

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

DEEPHAVEN AND
SELECTED STORIES &
SKETCHES

Sarah Orne Jewett
Deephaven and Selected
Stories & Sketches

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=36096597
Deephaven and Selected Stories & Sketches:*

Содержание

Deerhaven	4
Preface	4
Kate Lancaster's Plan	5
The Brandon House and the Lighthouse	15
My Lady Brandon and the Widow Jim	30
Deerhaven Society	51
The Captains	65
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	74

Sarah Orne Jewett

Deephaven and Selected Stories & Sketches

Deephaven

Preface

This book is not wholly new, several of the chapters having already been published in the "Atlantic Monthly." It has so often been asked if Deephaven may not be found on the map of New England under another name, that, to prevent any misunderstanding, I wish to say, while there is a likeness to be traced, few of the sketches are drawn from that town itself, and the characters will in almost every case be looked for there in vain.

I dedicate this story of out-of-door life and country people first to my father and mother, my two best friends, and also to all my other friends, whose names I say to myself lovingly, though I do not write them here.

S. O. J.

Kate Lancaster's Plan

I had been spending the winter in Boston, and Kate Lancaster and I had been together a great deal, for we are the best of friends. It happened that the morning when this story begins I had waked up feeling sorry, and as if something dreadful were going to happen. There did not seem to be any good reason for it, so I undertook to discourage myself more by thinking that it would soon be time to leave town, and how much I should miss being with Kate and my other friends. My mind was still disquieted when I went down to breakfast; but beside my plate I found, with a hoped-for letter from my father, a note from Kate. To this day I have never known any explanation of that depression of my spirits, and I hope that the good luck which followed will help some reader to lose fear, and to smile at such shadows if any chance to come.

Kate had evidently written to me in an excited state of mind, for her note was not so trig-looking as usual; but this is what she said:—

Dear Helen,—I have a plan—I think it a most delightful plan—in which you and I are chief characters. Promise that you will say yes; if you do not you will have to remember all your life that you broke a girl's heart. Come round early, and lunch with me and dine with me. I'm to be all alone, and

it's a long story and will need a great deal of talking over.

K.

I showed this note to my aunt, and soon went round, very much interested. My latch-key opened the Lancasters' door, and I hurried to the parlor, where I heard my friend practising with great diligence. I went up to her, and she turned her head and kissed me solemnly. You need not smile; we are not sentimental girls, and are both much averse to indiscriminate kissing, though I have not the adroit habit of shying in which Kate is proficient. It would sometimes be impolite in any one else, but she shies so affectionately.

"Won't you sit down, dear?" she said, with great ceremony, and went on with her playing, which was abominable that morning; her fingers stepped on each other, and, whatever the tune might have been in reality, it certainly had a most remarkable incoherence as I heard it then. I took up the new Littell and made believe read it, and finally threw it at Kate; you would have thought we were two children.

"Have you heard that my grand-aunt, Miss Katharine Brandon of Deephaven, is dead?" I knew that she had died in November, at least six months before.

"Don't be nonsensical, Kate!" said I. "What is it you are going to tell me?"

"My grand-aunt died very old, and was the last of her generation. She had a sister and three brothers, one of whom had the honor of being my grandfather. Mamma is sole heir to the

family estates in Deephaven, wharf-property and all, and it is a great inconvenience to her. The house is a charming old house, and some of my ancestors who followed the sea brought home the greater part of its furnishings. Miss Katharine was a person who ignored all frivolities, and her house was as sedate as herself. I have been there but little, for when I was a child my aunt found no pleasure in the society of noisy children who upset her treasures, and when I was older she did not care to see strangers, and after I left school she grew more and more feeble; I had not been there for two years when she died. Mamma went down very often. The town is a quaint old place which has seen better days. There are high rocks at the shore, and there is a beach, and there are woods inland, and hills, and there is the sea. It might be dull in Deephaven for two young ladies who were fond of gay society and dependent upon excitement, I suppose; but for two little girls who were fond of each other and could play in the boats, and dig and build houses in the sea-sand, and gather shells, and carry their dolls wherever they went, what could be pleasanter?"

"Nothing," said I, promptly.

Kate had told this a little at a time, with a few appropriate bars of music between, which suddenly reminded me of the story of a Chinese procession which I had read in one of Marryat's novels when I was a child: "A thousand white elephants richly caparisoned,—ti-tum tilly-lily," and so on, for a page or two. She seemed to have finished her story for that time, and while it was dawning upon me what she meant, she sang a bit from one of

Jean Ingelow's verses:—

"Will ye step aboard, my dearest,
For the high seas lie before us?"

and then came over to sit beside me and tell the whole story in a more sensible fashion.

"You know that my father has been meaning to go to England in the autumn? Yesterday he told us that he is to leave in a month and will be away all summer, and mamma is going with him. Jack and Willy are to join a party of their classmates who are to spend nearly the whole of the long vacation at Lake Superior. I don't care to go abroad again now, and I did not like any plan that was proposed to me. Aunt Anna was here all the afternoon, and she is going to take the house at Newport, which is very pleasant and unexpected, for she hates housekeeping. Mamma thought of course that I would go with her, but I did not wish to do that, and it would only result in my keeping house for her visitors, whom I know very little; and she will be much more free and independent by herself. Beside, she can have my room if I am not there. I have promised to make her a long visit in Baltimore next winter instead. I told mamma that I should like to stay here and go away when I choose. There are ever so many visits which I have promised; I could stay with you and your Aunt Mary at Lenox if she goes there, for a while, and I have always wished to spend a summer in town; but mamma did not encourage that at all.

In the evening papa gave her a letter which had come from Mr. Dockum, the man who takes care of Aunt Katharine's place, and the most charming idea came into my head, and I said I meant to spend my summer in Deephaven.

"At first they laughed at me, and then they said I might go if I chose, and at last they thought nothing could be pleasanter, and mamma wishes she were going herself. I asked if she did not think you would be the best person to keep me company, and she does, and papa announced that he was just going to suggest my asking you. I am to take Ann and Maggie, who will be overjoyed, for they came from that part of the country, and the other servants are to go with Aunt Anna, and old Nora will come to take care of this house, as she always does. Perhaps you and I will come up to town once in a while for a few days. We shall have such jolly housekeeping. Mamma and I sat up very late last night, and everything is planned. Mr. Dockum's house is very near Aunt Katharine's, so we shall not be lonely; though I know you're no more afraid of that than I. O Helen, won't you go?"

Do you think it took me long to decide?

Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster sailed the 10th of June, and my Aunt Mary went to spend her summer among the Berkshire Hills, so I was at the Lancasters' ready to welcome Kate when she came home, after having said good by to her father and mother. We meant to go to Deephaven in a week, but were obliged to stay in town longer. Boston was nearly deserted of our friends at the last, and we used to take quiet walks in the cool of the

evening after dinner, up and down the street, or sit on the front steps in company with the servants left in charge of the other houses, who also sometimes walked up and down and looked at us wonderingly. We had much shopping to do in the daytime, for there was a probability of our spending many days in doors, and as we were not to be near any large town, and did not mean to come to Boston for weeks at least, there was a great deal to be remembered and arranged. We enjoyed making our plans, and deciding what we should want, and going to the shops together. I think we felt most important the day we conferred with Ann and made out a list of the provisions which must be ordered. This was being housekeepers in earnest. Mr. Dockum happened to come to town, and we sent Ann and Maggie, with most of our boxes, to Deephaven in his company a day or two before we were ready to go ourselves, and when we reached there the house was opened and in order for us.

On our journey to Deephaven we left the railway twelve miles from that place, and took passage in a stage-coach. There was only one passenger beside ourselves. She was a very large, thin, weather-beaten woman, and looked so tired and lonesome and good-natured, that I could not help saying it was very dusty; and she was apparently delighted to answer that she should think everybody was sweeping, and she always felt, after being in the cars a while, as if she had been taken all to pieces and left in the different places. And this was the beginning of our friendship with Mrs. Kew.

After this conversation we looked industriously out of the window into the pastures and pine-woods. I had given up my seat to her, for I do not mind riding backward in the least, and you would have thought I had done her the greatest favor of her life. I think she was the most grateful of women, and I was often reminded of a remark one of my friends once made about some one: "If you give Bessie a half-sheet of letter-paper, she behaves to you as if it were the most exquisite of presents!" Kate and I had some fruit left in our lunch-basket, and divided it with Mrs. Kew, but after the first mouthful we looked at each other in dismay. "Lemons with oranges' clothes on, aren't they?" said she, as Kate threw hers out of the window, and mine went after it for company; and after this we began to be very friendly indeed. We both liked the odd woman, there was something so straightforward and kindly about her.

"Are you going to Deephaven, dear?" she asked me, and then: "I wonder if you are going to stay long? All summer? Well, that's clever! I do hope you will come out to the Light to see me; young folks 'most always like my place. Most likely your friends will fetch you."

"Do you know the Brandon house?" asked Kate.

"Well as I do the meeting-house. There! I wonder I didn't know from the beginning, but I have been a trying all the way to settle it who you could be. I've been up country some weeks, stopping with my mother, and she seemed so set to have me stay till strawberry-time, and would hardly let me come now. You

see she's getting to be old; why, every time I've come away for fifteen years she's said it was the last time I'd ever see her, but she's a dreadful smart woman of her age. 'He' wrote me some o' Mrs. Lancaster's folks were going to take the Brandon house this summer; and so you are the ones? It's a sightly old place; I used to go and see Miss Katharine. She must have left a power of china-ware. She set a great deal by the house, and she kept everything just as it used to be in her mother's day."

"Then you live in Deephaven too?" asked Kate.

"I've been here the better part of my life. I was raised up among the hills in Vermont, and I shall always be a real up-country woman if I live here a hundred years. The sea doesn't come natural to me, it kind of worries me, though you won't find a happier woman than I be, 'long shore. When I was first married 'he' had a schooner and went to the banks, and once he was off on a whaling voyage, and I hope I may never come to so long a three years as those were again, though I was up to mother's. Before I was married he had been 'most everywhere. When he came home that time from whaling, he found I'd taken it so to heart that he said he'd never go off again, and then he got the chance to keep Deephaven Light, and we've lived there seventeen years come January. There isn't great pay, but then nobody tries to get it away from us, and we've got so's to be contented, if it is lonesome in winter."

"Do you really live in the lighthouse? I remember how I used to beg to be taken out there when I was a child, and how I used

to watch for the light at night," said Kate, enthusiastically.

So began a friendship which we both still treasure, for knowing Mrs. Kew was one of the pleasantest things which happened to us in that delightful summer, and she used to do so much for our pleasure, and was so good to us. When we went out to the lighthouse for the last time to say good by, we were very sorry girls indeed. We had no idea until then how much she cared for us, and her affection touched us very much. She told us that she loved us as if we belonged to her, and begged us not to forget her,—as if we ever could!—and to remember that there was always a home and a warm heart for us if she were alive. Kate and I have often agreed that few of our acquaintances are half so entertaining. Her comparisons were most striking and amusing, and her comments upon the books she read—for she was a great reader—were very shrewd and clever, and always to the point. She was never out of temper, even when the barrels of oil were being rolled across her kitchen floor. And she was such a wise woman! This stage-ride, which we expected to find tiresome, we enjoyed very much, and we were glad to think, when the coach stopped, and "he" came to meet her with great satisfaction, that we had one friend in Deephaven at all events.

I liked the house from my very first sight of it. It stood behind a row of poplars which were as green and flourishing as the poplars which stand in stately processions in the fields around Quebec. It was an imposing great white house, and the lilacs were tall, and there were crowds of rose-bushes not yet out of bloom;

and there were box borders, and there were great elms at the side of the house and down the road. The hall door stood wide open, and my hostess turned to me as we went in, with one of her sweet, sudden smiles. "Won't we have a good time, Nelly?" said she. And I thought we should.

So our summer's housekeeping began in most pleasant fashion. It was just at sunset, and Ann's and Maggie's presence made the house seem familiar at once. Maggie had been unpacking for us, and there was a delicious supper ready for the hungry girls. Later in the evening we went down to the shore, which was not very far away; the fresh sea-air was welcome after the dusty day, and it seemed so quiet and pleasant in Deephaven.

The Brandon House and the Lighthouse

I do not know that the Brandon house is really very remarkable, but I never have been in one that interested me in the same way. Kate used to recount to select audiences at school some of her experiences with her Aunt Katharine, and it was popularly believed that she once carried down some indestructible picture-books when they were first in fashion, and the old lady basted them for her to hem round the edges at the rate of two a day. It may have been fabulous. It was impossible to imagine any children in the old place; everything was for grown people; even the stair-railing was too high to slide down on. The chairs looked as if they had been put, at the furnishing of the house, in their places, and there they meant to remain. The carpets were particularly interesting, and I remember Kate's pointing out to me one day a great square figure in one, and telling me she used to keep house there with her dolls for lack of a better play-house, and if one of them chanced to fall outside the boundary stripe, it was immediately put to bed with a cold. It is a house with great possibilities; it might easily be made charming. There are four very large rooms on the lower floor, and six above, a wide hall in each story, and a fascinating garret over the whole, where were many mysterious old chests and boxes, in one of which we found Kate's grandmother's love-letters; and you may be sure the vista of rummages which Mr. Lancaster

had laughed about was explored to its very end. The rooms all have elaborate cornices, and the lower hall is very fine, with an archway dividing it, and panellings of all sorts, and a great door at each end, through which the lilacs in front and the old pensioner plum-trees in the garden are seen exchanging bows and gestures. Coming from the Lancasters' high city house, it did not seem as if we had to go up stairs at all there, for every step of the stairway is so broad and low, and you come half-way to a square landing with an old straight-backed chair in each farther corner; and between them a large, round-topped window, with a cushioned seat, looking out on the garden and the village, the hills far inland, and the sunset beyond all. Then you turn and go up a few more steps to the upper hall, where we used to stay a great deal. There were more old chairs and a pair of remarkable sofas, on which we used to deposit the treasures collected in our wanderings. The wide window which looks out on the lilacs and the sea was a favorite seat of ours. Facing each other on either side of it are two old secretaries, and one of them we ascertained to be the hiding-place of secret drawers, in which may be found valuable records deposited by ourselves one rainy day when we first explored it. We wrote, between us, a tragic "journal" on some yellow old letter-paper we found in the desk. We put it in the most hidden drawer by itself, and flatter ourselves that it will be regarded with great interest some time or other. Of one of the front rooms, "the best chamber," we stood rather in dread. It is very remarkable that

there seem to be no ghost-stories connected with any part of the house, particularly this. We are neither of us nervous; but there is certainly something dismal about the room. The huge curtained bed and immense easy-chairs, windows, and everything were draped in some old-fashioned kind of white cloth which always seemed to be waving and moving about of itself. The carpet was most singularly colored with dark reds and indescribable grays and browns, and the pattern, after a whole summer's study, could never be followed with one's eye. The paper was captured in a French prize somewhere some time in the last century, and part of the figure was shaggy, and therein little spiders found habitation, and went visiting their acquaintances across the shiny places. The color was an unearthly pink and a forbidding maroon, with dim white spots, which gave it the appearance of having moulded. It made you low-spirited to look long in the mirror; and the great lounge one could not have cheerful associations with, after hearing that Miss Brandon herself did not like it, having seen so many of her relatives lie there dead. There were fantastic china ornaments from Bible subjects on the mantel, and the only picture was one of the Maid of Orleans tied with an unnecessarily strong rope to a very stout stake. The best parlor we also rarely used, because all the portraits which hung there had for some unaccountable reason taken a violent dislike to us, and followed us suspiciously with their eyes. The furniture was stately and very uncomfortable, and there was something about the room which suggested an invisible funeral.

There is not very much to say about the dining-room. It was not specially interesting, though the sea was in sight from one of the windows. There were some old Dutch pictures on the wall, so dark that one could scarcely make out what they were meant to represent, and one or two engravings. There was a huge sideboard, for which Kate had brought down from Boston Miss Brandon's own silver which had stood there for so many years, and looked so much more at home and in place than any other possibly could have looked, and Kate also found in the closet the three great decanters with silver labels chained round their necks, which had always been the companions of the tea-service in her aunt's lifetime. From the little closets in the sideboard there came a most significant odor of cake and wine whenever one opened the doors. We used Miss Brandon's beautiful old blue India china which she had given to Kate, and which had been carefully packed all winter. Kate sat at the head and I at the foot of the round table, and I must confess that we were apt to have either a feast or a famine, for at first we often forgot to provide our dinners. If this were the case Maggie was sure to serve us with most derisive elegance, and make us wait for as much ceremony as she thought necessary for one of Mrs. Lancaster's dinner-parties.

The west parlor was our favorite room down stairs. It had a great fireplace framed in blue and white Dutch tiles which ingeniously and instructively represented the careers of the good and the bad man; the starting-place of each being a very singular

cradle in the centre at the top. The last two of the series are very high art: a great coffin stands in the foreground of each, and the virtuous man is being led off by two disagreeable-looking angels, while the wicked one is hastening from an indescribable but unpleasant assemblage of claws and horns and eyes which is rapidly advancing from the distance, open-mouthed, and bringing a chain with it.

There was a large cabinet holding all the small curiosities and knick-knacks there seemed to be no other place for,—odd china figures and cups and vases, unaccountable Chinese carvings and exquisite corals and sea-shells, minerals and Swiss wood-work, and articles of *vertu* from the South Seas. Underneath were stored boxes of letters and old magazines; for this was one of the houses where nothing seems to have been thrown away. In one parting we found a parcel of old manuscript sermons, the existence of which was a mystery, until Kate remembered there had been a gifted son of the house who entered the ministry and soon died. The windows had each a pane of stained glass, and on the wide sills we used to put our immense bouquets of field-flowers. There was one place which I liked and sat in more than any other. The chimney filled nearly the whole side of the room, all but this little corner, where there was just room for a very comfortable high-backed cushioned chair, and a narrow window where I always had a bunch of fresh green ferns in a tall champagne-glass. I used to write there often, and always sat there when Kate sang and played. She sent for a tuner, and used to

successfully coax the long-imprisoned music from the antiquated piano, and sing for her visitors by the hour. She almost always sang her oldest songs, for they seemed most in keeping with everything about us. I used to fancy that the portraits liked our being there. There was one young girl who seemed solitary and forlorn among the rest in the room, who were all middle-aged. For their part they looked amiable, but rather unhappy, as if she had come in and interrupted their conversation. We both grew very fond of her, and it seemed, when we went in the last morning on purpose to take leave of her, as if she looked at us imploringly. She was soon afterward boxed up, and now enjoys society after her own heart in Kate's room in Boston.

There was the largest sofa I ever saw opposite the fireplace; it must have been brought in in pieces, and built in the room. It was broad enough for Kate and me to lie on together, and very high and square; but there was a pile of soft cushions at one end. We used to enjoy it greatly in September, when the evenings were long and cool, and we had many candles, and a fire—and crickets too—on the hearth, and the dear dog lying on the rug. I remember one rainy night, just before Miss Tennant and Kitty Bruce went away; we had a real drift-wood fire, and blew out the lights and told stories. Miss Margaret knows so many and tells them so well. Kate and I were unusually entertaining, for we became familiar with the family record of the town, and could recount marvellous adventures by land and sea, and ghost-stories by the dozen. We had never either of us been in a society

consisting of so many travelled people! Hardly a man but had been the most of his life at sea. Speaking of ghost-stories, I must tell you that once in the summer two Cambridge girls who were spending a week with us unwisely enticed us into giving some thrilling recitals, which nearly frightened them out of their wits, and Kate and I were finally in terror ourselves. We had all been on the sofa in the dark, singing and talking, and were waiting in great suspense after I had finished one of such particular horror that I declared it should be the last, when we heard footsteps on the hall stairs. There were lights in the dining-room which shone faintly through the half-closed door, and we saw something white and shapeless come slowly down, and clutched each other's gowns in agony. It was only Kate's dog, who came in and laid his head in her lap and slept peacefully. We thought we could not sleep a wink after this, and I bravely went alone out to the light to see my watch, and, finding it was past twelve, we concluded to sit up all night and to go down to the shore at sunrise, it would be so much easier than getting up early some morning. We had been out rowing and had taken a long walk the day before, and were obliged to dance and make other slight exertions to keep ourselves awake at one time. We lunched at two, and I never shall forget the sunrise that morning; but we were singularly quiet and abstracted that day, and indeed for several days after Deephaven was "a land in which it seemed always afternoon," we breakfasted so late.

As Mrs. Kew had said, there was "a power of china." Kate and

I were convinced that the lives of her grandmothers must have been spent in giving tea-parties. We counted ten sets of cups, beside quantities of stray ones; and some member of the family had evidently devoted her time to making a collection of pitchers.

There was an escritoire in Miss Brandon's own room, which we looked over one day. There was a little package of letters; ship letters mostly, tied with a very pale and tired-looking blue ribbon. They were in a drawer with a locket holding a faded miniature on ivory and a lock of brown hair, and there were also some dry twigs and bits of leaf which had long ago been bright wild-roses, such as still bloom among the Deephaven rocks. Kate said that she had often heard her mother wonder why her aunt never had cared to marry, for she had chances enough doubtless, and had been rich and handsome and finely educated. So there was a sailor lover after all, and perhaps he had been lost at sea and she faithfully kept the secret, never mourning outwardly. "And I always thought her the most matter-of-fact old lady," said Kate; "yet here's her romance, after all." We put the letters outside on a chair to read, but afterwards carefully replaced them, without untying them. I'm glad we did. There were other letters which we did read, and which interested us very much,—letters from her girl friends written in the boarding-school vacations, and just after she finished school. Those in one of the smaller packages were charming; it must have been such a bright, nice girl who wrote them! They were very few, and were tied with black ribbon, and marked on the outside in girlish writing: "My

dearest friend, Dolly McAllister, died September 3, 1809, aged eighteen." The ribbon had evidently been untied and the letters read many times. One began: "My dear, delightful Kitten: I am quite overjoyed to find my father has business which will force him to go to Deephaven next week, and he kindly says if there be no more rain I may ride with him to see you. I will surely come, for if there is danger of spattering my gown, and he bids me stay at home, I shall go galloping after him and overtake him when it is too late to send me back. I have so much to tell you." I wish I knew more about the visit. Poor Miss Katharine! it made us sad to look over these treasures of her girlhood. There were her compositions and exercise-books; some samplers and queer little keepsakes; withered flowers and some pebbles and other things of like value, with which there was probably some pleasant association. "Only think of her keeping them all her days," said I to Kate. "I am continually throwing some relic of the kind away, because I forget why I have it!"

There was a box in the lower part which Kate was glad to find, for she had heard her mother wonder if some such things were not in existence. It held a crucifix and a mass-book and some rosaries, and Kate told me Miss Katharine's youngest and favorite brother had become a Roman Catholic while studying in Europe. It was a dreadful blow to the family; for in those days there could have been few deeper disgraces to the Brandon family than to have one of its sons go over to popery. Only Miss Katharine treated him with kindness, and after a time he

disappeared without telling even her where he was going, and was only heard from indirectly once or twice afterward. It was a great grief to her. "And mamma knows," said Kate, "that she always had a lingering hope of his return, for one of the last times she saw Aunt Katharine before she was ill she spoke of soon going to be with all the rest, and said, 'Though your Uncle Henry, dear,'—and stopped and smiled sadly; 'you'll think me a very foolish old woman, but I never quite gave up thinking he might come home.'"

Mrs. Kew did the honors of the lighthouse thoroughly on our first visit; but I think we rarely went to see her that we did not make some entertaining discovery. Mr. Kew's nephew, a guileless youth of forty, lived with them, and the two men were of a mechanical turn and had invented numerous aids to housekeeping,—appendages to the stove, and fixtures on the walls for everything that could be hung up; catches in the floor to hold the doors open, and ingenious apparatus to close them; but, above all, a system of barring and bolting for the wide "fore door," which would have disconcerted an energetic battering-ram. After all this work being expended, Mrs. Kew informed us that it was usually wide open all night in summer weather. On the back of this door I discovered one day a row of marks, and asked their significance. It seemed that Mrs. Kew had attempted one summer to keep count of the number of people who inquired about the depredations of the neighbors' chickens. Mrs. Kew's bedroom was partly devoted to the fine arts. There was a large

collection of likenesses of her relatives and friends on the wall, which was interesting in the extreme. Mrs. Kew was always much pleased to tell their names, and her remarks about any feature not exactly perfect were very searching and critical. "That's my oldest brother's wife, Clorinty Adams that was. She's well featured, if it were not for her nose, and that looks as if it had been thrown at her, and she wasn't particular about having it on firm, in hopes of getting a better one. She sets by her looks, though."

There were often sailing-parties that came there from up and down the coast. One day Kate and I were spending the afternoon at the Light; we had been fishing, and were sitting in the doorway listening to a reminiscence of the winter Mrs. Kew kept school at the Four Corners; saw a boatful coming, and all lost our tempers. Mrs. Kew had a lame ankle, and Kate offered to go up with the visitors. There were some girls and young men who stood on the rocks awhile, and then asked us, with much better manners than the people who usually came, if they could see the lighthouse, and Kate led the way. She was dressed that day in a costume we both frequently wore, of gray skirts and blue sailor-jacket, and her boots were much the worse for wear. The celebrated Lancaster complexion was rather darkened by the sun. Mrs. Kew expressed a wish to know what questions they would ask her, and I followed after a few minutes. They seemed to have finished asking about the lantern, and to have become personal.

"Don't you get tired staying here?"

"No, indeed!" said Kate.

"Is that your sister down stairs?"

"No, I have no sister."

"I should think you would wish she was. Aren't you ever lonesome?"

"Everybody is, sometimes," said Kate.

"But it's such a lonesome place!" said one of the girls. "I should think you would get work away. I live in Boston. Why, it's so awful quiet! nothing but the water, and the wind, when it blows; and I think either of them is worse than nothing. And only this little bit of a rocky place! I should want to go to walk."

I heard Kate pleasantly refuse the offer of pay for her services, and then they began to come down the steep stairs laughing and chattering with each other. Kate stayed behind to close the doors and leave everything all right, and the girl who had talked the most waited too, and when they were on the stairs just above me, and the others out of hearing, she said, "You're real good to show us the things. I guess you'll think I'm silly, but I do like you ever so much! I wish you would come to Boston. I'm in a real nice store, —H—'s, on Winter Street; and they will want new saleswomen in October. Perhaps you could be at my counter. I'd teach you, and you could board with me. I've got a real comfortable room, and I suppose I might have more things, for I get good pay; but I like to send money home to mother. I'm at my aunt's now, but I am going back next Monday, and if you will tell me what your name is, I'll find out for certain about the place, and write you. My name's Mary Wendell."

I knew by Kate's voice that this had touched her. "You are very kind; thank you heartily," said she; "but I cannot go and work with you. I should like to know more about you. I live in Boston too; my friend and I are staying over in Deephaven for the summer only." And she held out her hand to the girl, whose face had changed from its first expression of earnest good-humor to a very startled one; and when she noticed Kate's hand, and a ring of hers, which had been turned round, she looked really frightened.

"O, will you please excuse me?" said she, blushing. "I ought to have known better; but you showed us round so willing, and I never thought of your not living here. I didn't mean to be rude."

"Of course you did not, and you were not. I am very glad you said it, and glad you like me," said Kate; and just then the party called the girl, and she hurried away, and I joined Kate. "Then you heard it all. That was worth having!" said she. "She was such an honest little soul, and I mean to look for her when I get home."

Sometimes we used to go out to the Light early in the morning with the fishermen who went that way to the fishing-grounds, but we usually made the voyage early in the afternoon if it were not too hot, and we went fishing off the rocks or sat in the house with Mrs. Kew, who often related some of her Vermont experiences, or Mr. Kew would tell us surprising sea-stories and ghost-stories like a story-book sailor. Then we would have an unreasonably good supper and afterward climb the ladder to the lantern to see the lamps lighted, and sit there for a while watching the ships and the sunset. Almost all the coasters came in sight of Deephaven,

and the sea outside the light was their grand highway. Twice from the lighthouse we saw a yacht squadron like a flock of great white birds. As for the sunsets, it used to seem often as if we were near the heart of them, for the sea all around us caught the color of the clouds, and though the glory was wonderful, I remember best one still evening when there was a bank of heavy gray clouds in the west shutting down like a curtain, and the sea was silver-colored. You could look under and beyond the curtain of clouds into the palest, clearest yellow sky. There was a little black boat in the distance drifting slowly, climbing one white wave after another, as if it were bound out into that other world beyond. But presently the sun came from behind the clouds, and the dazzling golden light changed the look of everything, and it was the time then to say one thought it a beautiful sunset; while before one could only keep very still, and watch the boat, and wonder if heaven would not be somehow like that far, faint color, which was neither sea nor sky.

When we came down from the lighthouse and it grew late, we would beg for an hour or two longer on the water, and row away in the twilight far out from land, where, with our faces turned from the Light, it seemed as if we were alone, and the sea shoreless; and as the darkness closed round us softly, we watched the stars come out, and were always glad to see Kate's star and my star, which we had chosen when we were children. I used long ago to be sure of one thing,—that, however far away heaven might be, it could not be out of sight of the stars. Sometimes in the evening

we waited out at sea for the moonrise, and then we would take the oars again and go slowly in, once in a while singing or talking, but oftenest silent.

My Lady Brandon and the Widow Jim

When it was known that we had arrived in Deephaven, the people who had known Miss Brandon so well, and Mrs. Lancaster also, seemed to consider themselves Kate's friends by inheritance, and were exceedingly polite to us, in either calling upon us or sending pleasant messages. Before the first week had ended we had no lack of society. They were not strangers to Kate, to begin with, and as for me, I think it is easy for me to be contented, and to feel at home anywhere. I have the good fortune and the misfortune to belong to the navy,—that is, my father does,—and my life has been consequently an unsettled one, except during the years of my school life, when my friendship with Kate began.

I think I should be happy in any town if I were living there with Kate Lancaster. I will not praise my friend as I can praise her, or say half the things I might say honestly. She is so fresh and good and true, and enjoys life so heartily. She is so child-like, without being childish; and I do not tell you that she is faultless, but when she makes mistakes she is sorrier and more ready to hopefully try again than any girl I know. Perhaps you would like to know something about us, but I am not writing Kate's biography and my own, only telling you of one summer which we spent together. Sometimes in Deephaven we were between six and seven years old, but at other times we have felt irreparably grown-up, and

as if we carried a crushing weight of care and duty. In reality we are both twenty-four, and it is a pleasant age, though I think next year is sure to be pleasanter, for we do not mind growing older, since we have lost nothing that we mourn about, and are gaining so much. I shall be glad if you learn to know Kate a little in my stories. It is not that I am fond of her and endow her with imagined virtues and graces; no one can fail to see how unaffected she is, or not notice her thoughtfulness and generosity and her delightful fun, which never has a trace of coarseness or silliness. It was very pleasant having her for one's companion, for she has an unusual power of winning people's confidence, and of knowing with surest instinct how to meet them on their own ground. It is the girl's being so genuinely sympathetic and interested which makes every one ready to talk to her and be friends with her; just as the sunshine makes it easy for flowers to grow which the chilly winds hinder. She is not polite for the sake of seeming polite, but polite for the sake of being kind, and there is not a particle of what Hugh Miller justly calls the insolence of condescension about her; she is not brilliantly talented, yet she does everything in a charming fashion of her own; she is not profoundly learned, yet she knows much of which many wise people are ignorant, and while she is a patient scholar in both little things and great, she is no less a teacher to all her friends,—dear Kate Lancaster!

We knew that we were considered Miss Brandon's representatives in Deephaven society, and this was no slight

responsibility, as she had received much honor and respect. We heard again and again what a loss she had been to the town, and we tried that summer to do nothing to lessen the family reputation, and to give pleasure as well as take it, though we were singularly persistent in our pursuit of a good time. I grew much interested in what I heard of Miss Brandon, and it seems to me that it is a great privilege to have an elderly person in one's neighborhood, in town or country, who is proud, and conservative, and who lives in stately fashion; who is intolerant of sham and of useless novelties, and clings to the old ways of living and behaving as if it were part of her religion. There is something immensely respectable about the gentlewomen of the old school. They ignore all bustle and flashiness, and the conceit of the younger people, who act as if at last it had been time for them to appear and manage this world as it ought to have been managed before. Their position in modern society is much like that of the King's Chapel in its busy street in Boston. It perhaps might not have been easy to approach Miss Brandon, but I am sure that if I had visited in Deephaven during her lifetime I should have been very proud if I had been asked to take tea at her house, and should have liked to speak afterward of my acquaintance with her. It would have been impossible not to pay her great deference; it is a pleasure to think that she must have found this world a most polite world, and have had the highest opinion of its good manners. *Noblesse oblige*: that is true in more ways than one!

I cannot help wondering if those of us who will be left by and by to represent our own generation will seem to have such superior elegance of behavior; if we shall receive so much respect and be so much valued. It is hard to imagine it. We know that the world gains new refinements and a better culture; but to us there never will be such imposing ladies and gentlemen as these who belong to the old school.

The morning after we reached Deephaven we were busy up stairs, and there was a determined blow at the knocker of the front door. I went down to see who was there, and had the pleasure of receiving our first caller. She was a prim little old woman who looked pleased and expectant, who wore a neat cap and front, and whose eyes were as bright as black beads. She wore no bonnet, and had thrown a little three-cornered shawl, with palm-leaf figures, over her shoulders; and it was evident that she was a near neighbor. She was very short and straight and thin, and so quick that she darted like a pickerel when she moved about. It occurred to me at once that she was a very capable person, and had "faculty," and, dear me, how fast she talked! She hesitated a moment when she saw me, and dropped a fragment of a courtesy. "Miss Lan'k'ster?" said she, doubtfully.

"No," said I, "I'm Miss Denis: Miss Lancaster is at home, though: come in, won't you?"

"O Mrs. Patton!" said Kate, who came down just then. "How very kind of you to come over so soon! I should have gone to see you to-day. I was asking Mrs. Kew last night if you were here."

"Land o' compassion!" said Mrs. Patton, as she shook Kate's hand delightedly. "Where'd ye s'pose I'd be, dear? I ain't like to move away from Deephaven now, after I've held by the place so long, I've got as many roots as the big ellum. Well, I should know you were a Brandon, no matter where I see you. You've got a real Brandon look; tall and straight, ain't you? It's four or five years since I saw you, except once at church, and once you went by, down to the shore, I suppose. It was a windy day in the spring of the year."

"I remember it very well," said Kate. "Those were both visits of only a day or two, and I was here at Aunt Katharine's funeral, and went away that same evening. Do you remember once I was here in the summer for a longer visit, five or six years ago, and I helped you pick currants in the garden? You had a very old mug."

"Now, whoever would ha' thought o' your rec'lecting that?" said Mrs. Patton. "Yes. I had that mug because it was handy to carry about among the bushes, and then I'd empt' it into the basket as fast as I got it full. Your aunt always told me to pick all I wanted; she couldn't use 'em, but they used to make sights o' currant wine in old times. I s'pose that mug would be considerable of a curiosity to anybody that wasn't used to seeing it round. My grand'ther Joseph Toggerson—my mother was a Toggerson—picked it up on the long sands in a wad of sea-weed: strange it wasn't broke, but it's tough; I've dropped it on the floor, many's the time, and it ain't even chipped. There's some Dutch reading on it and it's marked 1732. Now I shouldn't ha' thought

you'd remembered that old mug, I declare. Your aunt she had a monstrous sight of chiny. She's told me where 'most all of it come from, but I expect I've forgot. My memory fails me a good deal by spells. If you hadn't come down I suppose your mother would have had the chiny packed up this spring,—what she didn't take with her after your aunt died. S'pose she hasn't made up her mind what to do with the house?"

"No," said Kate; "she wishes she could: it is a great puzzle to us."

"I hope you will find it in middling order," said Mrs. Patton, humbly. "Me and Mis' Dockum have done the best we knew,—opened the windows and let in the air and tried to keep it from getting damp. I fixed all the woollens with fresh camphire and tobacco the last o' the winter; you have to be dreadful careful in one o' these old houses, 'less everything gets creaking with moths in no time. Miss Katharine, how she did hate the sight of a moth-miller! There's something I'll speak about before I forget it: the mice have eat the backs of a pile o' old books that's stored away in the west chamber closet next to Miss Katharine's room, and I set a trap there, but it was older 'n the ten commandments, that trap was, and the spring's rusty. I guess you'd better get some new ones and set round in different places, 'less the mice'll pester you. There ain't been no chance for 'em to get much of a living 'long through the winter, but they'll be sure to come back quick as they find there's likely to be good board. I see your aunt's cat setting out on the front steps. She never was no great of a mouser,

but it went to my heart to see how pleased she looks! Come right back, didn't she? How they do hold to their old haunts!"

"Was that Miss Brandon's cat?" I asked, with great interest. "She has been up stairs with us, but I supposed she belonged to some neighbor, and had strayed in. She behaved as if she felt at home, poor old pussy!"

"We must keep her here," said Kate.

"Mis' Dockum took her after your mother went off, and Miss Katharine's maids," said Mrs. Patton; "but she told me that it was a long spell before she seemed to feel contented. She used to set on the steps and cry by the hour together, and try to get in, to first one door and then another. I used to think how bad Miss Katharine would feel; she set a great deal by a cat, and she took notice of this as long as she did of anything. Her mind failed her, you know. Great loss to Deephaven, she was. Proud woman, and some folks were scared of her; but I always got along with her, and I wouldn't ask for no kinder friend nor neighbor. I've had my troubles, and I've seen the day I was suffering poor, and I couldn't have brought myself to ask town help nohow, but I wish ye'd ha' heard her scold me when she found it out; and she come marching into my kitchen one morning, like a grenadier, and says she, 'Why didn't you send and tell me how sick and poor you are?' says she. And she said she'd ha' been so glad to help me all along, but she thought I had means,—everybody did; and I see the tears in her eyes, but she was scolding me and speaking as if she was dreadful mad. She made me comfortable, and she sent over one

o' her maids to see to me, and got the doctor, and a load o' stuff come up from the store, so I didn't have to buy anything for a good many weeks. I got better and so's to work, but she never'd let me say nothing about it. I had a good deal o' trouble, and I thought I'd lost my health, but I hadn't, and that was thirty or forty years ago. There never was nothing going on at the great house that she didn't have me over, sewing or cleaning or company; and I got so that I knew how she liked to have things done. I felt as if it was my own sister, though I never had one, when I was going over to help lay her out. She used to talk as free to me as she would to Miss Lorimer or Miss Carew. I s'pose ye ain't seen nothing o' them yet? She was a good Christian woman, Miss Katharine was. 'The memory of the just is blessed'; that's what Mr. Lorimer said in his sermon the Sunday after she died, and there wasn't a blood-relation there to hear it. I declare it looked pitiful to see that pew empty that ought to ha' been the mourners' pew. Your mother, Mis' Lancaster, had to go home Saturday, your father was going away sudden to Washington, I've understood, and she come back again the first of the week. There! it didn't make no sort o' difference, p'r'aps nobody thought of it but me. There hadn't been anybody in the pew more than a couple o' times since she used to sit there herself, regular as Sunday come." And Mrs. Patton looked for a minute as if she were going to cry, but she changed her mind upon second thought.

"Your mother gave me most of Miss Katharine's clothes; this cap belonged to her, that I've got on now; it's 'most wore out, but

it does for mornings."

"O," said Kate, "I have two new ones for you in one of my trunks! Mamma meant to choose them herself, but she had not time, and so she told me, and I think I found the kind she thought you would like."

"Now I'm sure!" said Mrs. Patton, "if that ain't kind; you don't tell me that Mis' Lancaster thought of me just as she was going off? I shall set everything by them caps, and I'm much obliged to you too, Miss Kate. I was just going to speak of that time you were here and saw the mug; you trimmed a cap for Miss Katharine to give me, real Boston style. I guess that box of cap-fixings is up on the top shelf of Miss Katharine's closet now, to the left hand," said Mrs. Patton, with wistful certainty. "She used to make her every-day caps herself, and she had some beautiful materials laid away that she never used. Some folks has laughed at me for being so particular 'bout wearing caps except for best, but I don't know's it's presuming beyond my station, and somehow I feel more respect for myself when I have a good cap on. I can't get over your mother's rec'lecting about me; and she sent me a handsome present o' money this spring for looking after the house. I never should have asked for a cent; it's a pleasure to me to keep an eye on it, out o' respect to your aunt. I was so pleased when I heard you were coming long o' your friend. I like to see the old place open; it was about as bad as having no meeting. I miss seeing the lights, and your aunt was a great hand for lighting up bright; the big hall lantern was lit every night, and she put it

out when she went up stairs. She liked to go round same's if it was day. You see I forget all the time she was sick, and go back to the days when she was well and about the house. When her mind was failing her, and she was up stairs in her room, her eyesight seemed to be lost part of the time, and sometimes she'd tell us to get the lamp and a couple o' candles in the middle o' the day, and then she'd be as satisfied! But she used to take a notion to set in the dark, some nights, and think, I s'pose. I should have forty fits, if I undertook it. That was a good while ago; and do you rec'lect how she used to play the piano? She used to be a great hand to play when she was young."

"Indeed I remember it," said Kate, who told me afterward how her aunt used to sit at the piano in the twilight and play to herself. "She was formerly a skilful musician," said my friend, "though one would not have imagined she cared for music. When I was a child she used to play in company of an evening, and once when I was here one of her old friends asked for a tune, and she laughingly said that her day was over and her fingers were stiff; though I believe she might have played as well as ever then, if she had cared to try. But once in a while when she had been quiet all day and rather sad—I am ashamed that I used to think she was cross—she would open the piano and sit there until late, while I used to be enchanted by her memories of dancing-tunes, and old psalms, and marches and songs. There was one tune which I am sure had a history: there was a sweet wild cadence in it, and she would come back to it again and again, always going through

with it in the same measured way. I have remembered so many things about my aunt since I have been here," said Kate, "which I hardly noticed and did not understand when they happened. I was afraid of her when I was a little girl, but I think if I had grown up sooner, I should have enjoyed her heartily. It never used to occur to me that she had a spark of tenderness or of sentiment, until just before she was ill, but I have been growing more fond of her ever since. I might have given her a great deal more pleasure. It was not long after I was through school that she became so feeble, and of course she liked best having mamma come to see her; one of us had to be at home. I have thought lately how careful one ought to be, to be kind and thoughtful to one's old friends. It is so soon too late to be good to them, and then one is always so sorry."

I must tell you more of Mrs. Patton; of course it was not long before we returned her call, and we were much entertained; we always liked to see our friends in their own houses. Her house was a little way down the road, unpainted and gambrel-roofed, but so low that the old lilac-bushes which clustered round it were as tall as the eaves. The Widow Jim (as nearly every one called her in distinction to the widow Jack Patton, who was a tailoress and lived at the other end of the town) was a very useful person. I suppose there must be her counterpart in all old New England villages. She sewed, and she made elaborate rugs, and she had a decided talent for making carpets,—if there were one to be made, which must have happened seldom. But there were a great many to be turned and made over in Deephaven, and

she went to the Carews' and Lorimers' at house-cleaning time or in seasons of great festivity. She had no equal in sickness, and knew how to brew every old-fashioned dose and to make every variety of herb-tea, and when her nursing was put to an end by her patient's death, she was commander-in-chief at the funeral, and stood near the doorway to direct the mourning friends to their seats; and I have no reason to doubt that she sometimes even had the immense responsibility of making out the order of the procession, since she had all genealogy and relationship at her tongue's end. It was an awful thing in Deephaven, we found, if the precedence was wrongly assigned, and once we chanced to hear some bitter remarks because the cousins of the departed wife had been placed after the husband's relatives,—"the blood-relations ridin' behind them that was only kin by marriage! I don't wonder they felt hurt!" said the person who spoke; a most unselfish and unassuming soul, ordinarily.

Mrs. Patton knew everybody's secrets, but she told them judiciously if at all. She chattered all day to you as a sparrow twitters, and you did not tire of her; and Kate and I were never more agreeably entertained than when she told us of old times and of Kate's ancestors and their contemporaries; for her memory was wonderful, and she had either seen everything that had happened in Deephaven for a long time, or had received the particulars from reliable witnesses. She had known much trouble; her husband had been but small satisfaction to her, and it was not to be wondered at if she looked upon all proposed marriages

with compassion. She was always early at church, and she wore the same bonnet that she had when Kate was a child; it was such a well-preserved, proper black straw bonnet, with discreet bows of ribbon, and a useful lace veil to protect it from the weather.

She showed us into the best room the first time we went to see her. It was the plainest little room, and very dull, and there was an exact sufficiency about its furnishings. Yet there was a certain dignity about it; it was unmistakably a best room, and not a place where one might make a litter or carry one's every-day work. You felt at once that somebody valued the prim old-fashioned chairs, and the two half-moon tables, and the thin carpet, which must have needed anxious stretching every spring to make it come to the edge of the floor. There were some mourning-pieces by way of decoration, inscribed with the names of Mrs. Patton's departed friends,—two worked in crewel to the memory of her father and mother, and two paper memorials, with the woman weeping under the willow at the side of a monument. They were all brown with age; and there was a sampler beside, worked by "Judith Beckett, aged ten," and all five were framed in slender black frames and hung very high on the walls. There was a rocking-chair which looked as if it felt too grand for use, and considered itself imposing. It tilted far back on its rockers, and was bent forward at the top to make one's head uncomfortable. It need not have troubled itself; nobody would ever wish to sit there. It was such a big rocking-chair, and Mrs. Patton was proud of it; always generously urging her guests to enjoy its comfort,

which was imaginary with her, as she was so short that she could hardly have climbed into it without assistance.

Mrs. Patton was a little ceremonious at first, but soon recovered herself and told us a great deal which we were glad to hear. I asked her once if she had not always lived at Deephaven. "Here and beyond East Parish," said she. "Mr. Patton,—that was my husband,—he owned a good farm there when I married him, but I come back here again after he died; place was all mortgaged. I never got a cent, and I was poorer than when I started. I worked harder 'n ever I did before or since to keep things together, but 't wasn't any kind o' use. Your mother knows all about it, Miss Kate,"—as if we might not be willing to believe it on her authority. "I come back here a widow and destitute, and I tell you the world looked fair to me when I left this house first to go over there. Don't you run no risks, you're better off as you be, dears. But land sakes alive, 'he' didn't mean no hurt! and he set everything by me when he was himself. I don't make no scruples of speaking about it, everybody knows how it was, but I did go through with everything. I never knew what the day would bring forth," said the widow, as if this were the first time she had had a chance to tell her sorrows to a sympathizing audience. She did not seem to mind talking about the troubles of her married life any more than a soldier minds telling the story of his campaigns, and dwells with pride on the worst battle of all.

Her favorite subject always was Miss Brandon, and after a pause she said that she hoped we were finding everything right

in the house; she had meant to take up the carpet in the best spare room, but it didn't seem to need it; it was taken up the year before, and the room had not been used since, there was not a mite of dust under it last time. And Kate assured her, with an appearance of great wisdom, that she did not think it could be necessary at all.

"I come home and had a good cry yesterday after I was over to see you," said Mrs. Patton, and I could not help wondering if she really could cry, for she looked so perfectly dried up, so dry that she might rustle in the wind. "Your aunt had been failin' so long that just after she died it was a relief, but I've got so's to forget all about that, and I miss her as she used to be; it seemed as if you had stepped into her place, and you look some as she used to when she was young."

"You must miss her," said Kate, "and I know how much she used to depend upon you. You were very kind to her."

"I sat up with her the night she died," said the widow, with mournful satisfaction. "I have lived neighbor to her all my life except the thirteen years I was married, and there wasn't a week I wasn't over to the great house except I was off to a distance taking care of the sick. When she got to be feeble she always wanted me to 'tend to the cleaning and to see to putting the canopies and curtains on the bedsteads, and she wouldn't trust nobody but me to handle some of the best china. I used to say, 'Miss Katharine, why don't you have some young folks come and stop with you? There's Mis' Lancaster's daughter a growing up'; but she didn't

seem to care for nobody but your mother. You wouldn't believe what a hand she used to be for company in her younger days. Surprisin' how folks alters. When I first rec'lect her much she was as straight as an arrow, and she used to go to Boston visiting and come home with the top of the fashion. She always did dress elegant. It used to be gay here, and she was always going down to the Lorimers' or the Carews' to tea, and they coming here. Her sister was married; she was a good deal older; but some of her brothers were at home. There was your grandfather and Mr. Henry. I don't think she ever got it over,—his disappearing so. There were lots of folks then that's dead and gone, and they used to have their card-parties, and old Cap'n Manning—he's dead and gone—used to have 'em all to play whist every fortnight, sometimes three or four tables, and they always had cake and wine handed round, or the cap'n made some punch, like's not, with oranges in it, and lemons; *he* knew how! He was a bachelor to the end of his days, the old cap'n was, but he used to entertain real handsome. I rec'lect one night they was a playin' after the wine was brought in, and he upset his glass all over Miss Martha Lorimer's invisible-green watered silk, and spoilt the better part of two breadths. She sent right over for me early the next morning to see if I knew of anything to take out the spots, but I didn't, though I can take grease out o' most any material. We tried clear alcohol, and saleratus-water, and hartshorn, and pouring water through, and heating of it, and when we got through it was worse than when we started. She felt dreadful bad about it, and at last

she says, 'Judith, we won't work over it any more, but if you 'll give me a day some time or 'nother, we'll rip it up and make a quilt of it.' I see that quilt last time I was in Miss Rebecca's north chamber. Miss Martha was her aunt; you never saw her; she was dead and gone before your day. It was a silk old Cap'n Peter Lorimer, her brother, who left 'em his money, brought home from sea, and she had worn it for best and second best eleven year. It looked as good as new, and she never would have ripped it up if she could have matched it. I said it seemed to be a shame, but it was a curi's figure. Cap'n Manning fetched her one to pay for it the next time he went to Boston. She didn't want to take it, but he wouldn't take no for an answer; he was free-handed, the cap'n was. I helped 'em make it 'long of Mary Ann Simms the dressmaker,—she's dead and gone too,—the time it was made. It was brown, and a beautiful-looking piece, but it wore shiny, and she made a double-gown of it before she died."

Mrs. Patton brought Kate and me some delicious old-fashioned cake with much spice in it, and told us it was made by old Mrs. Chantrey Brandon's receipt which she got in England, that it would keep a year, and she always kept a loaf by her, now that she could afford it; she supposed we knew Miss Katharine had named her in her will long before she was sick. "It has put me beyond fear of want," said Mrs. Patton. "I won't deny that I used to think it would go hard with me when I got so old I couldn't earn my living. You see I never laid up but a little, and it's hard for a woman who comes of respectable folks to be a pauper in her

last days; but your aunt, Miss Kate, she thought of it too, and I'm sure I'm thankful to be so comfortable, and to stay in my house, which I couldn't have done, like's not. Miss Rebecca Lorimer said to me after I got news of the will, 'Why, Mis' Patton, you don't suppose your friends would ever have let you want!' And I says, 'My friends are kind,—the Lord bless 'em!—but I feel better to be able to do for myself than to be beholden.'"

After this long call we went down to the post-office, and coming home stopped for a while in the old burying-ground, which we had noticed the day before; and we sat for the first time on the great stone in the wall, in the shade of a maple-tree, where we so often waited afterward for the stage to come with the mail, or rested on our way home from a walk. It was a comfortable perch; we used to read our letters there, I remember.

I must tell you a little about the Deephaven burying-ground, for its interest was inexhaustible, and I do not know how much time we may have spent in reading the long epitaphs on the grave-stones and trying to puzzle out the inscriptions, which were often so old and worn that we could only trace a letter here and there. It was a neglected corner of the world, and there were straggling sumachs and acacias scattered about the enclosure, while a row of fine old elms marked the boundary of two sides. The grass was long and tangled, and most of the stones leaned one way or the other, and some had fallen flat. There were a few handsome old family monuments clustered in one corner, among which the one that marked Miss Brandon's grave looked so new and fresh

that it seemed inappropriate. "It should have been dingy to begin with, like the rest," said Kate one day; "but I think it will make itself look like its neighbors as soon as possible."

There were many stones which were sacred to the memory of men who had been lost at sea, almost always giving the name of the departed ship, which was so kept in remembrance; and one felt as much interest in the ship Starlight, supposed to have foundered off the Cape of Good Hope, as in the poor fellow who had the ill luck to be one of her crew. There were dozens of such inscriptions, and there were other stones perpetuating the fame of Honourable gentlemen who had been members of His Majesty's Council, or surveyors of His Majesty's Woods, or King's Officers of Customs for the town of Deephaven. Some of the epitaphs were beautiful, showing that tenderness for the friends who had died, that longing to do them justice, to fully acknowledge their virtues and dearness, which is so touching, and so unmistakable even under the stiff, quaint expressions and formal words which were thought suitable to be chiselled on the stones, so soon to be looked at carelessly by the tearless eyes of strangers. We often used to notice names, and learn their history from the old people whom we knew, and in this way we heard many stories which we never shall forget. It is wonderful, the romance and tragedy and adventure which one may find in a quiet old-fashioned country town, though to heartily enjoy the everyday life one must care to study life and character, and must find pleasure in thought and observation of simple things, and have an

instinctive, delicious interest in what to other eyes is unflavored dulness.

To go back to Mrs. Patton; on our way home, after our first call upon her, we stopped to speak to Mrs. Dockum, who mentioned that she had seen us going in to the "Widow Jim's."

"Willin' woman," said Mrs. Dockum, "always been respected; got an uncommon facility o' speech. I never saw such a hand to talk, but then she has something to say, which ain't the case with everybody. Good neighbor, does according to her means always. Dreadful tough time of it with her husband, shif'less and drunk all his time. Noticed that dent in the side of her forehead, I s'pose? That's where he liked to have killed her; slung a stone bottle at her."

"*What!*" said Kate and I, very much shocked.

"She don't like to have it inquired about; but she and I were sitting up with 'Manda Damer one night, and she gave me the particulars. I knew he did it, for she had a fit o' sickness afterward. Had sliced cucumbers for breakfast that morning; he was very partial to them, and he wanted some vinegar. Happened to be two bottles in the cellar-way; were just alike, and one of 'em was vinegar and the other had sperrit in it at haying-time. He takes up the wrong one and pours on quick, and out come the hayseed and flies, and he give the bottle a sling, and it hit her there where you see the scar; might put the end of your finger into the dent. He said he meant to break the bottle ag'in the door, but it went slant-wise, sort of. I don' know, I'm sure" (meditatively).

"She said he was good-natured; it was early in the mornin', and he hadn't had time to get upset; but he had a high temper naturally, and so much drink hadn't made it much better. She had good prospects when she married him. Six-foot-two and red cheeks and straight as a Norway pine; had a good property from his father, and his mother come of a good family, but he died in debt; drank like a fish. Yes, 'twas a shame, nice woman; good consistent church-member; always been respected; useful among the sick."

Deephaven Society

It was curious to notice, in this quaint little fishing-village by the sea, how clearly the gradations of society were defined. The place prided itself most upon having been long ago the residence of one Governor Chantrey, who was a rich shipowner and East India merchant, and whose fame and magnificence were almost fabulous. It was a never-ceasing regret that his house should have burned down after he died, and there is no doubt that if it were still standing it would rival any ruin of the Old World.

The elderly people, though laying claim to no slight degree of present consequence, modestly ignored it, and spoke with pride of the grand way in which life was carried on by their ancestors, the Deephaven families of old times. I think Kate and I were assured at least a hundred times that Governor Chantrey kept a valet, and his wife, Lady Chantrey, kept a maid, and that the governor had an uncle in England who was a baronet; and I believe this must have been why our friends felt so deep an interest in the affairs of the English nobility: they no doubt felt themselves entitled to seats near the throne itself. There were formerly five families who kept their coaches in Deephaven; there were balls at the governor's, and regal entertainments at other of the grand mansions; there is not a really distinguished person in the country who will not prove to have been directly or indirectly connected with Deephaven. We

were shown the cellar of the Chantrey house, and the terraces, and a few clumps of lilacs, and the grand rows of elms. There are still two of the governor's warehouses left, but his ruined wharves are fast disappearing, and are almost deserted, except by small barefooted boys who sit on the edges to fish for sea-perch when the tide comes in. There is an imposing monument in the burying-ground to the great man and his amiable consort. I am sure that if there were any surviving relatives of the governor they would receive in Deephaven far more deference than is consistent with the principles of a republican government; but the family became extinct long since, and I have heard, though it is not a subject that one may speak of lightly, that the sons were unworthy their noble descent and came to inglorious ends.

There were still remaining a few representatives of the old families, who were treated with much reverence by the rest of the townspeople, although they were, like the conies of Scripture, a feeble folk.

Deephaven is utterly out of fashion. It never recovered from the effects of the embargo of 1807, and a sand-bar has been steadily filling in the mouth of the harbor. Though the fishing gives what occupation there is for the inhabitants of the place, it is by no means sufficient to draw recruits from abroad. But nobody in Deephaven cares for excitement, and if some one once in a while has the low taste to prefer a more active life, he is obliged to go elsewhere in search of it, and is spoken of afterward with kind pity. I well remember the Widow Moses said to me, in

speaking of a certain misguided nephew of hers, "I never could see what could 'a' sot him out to leave so many privileges and go way off to Lynn, with all them children too. Why, they lived here no more than a cable's length from the meetin'-house!"

There were two schooners owned in town, and 'Bijah Mauley and Jo Sands owned a trawl. There were some schooners and a small brig slowly going to pieces by the wharves, and indeed all Deephaven looked more or less out of repair. All along shore one might see dories and wherries and whale-boats, which had been left to die a lingering death. There is something piteous to me in the sight of an old boat. If one I had used much and cared for were past its usefulness, I should say good by to it, and have it towed out to sea and sunk; it never should be left to fall to pieces above high-water mark.

Even the commonest fishermen felt a satisfaction, and seemed to realize their privilege, in being residents of Deephaven; but among the nobility and gentry there lingered a fierce pride in their family and town records, and a hardly concealed contempt and pity for people who were obliged to live in other parts of the world. There were acknowledged to be a few disadvantages,—such as living nearly a dozen miles from the railway,—but, as Miss Honora Carew said, the tone of Deephaven society had always been very high, and it was very nice that there had never been any manufacturing element introduced. She could not feel too grateful, herself, that there was no disagreeable foreign population.

"But," said Kate one day, "wouldn't you like to have some pleasant new people brought into town?"

"Certainly, my dear," said Miss Honora, rather doubtfully; "I have always been public-spirited; but then, we always have guests in summer, and I am growing old. I should not care to enlarge my acquaintance to any great extent." Miss Honora and Mrs. Dent had lived gay lives in their younger days, and were interested and connected with the outside world more than any of our Deephaven friends; but they were quite contented to stay in their own house, with their books and letters and knitting, and they carefully read *Littell* and "the new magazine," as they called the *Atlantic*.

The Carews were very intimate with the minister and his sister, and there were one or two others who belonged to this set. There was Mr. Joshua Dorsey, who wore his hair in a queue, was very deaf, and carried a ponderous cane which had belonged to his venerated father,—a much taller man than he. He was polite to Kate and me, but we never knew him much. He went to play whist with the Carews every Monday evening, and commonly went out fishing once a week. He had begun the practice of law, but he had lost his hearing, and at the same time his lady-love had inconsiderately fallen in love with somebody else; after which he retired from active business life. He had a fine library, which he invited us to examine. He had many new books, but they looked shockingly overdressed, in their fresher bindings, beside the old brown volumes of essays and sermons, and lighter works

in many-volume editions.

A prominent link in society was Widow Tully, who had been the much-respected housekeeper of old Captain Manning for forty years. When he died he left her the use of his house and family pew, besides an annuity. The existence of Mr. Tully seemed to be a myth. During the first of his widow's residence in town she had been much affected when obliged to speak of him, and always represented herself as having seen better days and as being highly connected. But she was apt to be ungrammatical when excited, and there was a whispered tradition that she used to keep a toll-bridge in a town in Connecticut; though the mystery of her previous state of existence will probably never be solved. She wore mourning for the captain which would have befitted his widow, and patronized the townspeople conspicuously, while she herself was treated with much condescension by the Carews and Lorimers. She occupied, on the whole, much the same position that Mrs. Betty Barker did in Cranford. And, indeed, Kate and I were often reminded of that estimable town. We heard that Kate's aunt, Miss Brandon, had never been appreciative of Mrs. Tully's merits, and that since her death the others had received Mrs. Tully into their society rather more.

It seemed as if all the clocks in Deephaven, and all the people with them, had stopped years ago, and the people had been doing over and over what they had been busy about during the last week of their unambitious progress. Their clothes had lasted wonderfully well, and they had no need to earn money when

there was so little chance to spend it; indeed, there were several families who seemed to have no more visible means of support than a balloon. There were no young people whom we knew, though a number used to come to church on Sunday from the inland farms, or "the country," as we learned to say. There were children among the fishermen's families at the shore, but a few years will see Deephaven possessed by two classes instead of the time-honored three.

As for our first Sunday at church, it must be in vain to ask you to imagine our delight when we heard the tuning of a bass-viol in the gallery just before service. We pressed each other's hands most tenderly, looked up at the singers' seats, and then trusted ourselves to look at each other. It was more than we had hoped for. There were also a violin and sometimes a flute, and a choir of men and women singers, though the congregation were expected to join in the psalm-singing. The first hymn was

"The Lord our God is full of might,
The winds obey his will,"

to the tune of St. Ann's. It was all so delightfully old-fashioned; our pew was a square pew, and was by an open window looking seaward. We also had a view of the entire congregation, and as we were somewhat early, we watched the people come in, with great interest. The Deephaven aristocracy came with stately step up the aisle; this was all the chance there was for displaying their

unquestioned dignity in public.

Many of the people drove to church in wagons that were low and old and creaky, with worn buffalo-ropes over the seat, and some hay tucked underneath for the sleepy, undecided old horse. Some of the younger farmers and their wives had high, shiny wagons, with tall horsewhips,—which they sometimes brought into church,—and they drove up to the steps with a consciousness of being conspicuous and enviable. They had a bashful look when they came in, and for a few minutes after they took their seats they evidently felt that all eyes were fixed upon them; but after a little while they were quite at their ease, and looked critically at the new arrivals.

The old folks interested us most. "Do you notice how many more old women there are than old men?" whispered Kate to me. And we wondered if the husbands and brothers had been drowned, and if it must not be sad to look at the blue, sunshiny sea beyond the marshes, if the far-away white sails reminded them of some ships that had never sailed home into Deephaven harbor, or of fishing-boats that had never come back to land.

The girls and young men adorned themselves in what they believed to be the latest fashion, but the elderly women were usually relics of old times in manner and dress. They wore to church thin, soft silk gowns that must have been brought from over the seas years upon years before, and wide collars fastened with mourning-pins holding a lock of hair. They had big black bonnets, some of them with stiff capes, such as Kate and I had

not seen before since our childhood. They treasured large rusty lace veils of scraggly pattern, and wore sometimes, on pleasant Sundays, white China-crape shawls with attenuated fringes; and there were two or three of these shawls in the congregation which had been dyed black, and gave an aspect of meekness and general unworthiness to the aged wearer, they clung and drooped about the figure in such a hopeless way. We used to notice often the most interesting scarfs, without which no Deephaven woman considered herself in full dress. Sometimes there were red India scarfs in spite of its being hot weather; but our favorite ones were long strips of silk, embroidered along the edges and at the ends with dismal-colored floss in odd patterns. I think there must have been a fashion once, in Deephaven, of working these scarfs, and I should not be surprised to find that it was many years before the fashion of working samplers came about. Our friends always wore black mitts on warm Sundays, and many of them carried neat little bags of various designs on their arms, containing a precisely folded pocket-handkerchief, and a frugal lunch of caraway seeds or red and white peppermints. I should like you to see, with your own eyes, Widow Ware and Miss Exper'ence Hull, two old sisters whose personal appearance we delighted in, and whom we saw feebly approaching down the street this first Sunday morning under the shadow of the two last members of an otherwise extinct race of parasols.

There were two or three old men who sat near us. They were sailors,—there is something unmistakable about a sailor,—and

they had a curiously ancient, uncanny look, as if they might have belonged to the crew of the Mayflower, or even have cruised about with the Northmen in the times of Harold Harfager and his comrades. They had been blown about by so many winter winds, so browned by summer suns, and wet by salt spray, that their hands and faces looked like leather, with a few deep folds instead of wrinkles. They had pale blue eyes, very keen and quick; their hair looked like the fine sea-weed which clings to the kelp-roots and mussel-shells in little locks. These friends of ours sat solemnly at the heads of their pews and looked unflinchingly at the minister, when they were not dozing, and they sang with voices like the howl of the wind, with an occasional deep note or two.

Have you never seen faces that seemed old-fashioned? Many of the people in Deephaven church looked as if they must be—if not supernaturally old—exact copies of their remote ancestors. I wonder if it is not possible that the features and expression may be almost perfectly reproduced. These faces were not modern American faces, but belonged rather to the days of the early settlement of the country, the old colonial times. We often heard quaint words and expressions which we never had known anywhere else but in old books. There was a great deal of sea-lingo in use; indeed, we learned a great deal ourselves, unconsciously, and used it afterward to the great amusement of our friends; but there were also many peculiar provincialisms, and among the people who lived on the lonely farms inland we

often noticed words we had seen in Chaucer, and studied out at school in our English literature class. Everything in Deephaven was more or less influenced by the sea; the minister spoke oftenest of Peter and his fishermen companions, and prayed most earnestly every Sunday morning for those who go down to the sea in ships. He made frequent allusions and drew numberless illustrations of a similar kind for his sermons, and indeed I am in doubt whether, if the Bible had been written wholly in inland countries, it would have been much valued in Deephaven.

The singing was very droll, for there was a majority of old voices, which had seen their best days long before, and the bass-viol was excessively noticeable, and apt to be a little ahead of the time the singers kept, while the violin lingered after. Somewhere on the other side of the church we heard an acute voice which rose high above all the rest of the congregation, sharp as a needle, and slightly cracked, with a limitless supply of breath. It rose and fell gallantly, and clung long to the high notes of Dundee. It was like the wail of the banshee, which sounds clear to the fated hearer above all other noises. We afterward became acquainted with the owner of this voice, and were surprised to find her a meek widow, who was like a thin black beetle in her pathetic cypress veil and big black bonnet. She looked as if she had forgotten who she was, and spoke with an apologetic whine; but we heard she had a temper as high as her voice, and as much to be dreaded as the equinoctial gale.

Near the church was the parsonage, where Mr. Lorimer lived,

and the old Lorimer house not far beyond was occupied by Miss Rebecca Lorimer. Some stranger might ask the question why the minister and his sister did not live together, but you would have understood it at once after you had lived for a little while in town. They were very fond of each other, and the minister dined with Miss Rebecca on Sundays, and she passed the day with him on Wednesdays, and they ruled their separate households with decision and dignity. I think Mr. Lorimer's house showed no signs of being without a mistress, any more than his sister's betrayed the want of a master's care and authority.

The Carews were very kind friends of ours, and had been Miss Brandon's best friends. We heard that there had always been a coolness between Miss Brandon and Miss Lorimer, and that, though they exchanged visits and were always polite, there was a chill in the politeness, and one would never have suspected them of admiring each other at all. We had the whole history of the trouble, which dated back scores of years, from Miss Honora Carew, but we always took pains to appear ignorant of the feud, and I think Miss Lorimer was satisfied that it was best not to refer to it, and to let bygones be bygones. It would not have been true Deephaven courtesy to prejudice Kate against her grand-aunt, and Miss Rebecca cherished her dislike in silence, which gave us a most grand respect for her, since we knew she thought herself in the right; though I think it never had come to an open quarrel between these majestic aristocrats.

Miss Honora Carew and Mr. Dick and their elder sister, Mrs.

Dent, had a charmingly sedate and quiet home in the old Carew house. Mrs. Dent was ill a great deal while we were there, but she must have been a very brilliant woman, and was not at all dull when we knew her. She had outlived her husband and her children, and she had, several years before our summer there, given up her own home, which was in the city, and had come back to Deephaven. Miss Honora—dear Miss Honora!—had been one of the brightest, happiest girls, and had lost none of her brightness and happiness by growing old. She had lost none of her fondness for society, though she was so contented in quiet Deephaven, and I think she enjoyed Kate's and my stories of our pleasures as much as we did hers of old times. We used to go to see her almost every day. "Mr. Dick," as they called their brother, had once been a merchant in the East Indies, and there were quantities of curiosities and most beautiful china which he had brought and sent home, which gave the house a character of its own. He had been very rich and had lost some of his money, and then he came home and was still considered to possess princely wealth by his neighbors. He had a great fondness for reading and study, which had not been lost sight of during his business life, and he spent most of his time in his library. He and Mr. Lorimer had their differences of opinion about certain points of theology, and this made them much fonder of each other's society, and gave them a great deal of pleasure; for after every series of arguments, each was sure that he had vanquished the other, or there were alternate victories and defeats which made life vastly interesting

and important.

Miss Carew and Mrs. Dent had a great treasury of old brocades and laces and ornaments, which they showed us one day, and told us stories of the wearers, or, if they were their own, there were always some reminiscences which they liked to talk over with each other and with us. I never shall forget the first evening we took tea with them; it impressed us very much, and yet nothing wonderful happened. Tea was handed round by an old-fashioned maid, and afterward we sat talking in the twilight, looking out at the garden. It was such a delight to have tea served in this way. I wonder that the fashion has been almost forgotten. Kate and I took much pleasure in choosing our tea-poys; hers had a mandarin parading on the top, and mine a flight of birds and a pagoda; and we often used them afterward, for Miss Honora asked us to come to tea whenever we liked. "A stupid, common country town" some one dared to call Deephaven in a letter once, and how bitterly we resented it! That was a house where one might find the best society, and the most charming manners and good-breeding, and if I were asked to tell you what I mean by the word "lady," I should ask you to go, if it were possible, to call upon Miss Honora Carew.

After a while the elder sister said, "My dears, we always have prayers at nine, for I have to go up stairs early nowadays." And then the servants came in, and she read solemnly the King of glory Psalm, which I have always liked best, and then Mr. Dick read the church prayers, the form of prayer to be used in families.

We stayed later to talk with Miss Honora after we had said good night to Mrs. Dent. And we told each other, as we went home in the moonlight down the quiet street, how much we had enjoyed the evening, for somehow the house and the people had nothing to do with the present, or the hurry of modern life. I have never heard that psalm since without its bringing back that summer night in Deephaven, the beautiful quaint old room, and Kate and I feeling so young and worldly, by contrast, the flickering, shaded light of the candles, the old book, and the voices that said Amen.

There were several other fine old houses in Deephaven beside this and the Brandon house, though that was rather the most imposing. There were two or three which had not been kept in repair, and were deserted, and of course they were said to be haunted, and we were told of their ghosts, and why they walked, and when. From some of the local superstitions Kate and I have vainly endeavored ever since to shake ourselves free. There was a most heathenish fear of doing certain things on Friday, and there were countless signs in which we still have confidence. When the moon is very bright and other people grow sentimental, we only remember that it is a fine night to catch hake.

The Captains

I should consider my account of Deephaven society incomplete if I did not tell you something of the ancient mariners, who may be found every pleasant morning sunning themselves like turtles on one of the wharves. Sometimes there was a considerable group of them, but the less constant members of the club were older than the rest, and the epidemics of rheumatism in town were sadly frequent. We found that it was etiquette to call them each captain, but I think some of the Deephaven men took the title by brevet upon arriving at a proper age.

They sat close together because so many of them were deaf, and when we were lucky enough to overhear the conversation, it seemed to concern their adventures at sea, or the freight carried out by the Sea Duck, the Ocean Rover, or some other Deephaven ship,—the particulars of the voyage and its disasters and successes being as familiar as the wanderings of the children of Israel to an old parson. There were sometimes violent altercations when the captains differed as to the tonnage of some craft that had been a prey to the winds and waves, dry-rot, or barnacles fifty years before. The old fellows puffed away at little black pipes with short stems, and otherwise consumed tobacco in fabulous quantities. It is needless to say that they gave an immense deal of attention to the weather. We used to wish we could join this agreeable company, but we found that the

appearance of an outsider caused a disapproving silence, and that the meeting was evidently not to be interfered with. Once we were impertinent enough to hide ourselves for a while just round the corner of the warehouse, but we were afraid or ashamed to try it again, though the conversation was inconceivably edifying. Captain Isaac Horn, the eldest and wisest of all, was discoursing upon some cloth he had purchased once in Bristol, which the shopkeeper delayed sending until just as they were ready to weigh anchor.

"I happened to take a look at that cloth," said the captain, in a loud droning voice, "and as quick as I got sight of it, I spoke onpleasant of that swindling English fellow, and the crew, they stood back. I was dreadful high-tempered in them days, mind ye; and I had the gig manned. We was out in the stream, just ready to sail. 'T was no use waiting any longer for the wind to change, and we was going north-about. I went ashore, and when I walks into his shop ye never see a creatur' so wilted. Ye see the miser'ble sculpin thought I'd never stop to open the goods, an' it was a chance I did, mind ye! 'Lor,' says he, grinning and turning the color of a biled lobster, 'I s'posed ye were a standing out to sea by this time.' 'No,' says I, 'and I've got my men out here on the quay a landing that cloth o' yourn, and if you don't send just what I bought and paid for down there to go back in the gig within fifteen minutes, I'll take ye by the collar and drop ye into the dock.' I was twice the size of him, mind ye, and master strong. 'Don't ye like it?' says he, edging round; 'I'll change it

for ye, then.' Ter'ble perlite he was. 'Like it?' says I, 'it looks as if it were built of dog's hair and divil's wool, kicked together by spiders; and it's coarser than Irish frieze; three threads to an *armful*,' says I."

This was evidently one of the captain's favorite stories, for we heard an approving grumble from the audience.

In the course of a walk inland we made a new acquaintance, Captain Lant, whom we had noticed at church, and who sometimes joined the company on the wharf. We had been walking through the woods, and coming out to his fields we went on to the house for some water. There was no one at home but the captain, who told us cheerfully that he should be pleased to serve us, though his women-folks had gone off to a funeral, the other side of the P'int. He brought out a pitcherful of milk, and after we had drunk some, we all sat down together in the shade. The captain brought an old flag-bottomed chair from the woodhouse, and sat down facing Kate and me, with an air of certainty that he was going to hear something new and make some desirable new acquaintances, and also that he could tell something it would be worth our while to hear. He looked more and more like a well-to-do old English sparrow, and chipped faster and faster.

"Queer ye should know I'm a sailor so quick; why, I've been a-farming it this twenty years; have to go down to the shore and take a day's fishing every hand's turn, though, to keep the old hulk clear of barnacles. There! I do wish I lived nigher the shore, where I could see the folks I know, and talk about what's

been a-goin' on. You don't know anything about it, you don't; but it's tryin' to a man to be called 'old Cap'n Lant,' and, so to speak, be forgot when there's anything stirring, and be called gran'ther by clumsy creatur's goin' on fifty and sixty, who can't do no more work to-day than I can; an' then the women-folks keeps a-tellin' me to be keerful and not fall, and as how I'm too old to go out fishing; and when they want to be soft-spoken, they say as how they don't see as I fail, and how wonderful I keep my hearin'. I never did want to farm it, but 'she' always took it to heart when I was off on a v'y'ge, and this farm and some consider'ble means beside come to her from her brother, and they all sot to and give me no peace of mind till I sold out my share of the Ann Eliza and come ashore for good. I did keep an eighth of the Pactolus, and I was ship's husband for a long spell, but she never was heard from on her last voyage to Singapore. I was the lonesomest man, when I first come ashore, that ever you see. Well, you are master hands to walk, if you come way up from the Brandon house. I wish the women was at home. Know Miss Brandon? Why, yes; and I remember all her brothers and sisters, and her father and mother. I can see 'em now coming into meeting, proud as Lucifer and straight as a mast, every one of 'em. Miss Katharine, she always had her butter from this very farm. Some of the folks used to go down every Saturday, and my wife, she's been in the house a hundred times, I s'pose. So you are Hathaway Brandon's grand-daughter?" (to Kate); "why, he and I have been out fishing together many's the

time,—he and Chantrey, his next younger brother. Henry, he was a disapp'intment; he went to furrin parts and turned out a Catholic priest, I s'pose you've heard? I never was so set ag'in Mr. Henry as some folks was. He was the pleasantest spoken of the whole on 'em. You do look like the Brandons; you really favor 'em consider'ble. Well, I'm pleased to see ye, I'm sure."

We asked him many questions about the old people, and found he knew all the family histories and told them with great satisfaction. We found he had his pet stories, and it must have been gratifying to have an entirely new and fresh audience. He was adroit in leading the conversation around to a point where the stories would come in appropriately, and we helped him as much as possible. In a small neighborhood all the people know each other's stories and experiences by heart, and I have no doubt the old captain had been snubbed many times on beginning a favorite anecdote. There was a story which he told us that first day, which he assured us was strictly true, and it is certainly a remarkable instance of the influence of one mind upon another at a distance. It seems to me worth preserving, at any rate; and as we heard it from the old man, with his solemn voice and serious expression and quaint gestures, it was singularly impressive.

"When I was a youngster," said Captain Lant, "I was an orphan, and I was bound out to old Mr. Peletiah Daw's folks, over on the Ridge Road. It was in the time of the last war, and he had a nephew, Ben Dighton, a dreadful high-strung, wild fellow, who had gone off on a privateer. The old man, he set everything by

Ben; he would disoblige his own boys any day to please him. This was in his latter days, and he used to have spells of wandering and being out of his head; and he used to call for Ben and talk sort of foolish about him, till they would tell him to stop. Ben never did a stroke of work for him, either, but he was a handsome fellow, and had a way with him when he was good-natured. One night old Peletiah had been very bad all day and was getting quieted down, and it was after supper; we sat round in the kitchen, and he lay in the bedroom opening out. There were some pitch-knots blazing, and the light shone in on the bed, and all of a sudden something made me look up and look in; and there was the old man setting up straight, with his eyes shining at me like a cat's. 'Stop 'em!' says he; '*stop 'em!*' and his two sons run in then to catch hold of him, for they thought he was beginning with one of his wild spells; but he fell back on the bed and began to cry like a baby. 'O, dear me,' says he, 'they've hung him,—hung him right up to the yard-arm! O, they oughtn't to have done it; cut him down quick! he didn't think; he means well, Ben does; he was hasty. O my God, I can't bear to see him swing round by the neck! It's poor Ben hung up to the yard-arm. Let me alone, I say!' Andrew and Moses, they were holding him with all their might, and they were both hearty men, but he 'most got away from them once or twice, and he screeched and howled like a mad creatur', and then he would cry again like a child. He was worn out after a while and lay back quiet, and said over and over, 'Poor Ben!' and 'hung at the yard-arm'; and he told the neighbors next day,

but nobody noticed him much, and he seemed to forget it as his mind come back. All that summer he was miser'ble, and towards cold weather he failed right along, though he had been a master strong man in his day, and his timbers held together well. Along late in the fall he had taken to his bed, and one day there came to the house a fellow named Sim Decker, a reckless fellow he was too, who had gone out in the same ship with Ben. He pulled a long face when he came in, and said he had brought bad news. They had been taken prisoner and carried into port and put in jail, and Ben Dighton had got a fever there and died.

"'You lie!' says the old man from the bedroom, speaking as loud and f'erce as ever you heard. 'They hung him to the yard-arm!'

"'Don't mind him,' says Andrew; 'he's wandering-like, and he had a bad dream along back in the spring; I s'posed he'd forgotten it.' But the Decker fellow he turned pale, and kept talking crooked while he listened to old Peletiah a-scolding to himself. He answered the questions the women-folks asked him,—they took on a good deal,—but pretty soon he got up and winked to me and Andrew, and we went out in the yard. He began to swear, and then says he, 'When did the old man have his dream?' Andrew couldn't remember, but I knew it was the night before he sold the gray colt, and that was the 24th of April.

"'Well,' says Sim Decker, 'on the twenty-third day of April Ben Dighton was hung to the yard-arm, and I see 'em do it, Lord help him! I didn't mean to tell the women, and I s'posed you'd

never know, for I'm all the one of the ship's company you're ever likely to see. We were taken prisoner, and Ben was mad as fire, and they were scared of him and chained him to the deck; and while he was sulking there, a little parrot of a midshipman come up and grinned at him, and snapped his fingers in his face; and Ben lifted his hands with the heavy irons and sprung at him like a tiger, and the boy dropped dead as a stone; and they put the bight of a rope round Ben's neck and slung him right up to the yard-arm, and there he swung back and forth until as soon as we dared one of us clim' up and cut the rope and let him go over the ship's side; and they put us in irons for that, curse 'em! How did that old man in there know, and he bedridden here, nigh upon three thousand miles off?" says he. But I guess there wasn't any of us could tell him," said Captain Lant in conclusion. "It's something I never could account for, but it's true as truth. I've known more such cases; some folks laughs at me for believing 'em,—'the cap'n's yarns,' they calls 'em,—but if you'll notice, everybody's got some yarn of that kind they do believe, if they won't believe yours. And there's a good deal happens in the world that's myster'ous. Now there was Widder Oliver Pinkham, over to the P'int, told me with her own lips that she—" But just here we saw the captain's expression alter suddenly, and looked around to see a wagon coming up the lane. We immediately said we must go home, for it was growing late, but asked permission to come again and hear the Widow Oliver Pinkham story. We stopped, however, to see "the women-

folks," and afterward became so intimate with them that we were invited to spend the afternoon and take tea, which invitation we accepted with great pride. We went out fishing, also, with the captain and "Danny," of whom I will tell you presently. I often think of Captain Lant in the winter, for he told Kate once that he "felt master old in winter to what he did in summer." He likes reading, fortunately, and we had a letter from him, not long ago, acknowledging the receipt of some books of travel by land and water which we had luckily thought to send him. He gave the latitude and longitude of Deephaven at the beginning of his letter, and signed himself, "Respectfully yours with esteem, Jacob Lant (condemned as unseaworthy)."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.