removal to the farm, and that remembrance forbade my indulging in any thoughts of permanency.

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

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

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

"What a wilderness it is!"

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

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

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

"When is Mr. Ewart coming?"

"We expect him sometime the last of November. He was in

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

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

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

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

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

"Jamie and I have rooms in the long corridor where yours is," said Mrs. Macleod; "it's much cosier there; we actually have

curtains to our beds, which seems a bit like home."

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

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

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

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

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

"My dear boy, what an avalanche of responsibility! I don't know that I feel competent to carry out his wishes." She looked

so hopelessly helpless that her son laughed outright.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V

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

For the first week Jamie and I lived, in part, on the road between Lamoral and Richelieu-en-Bas. With little Pete for driver, an old cart-horse and a long low-bodied wagon carried us, sometimes twice a day, to the village. We spent hours in the one "goods" shop of the place. It was a long, low, dark room stocked to the ceiling on both walls and on shelves down the middle, with all varieties of cotton, woolen and silk goods, some of modern manufacture but more of past decades. In the dim background, a broad flight of stairs, bisecting on a landing, led to the gallery where were piled higgledy-piggledy every Canadian

want in the way of furnishings, from old-fashioned bellows and all wool blankets, to Englishware toilet sets that must have found storage there for a generation, and no customer till Jamie and I appeared to claim them. There, too, I unearthed a bolt of English chintz.

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

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

The shortening November days, the strengthening cold, that closed the creek and was beginning to bind the river, the gray unlifting skies, I welcomed as a foil to the cosy evenings in

the dining-room where Mrs. Macleod and I sewed and stitched, and planned for the various rooms, Jamie smoked and jeered or encouraged, and the four dogs watched every movement on our part, with an ear cocked for little Pete who was cracking butternuts in the kitchen.

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

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

"Who am I? Who—who?" I said to myself over and over again during those three weeks of preparation. And at night, creeping into my bed—than which there could be none better, for it was in three layers: spring, feather bed and hair mattress—and drawing up the blankets and comforter preparatory for the sharp frost of the early morning, I cried out in revolt:

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

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

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

He looked at me a little doubtfully.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He threw back his head, laughing heartily.

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

Jamie laughed uproariously.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Is he married?"

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

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

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

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

"Well, is he?"

"Is he what?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And I say I don't care—"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We both laughed and grew good-humored again.

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

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.