

THE WORK OF THE GOOD SAINTE ANNE



A NOVEL
OF MODERN QUEBEC
by
ANNA CHAPIN RAY

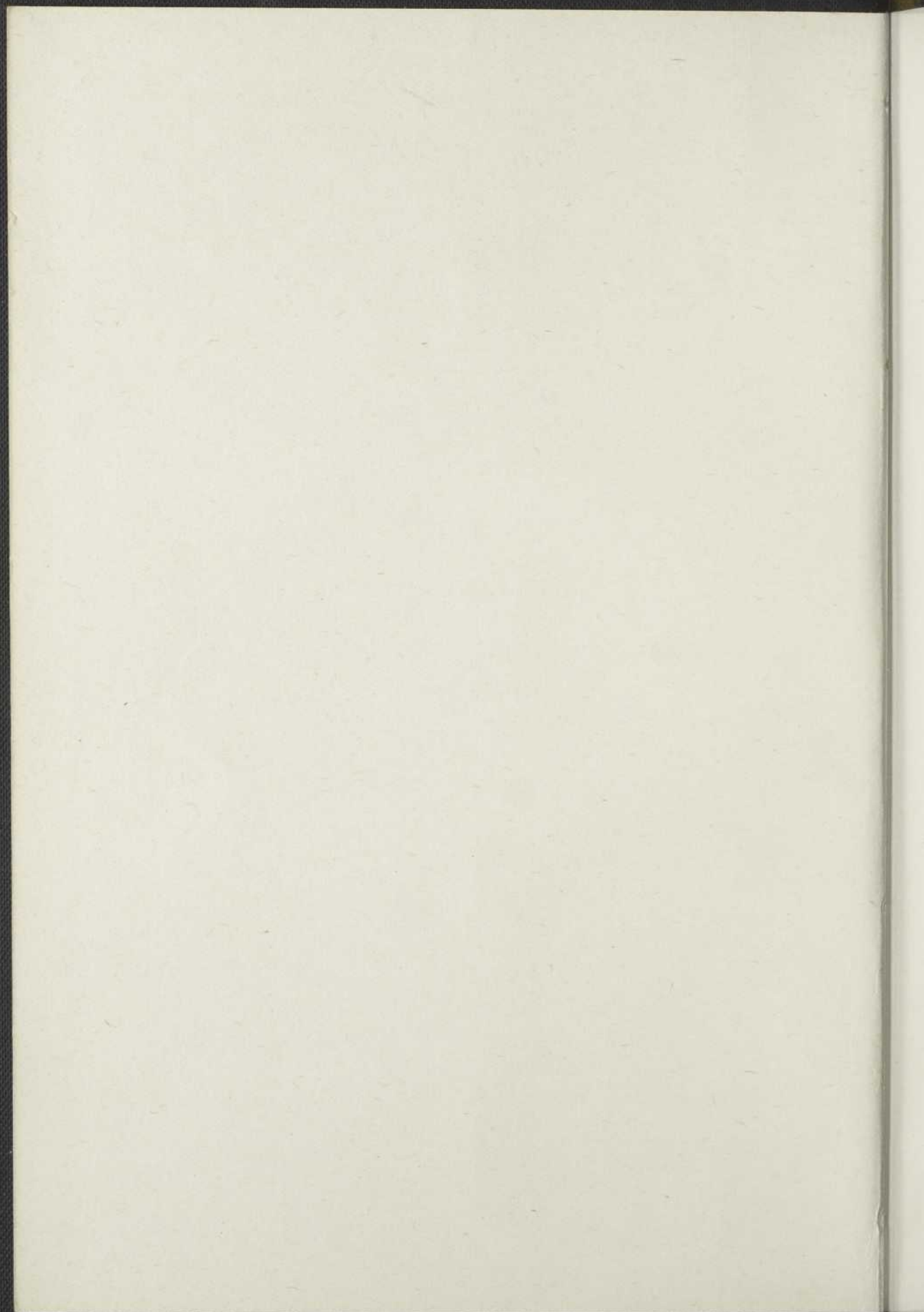
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BY

ANNA CHAPIN RAY

Author of "By the Good Sainte Anne," "Quickened,"
"The Bridge Builders," etc., etc.

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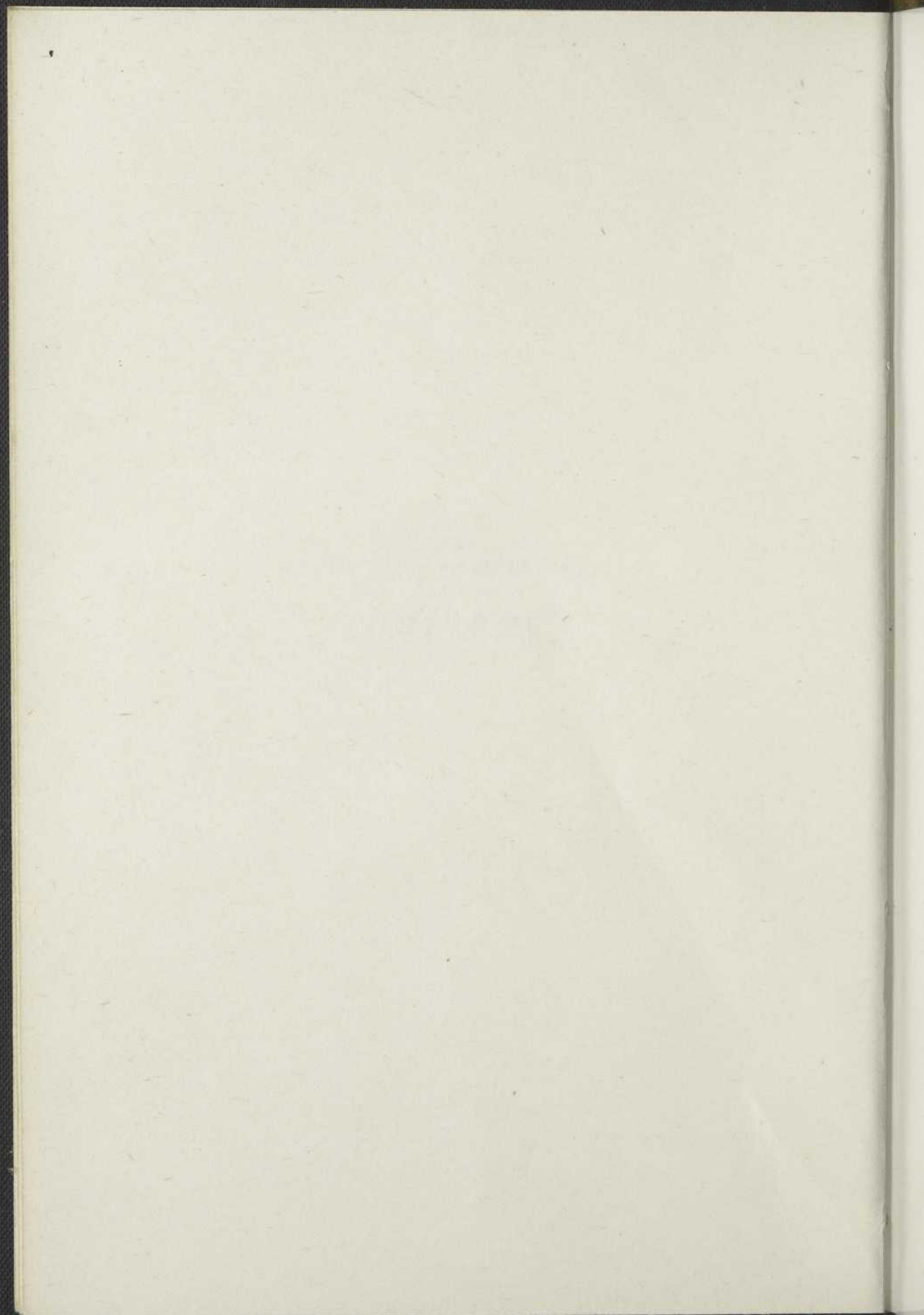
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TO
STEVIE



The Work of the Good Sainte Anne

CHAPTER ONE

CUNDIE BARTH, fitting her red-brown hat over her red-brown hair, and frowning intently at herself in the mirror while she did so, was startled by a sudden voice.

"T. D. T. D. Tee dee, Tee-dee, Teedee.
'Lit-tle drops of water,
Lit—' "

The words came with a slow, painstaking care which seemed to deafen the speaker to the fact that apparently he was addressing a man in the next county. Then the second *little* was cut in two by a sharp small click, as if something inside the speaker's mechanism had suddenly gone wrong. The click was followed by sounds of gurgling and choking. Then, —

"Oh, damn it!" came in muffled accents, which were interrupted by another click and further gurglings.

Cundie lifted her eyes. True to an unvarying custom which neither prayers nor tears

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nor bribes could break, the chambermaid had left the transom open. Evidently she had done the same thing in the room just across the little hall. The gurglings kept on, and became explicit. Cundie did the only obvious thing. She sneezed. Instantly the transom across the way banged shut. Then silence fell.

"Poor one! But whatever can be the matter with him?" Cundie asked herself, while she was putting on her coat. "But how awful to have such a neighbour! He may have an attack in the night and kill himself, or else step across the hall and murder me. And my bag. And my gloves. And the leaflet-thing they gave me in the office."

She gave herself a final look-over in the mirror, tweaked her hat to a more cocky angle, tucked in a straggling curly lock and rewarded the result with a grimace of disdain. The next minute, her door had shut behind her and she was tramping down the long green hall. Outside a door at the far end she halted and knocked.

"I'm off, Grandaddy. Any last instructions?"

The door swung open.

"Come in, Cundie. Do you really think you'd better go alone? I can take you down in the car, to-morrow."

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"Can't wait, Grandaddy, and the car would be all out of the picture, anyway. I want to make my pilgrimage by train, just as mother did, and Dad. Else, The Good Sainte Anne may not recognize me as her handiwork."

Her grandfather laughed.

"I imagine she has a fairly good memory, Cundie; and you'll be saying a thanksgiving to her, in any case. By the way, have you any silver?"

She patted her bag.

"Lots. I want to get some little things to send back home, and I'm going, even if I'm nothing but a second-generation charge, and an Anglican at that, to make my own thank-offering to her for providing me with such a satisfactory pair of parents. Just think, Grandaddy! If it hadn't been for her, I might have been descended from a barmaid who married the brewer. Besides," she laughed suddenly; "I may decide to ask her immediate help."

"Heaven forbid, Cundie! I don't want my second attempt at scientific research to be upset by having another affair on my hands."

"You made a great success of the first one, Grandaddy. However, this time I'm not asking the Saint's offices for myself; at least, not directly, although it may lead to my later peace of mind. You know that other room"

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across my little crosswise hall, the room I tried to make them clear out for you? It's really awfully close to mine; and I've just discovered there's something abnormal in there, a maniac or something. I'd feel any amount safer, if I were to put him into Sainte Anne's capable hands." Briefly she told her grandfather about the sounds that had come across the hall, and added, "How much ought I to offer for a case like this? If mother only gave two shillings for having Dad engineered into her hands, I ought to get an impersonal thing like this for sixpence at the most."

Doctor Howard shook his head.

"Don't be too lavish, Cundie, or the Saint might overdo herself and land your maniac at your feet. I'd rather hate to have my granddaughter the heroine of such a romance. All in all, I think a Yankee dime will do. But, joking apart, child, don't you really think you'd better wait till I can go down there with you? There are any number of interesting things to see to-day, right here in town; and I can keep to-morrow morning free."

"Nothing doing, Granddaddy. I can't wait. I'm in a hurry to see the place: the cottage at the top of the zigzaggy hill where you and mother boarded, and the steps where Dad fell down and broke his poor old ankle. Do you know, he says it gets very gouty now and

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then. I don't believe mother half took care of him, after all. Anyway, I want to see all the places for myself."

"But to-morrow," her grandfather urged. "I could show them all to you. We needn't take the car, unless you like it."

She cocked her brown eyes up at him, and gave him a knowing wink.

"You know you haven't any especial desire to see the place again, Granddaddy. You're only afraid I'll get into some mischief down there, the way mother did."

"Why not? You're as like each other as two peas," he confessed.

"But grown up in different pods," she retorted coolly. "Mother didn't drive a car in France for three whole years."

"You wouldn't, if I'd had the say," he told her. "I never could understand how they let a child like you do such a crazy thing."

Her chin lifted, and her brown eyes shot sparks. Not for nothing had fate, and family, endowed her with red hair. But suddenly she laughed, her passing anger quite gone away.

"How old were you, Granddaddy, when you left college and went across to China in the famine year?" she asked him. Then, without waiting for his answer, she reached up to pat his shoulder caressingly and was gone.

A minute later, though, the door opened

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again, this time without the formality of a knock.

"By the way," she added calmly; "if I find I can't get back in time for luncheon, I'll get a snack down there. Don't worry. I'll be here for dinner, anyway." This time she was really gone.

Her grandfather looked rather dazed. Then he laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"Nancy all over!" he remarked into his own ears. "Only a generation farther on."

Cundie was true to her family traditions. Twenty-four years ago that very month, her father had told her, oh, how often! he had gone straying through narrow little Trésor Lane through which the supplies had been brought from the palace below to the Château Saint Louis on the cliff, down past the grey old Basilica, and on to Palace Hill at whose foot an aged brewery stands firmly astride the older palace vaults. And then along a narrow street or two and across a wide one, attracted by the crowd of humble people climbing on board a long line of waiting cars. He had climbed, too, moved by curiosity. Cundie, following his trail with filial care, also climbed, although the curiosity was lacking, and the line of cars had shortened to one single one.

To her discomfiture, the car was crowded. Most of the seats held three; most of the other

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seats held two, and the two looked undesirable, taken as close neighbours. She halted in the aisle, hesitating between a woman with a pair of babies, and a man and woman eating a belated breakfast from a paper bag. She was just deciding in favour of the babies, when a voice cut in upon her indecision, a nice voice whose clean-shaven English sliced across the turgid babble of assorted *patois*.

"There's a seat just up here at the end of the car; that is, if you don't mind climbing over a lot of hunting traps."

She turned her head quickly, to look into a pair of brown eyes scarcely above the level of her own. Such clear, far-seeing eyes behind a pair of owlish spectacles! Otherwise, the man was nothing remarkable, just a lean, sturdy, wholesome fellow-being somewhere in the middle twenties. Then, as Cundie's eyes lowered a little, she changed her mind. His hands were as unusual as his eyes. For all their long, slim delicacy, they looked as strong as steel, as actively controlled as if they had their own especial monopoly of the workings of their owner's brain. She lifted her eyes again. All in all, the man was very likable. She remembered now that she had noticed him at breakfast. He had had the window table next their own. Now and then their glances had brushed each other across

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the shoulder of her grandfather who was embellishing his grapefruit and bacon with reminiscences of his first trip to the grey old city on the cliff.

"I'm sorry I can't make much room for you, after all," the stranger said ruefully, after he had tried in vain to balance a saddle on his kit-bag and perch his rifle on the top. "But you see there isn't a baggage car where I can put the stuff, and it takes no end of things when you're going into the bush for a week or two. Anyway, a saddle hasn't as many legs as a pair of squirming babies. Sure you are not too uncomfortable?"

His voice was friendly, companionable. His manner, as he sat down on the few inches of cane seat he had left himself, and laid his unopened paper across his knees: his manner left it to Cundie whether she would keep up the talk or no. And Cundie, whose Yankee half was always sociably inclined, and whose British half had been mellowed by her years of driving an ambulance in France, promptly annexed the opportunity.

"The real bush? Your saddle doesn't exactly — " She paused expressively.

His laugh was as nice as his eyes were.

"It does look more like the *Côte des Neiges*, I confess; but it was the best I could get in a hurry, and my leave came rather

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unexpectedly."

She had caught at the unfamiliar name.

"*Côte des Neiges!* What a darling — "

"Yes. In Montreal, you know. We used to ride all over the mountains at the back, when I was a boy at McGill. Nowadays, I do my riding differently, and I imagine I'll be most awfully saddle-sore by bedtime."

She nodded.

"I know. I used to ride, myself. Lately, though, there hasn't seemed to be much time, and one gets out of the way of it so quickly."

"You're from England." There was less of question than of statement in the words.

"Yes. It is my first visit out here, since I was a child. I used to come often. My mother was an American, and my grandfather lives in New York."

His smile delighted her, and his next words.

"That jolly old chap who was with you in the dining-room, this morning? I was at the next table and couldn't help hearing some of his talk. Isn't he great?"

"Magnificent! If you only really knew him! But," she looked at him with cordial eyes, for his appreciation of her grandfather was the short road to her friendship; "perhaps you'll meet him later, when you come back to Quebec."

"You're staying on?" Unknown to him-

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self, his voice grew eager.

"Yes, while the good weather lasts. My grandfather has been overworking — he's a doctor — and has got a blood pressure, so he has come up here to rest and to go over the old trails. And I am here to see that he does both things properly. This morning, though, I've run away and left him to his own devices. I was in a hurry to get to Sainte Anne."

"It isn't your first trip down here, then?"

"My very first one into Canada. But of course I know all about the place."

"It's very famous. I'm afraid, though, that you're a little late to see a pilgrimage," he warned her.

"No matter. I'm on a pilgrimage of my own, you see."

He looked at her in some surprise. Her manner had been distinctly secular. She laughed, as she interpreted his glance. Laughing, her dimples came, and her nose wrinkled itself adorably. Cundie would never be called handsome; but she made up for the lacking beauty by her charm.

"Yes, a very private and personal pilgrimage," she assured him. "I have to say my thanks before the Shrine."

"For a cure?"

"M — yes. For a favour, that is." Then she became confidential. "You see my father

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and mother met, down here. It was quite a romance, and ever so funny; but they always have insisted that their marriage was the work of The Good Sainte Anne, and I suppose I am a piece of it. I've always been brought up to that tradition, anyway; and, so far as my own experience is concerned, the Saint has made very good, so I've come down, my first whole day in Canada, to say my thanks."

"And ask her to keep up her benefactions?" he queried, with sudden gravity.

Again her eyes looked straight into his.

"I've never supposed Sainte Anne would be a quitter," she said, and, on her lips, the words were shorn of all irreverence.

CHAPTER TWO

A HALF-HOUR later, as Cundie looked after the vanishing car, then turned to walk across the court before the Shrine, her mind was much more occupied with her casual companion than with the actual object of her morning's pilgrimage.

"Thank you so much for giving me such a jolly ride down here," he had said, as he stepped out into the aisle to let her pass him. "It usually is a fearful bore. And perhaps, when I get back to town, your grandfather will let me look him up. My name is Stevenson," he added simply, as he held out his hand in good-bye greeting. "I'm in the forestry air service, up and down the Saguenay country, so I am up at the Château now and then between times." Cap in hand, he had waited on the rear platform until the car had vanished from Cundie's sight. In fact, it was Cundie herself who, for all her frankly obvious enjoyment of their talk, was the first to dismiss the memory of it from her mind.

Small wonder! Whatever his inherited or acquired theology, no stranger can see Sainte Anne de Beaupré for the first time without a

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quickenings pulse, especially if, as Cundie found it, parvise and church and Santa Scala chapel are thronged with pilgrims, clustering like bees around their queen. The spirit of the place sweeps over one, blinding him to the tawdry little shops, the hand barrows filled with tinsel trinkets; it forces him to do his silent homage to the tremendous faith and reverence that have built and maintained the Shrine.

It is a far cry back to the day when the bent and crippled Louis Guimont, watching his neighbours build the little chapel to their patron saint at home in France, did his painful bit by adding three small stones to the foundation wall, only to find himself upright and painless as the third little stone fell into place. Three hundred years have passed since then; church after church has been burned, and replaced by another and a larger one; but the spirit of the place has gone on, unchanging as the great river that washes its banks, as the rugged mountains that guard and shelter it behind. And the stream of pilgrims goes on, also: rich and poor, sick and well, happy and bruised of heart; and it will go on, unending as the river. And the tide of tourists will go on, too, to watch and wonder and to form their swift impressions, and every now and then to gain some steadying and help. No

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need to be a Roman Catholic, before one is allowed to say a prayer of thankfulness before the great high altar, misty with its purple flowers.

At least, it was so that Cundie found it. Instinctively she had followed a group of be-lated pilgrims into the great church and, finding an empty bench, had knelt and hidden her face for a moment, before she looked about her. Then, as she looked, her breath quickened and her cheeks flushed ruddily in sheer delight. Her years in France and Belgium had accustomed her to the churches of the continental Catholics. This was different, more vital. The very essence of it came to her from the great stalks of the purple and white Lilies of Our Lord which always veil the high altar with their living bloom. At the other end of the church, the organ was singing softly to itself, and now and then breaking out into a mighty roar of many chords. And the altar rail, gleaming with white deep-cut marble, was half concealed by kneeling figures, silent, tense, waiting. Above and behind them the gem-crowned figure of The Good Sainte Anne smiled down upon the multitude in gracious blessing. Just so, almost a quarter of a century earlier, she had smiled down on Cundie's mother and granted her favour to a frivolous request.

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For, years earlier, Doctor Howard and his gay young daughter Nancy had lived for a month on top of the hill where the Franciscan monastery now stands. To the doctor, it had been a month of monotonous, but interesting toil, for he had been digging into all the records, hunting data for his monograph on *Medicine-Giving and Miracle-Making*. To Nancy, the month had begun draggingly; then it had gone leaping to its destined finish, which was not a finish, after all, for the actual ending of the episode had not come until weeks afterward and in Quebec.

Impatiently, one day, Nancy had pledged her saintly namesake an offering if she would send something, anything to break the dull monotony of existence. An hour later, Cecil Barth, English, lonely and terribly near-sighted, had pitched headlong down from the church steps into Nancy's fostering care. The later events are a matter of public record; among them is Cundie's birth certificate. Therefore, it was the family custom to refer to her as being the work of The Good Sainte Anne. And now Sainte Anne's extremely modern piece of handiwork was come to express to her creator her satisfaction with things in general as life had shown them to her, her thanks and her meek petition that the future might keep up the golden record of the past.

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Her thanks devoutly said, and her opened eyes discovering that the pilgrims were beginning to move on, Cundie followed them to the door, then started on a tour of discovery on her own account. A good deal to her disappointment, she found her father's collection of photographs no use at all. The place had grown and changed past recognition. The river was there, and the mountains, and the long wharf and the cyclorama and the Shrine itself. But of the long, low white house on the mountain, and the zigzag road that led up to it, she could find no trace. Hunting in vain, she took a wrong turn and wandered into the packed line of little shops to the west of the Shrine. She gave a horrified glance in at the windows where Saint Anthony stood in a forest of souvenir spoons, and Sainte Anne in every size and colour presided over medleys of thin little guide books, and prayer beads, and picture postcards of the most secular description. Turning sharply, she went back to the Shrine and started down the road in the other direction.

It was better there. Outside the cemetery gate, the handbarrows of souvenirs were glittering in the September sun. Beside them sat their owners, swaddled in winter wraps, and cajoling or threatening according to their several natures. Inside the barrows was a

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muddle of sacred and secular trinkets, for the order and quiet dignity of the Church stores across the way have never been favourite models for those who sell outside.

Beyond the barrows, a little thread of water spilling itself into a narrow basin caught Cundie's eye. A throng of pilgrims surrounded it, catching it in little cups to drink, filling little bottles with it to carry it away, or even patting little handfuls of it on themselves as they bent forward over the stone basin, careful that nothing should be spilled upon the ground.

"What is that water?" Cundie asked the world at large, speaking in the French that had become her second nature.

The pilgrims nearest her regarded her stolidly. Some shook their heads. Some merely shrugged, and turned away. Cundie tried again; in English, this time. No better success met her second effort. Cundie was puzzled. These people were not dumb; neither were they Czecho-Slovaks. They were certainly speaking French, although with differences. At least, for the most part. Here and there she caught a phrase as purely spoken as anything she might have heard on the Rue de Rivoli. Once more she tried her French. Once more it was ignored.

At first, she had put the question idly, not

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caring much whether it was answered or not. But this stolid disregard annoyed her; it increased tenfold her wish for information. The pilgrims failing her, she stepped back to the nearest barrow and tried again. A flashing smile met her questioning one, and then the swift reply that the smallest medals were two for five; but mademoiselle would be far better satisfied with a plaster copy of the miraculous statue for fifty. Or else, one of the Sainte Anne rosaries for a dollar and a half. Six chaplets in them, mademoiselle, and almost as large as the boa constrictor himself, and painted the colour of the river in the sun, while only ten cents extra could provide the blessing. A noble souvenir for those who wait at home!

And Cundie fled.

In her flight, she bumped headlong into a tall, lean man with country sunburn on his high cheek-bones and Fifth Avenue tweeds on his straight back. Instantly his hat came off in answer to Cundie's apologetic exclamation. Bareheaded, his hair showed light yellow, but as sunburned as his face; his eyes gleamed blue from behind his thick yellow lashes. All in all, he was so abnormally good to look at that Cundie gasped. Such visions, as a rule, were only on the movie screen. However, this man was no movie actor. Her eyes, fear-

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less and direct, swept over him appraisingly.

He had turned now, and was facing her straight, his hat once more in his hand, and his brows arching in unspoken question. He looked nice and wholesome, and Cundie's war years had taught her it was fairly safe to treat every man as a friend, even some rather unwholesome ones, till they had proved themselves the contrary of friendly. Therefore she explained herself.

"I was only asking what there is about that water in the basin that makes all the pilgrims so eager for it. Is it something sacred, do you know; or is it merely the only drinking-place that's open to them here?"

She knew her question was too wordy for an opening gambit with a total stranger; but she was too interested in the thing involved to stop to pick her words with care. Now, cutting her last phrase off short, she waited for the answer. None came. Instead, the stranger blushed violently, smiled deprecatingly and shook his yellow head.

Cundie was surprised. His face was as American as his clothes and of as good a quality. However, English failing, she tried him in French. Again the blush, again the gesture of negation; but the smile, this time, was lacking.

Cundie was perplexed. She cast her mind

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back into her school-books, and into the tongue taboo since the bad year 'Fourteen.

"*Verstehn-sie Deutsch?*" she asked him sternly, though dear knows why the sternness, as long as she had tarred herself with the same brush by digging up the almost-forgotten phrase.

This time, the blush was missing, and the stranger laughed outright, a laugh, Cundie told herself, that sounded very nice. Then, while she watched him, she saw that he was going through a curious facial contortion which ended in his hurling at her a short, uncompromising *No!* and then he swallowed, hard.

It was increasingly perplexing. At least, though, the stranger was not a deaf-mute, as she had begun to fear, and neither was he ignorant of the form and meaning of the English negative. She tried him again.

"Do you know what that water is?"

"No." Again the contortion and the swallowing.

"Oh. But perhaps you are a stranger down here, too."

The remark was sufficiently bromidic, inasmuch as no native of the place would ever clothe himself in loose-cut tweeds and an inconspicuous necktie. All in all, Cundie was not surprised that the stranger made no reply.

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She went off on a new tangent.

"Do you know where the Santa Scala chapel is?"

A taciturn stranger he was, indeed; and yet not absolutely mannerless. He turned at once and pointed down the road to the chapel, poised on the very verge of the steep hill. He dropped his hand, and moved as if to go his way; but Cundie's curiosity was piqued. Most men, whether strangers or not, had liked to talk to her. She tried once more.

"You've been there?"

He nodded, while the flush came back again, and dyed his cheekbones.

"Was it — " She hunted for a word. After all, she had no idea of the man's theology; "wonderful?"

"No." The word was accompanied by all its previous action.

"But, after all," Cundie was talking to herself now, rather than to him; "it must be rather impressive, even if you're a Methodist or a Unitarian. Just think of the work of it; pulling yourself up-stairs on your knees — I've tried it, with a hassock and the sofa — as an act of worship to your God! It may not be just the way you think he'd care to have you go about it; but it's the worship that's the main thing, just as it's the worship that counts in the *Te Deum*, when the choir

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sings off the key." She pulled herself up short. "Don't you really think so, after all?" she appealed the matter to him, her eyes once more lifted to his.

It was her eyes that did it. When Cundie looked like that, few could withstand her. The stranger started to answer with a sudden eagerness, forgetting his blush, forgetting his preliminary operations.

"Perhaps," he assented. "Only I doubt — "

What he doubted, Cundie never knew. The word was cut in two by a sharp, small click. He strangled, gulped, turned purple. Then he faced about abruptly and went hurrying away.

Cundie looked after him with eyes where merriment and pity and sheer human curiosity were about evenly mingled. Then, as she noticed the slight dragging of his foot, her face gentled.

"Shell-shock, the poor old dear!" she told herself. "And what a curious way for it to show itself! It must be something in the nerves around the upper jaw, for it's the T. and D. that throw him, every time. Now I think of it, he was practising on them, the first I heard of him. But what a funny chance that I should immediately run into him down here!"

CHAPTER THREE

CUNDIE did not get back in time for luncheon; but she had the grace to telephone. It was quite late in the afternoon when she came inside the court, and she quite expected to find her grandfather impatient about her absence. Instead of that, as she entered the lounge, she saw him sitting in a far corner and so absorbed in his talk with a tall, lean stranger that apparently he had entirely forgotten that he had ever owned a grandchild. His back was towards the door, so Cundie had time to take full note of his contented attitude, of his alertly interested air, and of the bald and greying head and the vast hooked nose of his companion. Both men looked up in surprise, when a pale grey glove went around the doctor's neck and clamped itself upon his farther shoulder.

"Well, Granddaddy, did you think I was lost?"

"Cundie!" The doctor was on his feet in an instant, the other man more slow in his surprise. "Major Davis, this is my granddaughter, Miss Barth, just out from England and seeing your country for the first time.

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Perhaps you remember my daughter Nancy, Major. She was here with me, while I was working on my monograph, you know."

"Indeed I do. And this is her daughter?" The Major was on his legs by now, showing himself as thin and dry as a grasshopper, and quite as active. "You're going to like your colonial possessions, I hope, and make a good long stay in our poor old city. I only wish you had come here when your mother did."

Cundie's reply was quite demure.

"I'm afraid that might have been a little difficult to manage, Major Davis."

"Of course. Of course. But I was only speaking as a phrase, you know. However, it's the fact. Quebec isn't the same now as it was then; and, if these vandals keep on a little longer, they'll have it made into a modern city, as bad as Montreal. Not that it wouldn't have its own advantages. We'd be rid of the tourists then."

"Don't you like the tourists, Major Davis?" Cundie was pulling off her gloves and loosening her coat, apparently intent upon her task.

As she had hoped, the Major fell headlong into her trap.

"Like them!" he exploded testily. "The good Lord deliver us! Standing on all the corners and blocking the traffic, while they point their forefingers at all the wrong things!

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And their comments! And the way they stare at us, as if we were Bushmen or E'skimos! And cramming the fine old Château till it has to tear down its precious little red bridge, and stick a New York skyscraper up on end in the court like a fork in a baked potato, fine enough to hold the Prince of Wales!"

His accent was adorable, Scotch-like and yet not wholly Scotch. His temper was adorable, too, and the medley of his metaphors. Cundie made no attempt to sort them out. She was too anxious to spring her trap.

"But we are tourists, you know, Granddaddy and I," she reminded him in a meek little voice.

The Major dodged very nimbly, considering his years.

"Not at all, my dear young lady; you are students. And what is more, if you will stay here for a month or two, I promise you'll find out more about Champlain and Jacques Cartier and General Wolfe than you ever learned in school." Above his beaky nose, his keen grey eyes gazed down on her benevolently.

"I'm afraid I don't know much about Jacques Cartier, nor about Champlain except that he had a lake named for him; but Wolfe fought the Battle of the Plains and had red hair like mine," she confessed, laughing at her own ignorance.

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"And said, 'They flee! They flee! I die content'," the Major added, and the fine old shoulders stiffened with the words.

Cundie's laugh became a trifle scornful.

"Oh, do they still tell that old fable? I remember reading it in school."

The old soldier stared down at her in a grave rebuke which suddenly made Cundie feel quite young and small.

"No fable at all," he told her sharply. "General Nairn himself wrote it down in those exact words, in his own story of the fight. I've had the manuscript in my own hands. It's still in the old seigniorie down the river. No fable at all, but the dying words of a gallant man who was as willing to give his life for his country as Lord Roberts was himself."

Cundie's eyes snapped ominously. Lord Roberts was one of her great heroes, in no way to be compared with the far-back sentimentalist who quoted Gray's *Elegy* while he was getting his three thousand men in fighting line across the eastern edge of Abraham Martin's cow pasture. To be sure, he fought there and gained a new colony for his England, for himself death and an undying fame. But a hero of one battle only, while Lord Roberts — And he had never stooped to say "I told you so."

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Doctor Howard saw the flash in Cundie's eyes and interpreted it. It matched the flush that dyed the Major's thin old cheeks. Therefore he interposed.

"No use arguing with the Major, Cundie. I found that out, myself, twenty-five years ago. You see, he's got the facts. He's counted the best authority on Wolfe, bar none; so, if we keep still and are very meek about it, we may get him to tell us some of the things we want to know."

The compliment did its work, though only partially. The Major became more suave, though he was still unyielding.

"Any day you choose, my dear young lady; and I'll answer for your conversion before I'm through with you." Then he turned to the doctor. "And now we must be going, if you are to get into the library before it closes. Good afternoon, Miss Barth, and good hunting among our landmarks!" And, with an elaborate bow of his bald grey head, he hooked his arm into that of the doctor and marched away.

Cundie looked after him with merry eyes.

"Cranky old dear!" she said to herself. "He's a Tartar; and yet, I rather like him. Anyway, he'll keep Granddaddy content and out of mischief, while I prowls."

And prowls she did, all the next day, and for

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many days to come, now with her grandfather who delighted in showing her the historic landmarks of the famous town, now alone by herself, when she cut free from what she flip-pantly dubbed the tourist trail and poked about the city, following her own sweet will. She came back from these solitary wanderings, full of enthusiasm. Now it was the delicious little side court of the Grey Nunnery, with its many-galleried walls and its working sisters drawing water from the sunk well in the middle of the pavement. Now it was a half-hour chat with one of the nuns, a real French nun from Amiens, at the wicket of the rosy Chapel of Perpetual Adoration. Now it was from the white-walled courtyard of the Seminary whose quaint, arched gateway beside the Basilica frames the city's sweetest picture: the fine old tree in the middle, ringed with its bench where black-robed old fathers sit to watch the shadow move across the dial on the farther wall, while other, younger fathers and lanky green-sashed boys play at fives in the courts below, just as the shadow has moved and the boys have played at fives, ever since those whitened walls were young.

Cundie was peering in under the old gateway, when she heard a voice, familiar and, temporarily at least, benign.

"And so you're staring in at our pearl of

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price, Miss Barth. I might have known you'd be one of the first to find it out. As a general thing, we have to show it to visitors, and even then it sometimes falls a little flat." The Major, a pile of books under his arm and a shabby leather attaché case dangling from his hand, had halted beside her. "Come inside, where you can see it better."

"May I?"

"Why not? But come in here, first." He dived into the old grey building at the right, along a hall and up some worn-down steps into a stuffy little room. "This was Monseigneur Laval's room in his latter days," he added. "Not so many strangers see this now, and it's one of the few things that have escaped the repair shops, this and the tree outside. King Edward planted the tree when he was Prince of Wales, and the good stout bench around it has kept it from being whittled away into tourist parings. But come along. I'm on my way over to Laval to leave these books in the library. You might as well come, too, and have a look at the portraits." His tone was masterful.

Cundie promptly rebelled.

"Thank you. But I like these live boys in their long-tailed coats immensely better than dead portraits. Besides, we've got enough of those up at the Château. I'm getting in-

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digestion, trying to remember which is which, while I'm at breakfast."

The Major stopped short, eyeing her much as a police dog would eye a snappish terrier.

"My dear Miss Barth, I begin to be afraid that you are nothing but a typical tourist, after all. Do you mean you'd put those — those chromos in the same class with the Laval gallery? And do you also mean that you can't tell their names, when you must have been here now for at least ten days?"

"Thirteen," Cundie corrected him calmly. "Perhaps that's what is the matter with it. Thirteen never was my lucky number. Anyway, I may as well confess that I couldn't remember Wolfe from Laval, if it weren't for their clothes and for the colour of Wolfe's hair."

For one long moment, the Major stared down at her, dumb. Even Cundie, staring back at him impenitently, thought she began to read a sorrow back of the surprise. Was it possible that the testy old soldier loved his city and its relics so much as all that? Measured by the age and dignity of the traditions she had seen trampled to bits in Belgium, it all seemed rather piffling. And yet — it was his city, his tradition, his great love, just as it had been Cardinal Mercier's Louvain. She began to feel ashamed of her bad-mannered flippancy.

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"Really, you know," she justified herself; "my brain won't hold everything at once, Major Davis; and I've been so busy assimilating the things that happened that I've had no time to care just how the people looked."

"And even then it's not so very much that you've assimilated," the Major answered crabbedly. "Take Wolfe alone, for instance --- "

She suppressed her smile of triumph for the way he had once more fallen headlong into her trap. She had given the whole of one rainy evening to cramming guide books for this very hour. Her face was grave and very earnest, as she dropped her arms at her side, lifted her eyes to his and, heedless of passers-by, began her lesson.

"Wolfe brought his army up the river, early in the summer of 'fifty-nine, and camped on the point of the Island. The French were holding the heights of Montmorency. They had one sharp battle on the beach near the factory below the falls. Then Wolfe moved across to a camp back of Levis. He fortified the heights there, and he stayed there all that summer. Every now and then he fired on the city. Montcalm was living down on the Ramparts, in the low brown house with the big brass knocker, and they dig up balls in the back garden, even now. Then, after he had gone up and down the river, hunting a spot to

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land and take the city from the — ”

Also heedless of the passer-by, the Major clapped his hands, attaché case and all, over his ears.

“The saints be good to us, my dear young lady! Wherever did you get that — that far-rago of unrelated fact?” In his displeasure, he rolled his R’s until they drummed like a distant aeroplane.

Cundie stared at him, her jaw hanging open from her final word. And was this all she got for her hours of toil with stuffy guide books? Her sense of humour forsook her utterly. Her chin rose in the air.

“Of course,” she said, with crisp frigidity; “one can never be too sure of the authenticity of even the best authorities, certainly not when one is only a tourist, here for only a short time.” Then swiftly her accent changed from icy remoteness to sunny cordiality. “*Good morning!* Isn’t it a wonderful day?” she said effusively to the tall and sunburned man who came suddenly upon them from around the corner of the nearest fives court. “I shall have to ask you to excuse me, Major. You see, I — ” And, to the total surprise and mystification of the tall and sunburned man, she turned and walked beside him to the street.

Well out from under the old gateway, well out of range of the astonished Major’s eyes,

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she halted, turned about and offered the mystified stranger her hand. He looked down at it a little dubiously, then took her fingers into his own, rather as if they had been a codfish.

"Thank you so much for coming along in time to save my life," Cundie was saying above their touching fingertips. "That old termagant in there was just going to flay me, because I wouldn't prostrate myself on all fours before the ghost of General Wolfe."

The stranger's shoulders stiffened suddenly. His face went through its customary preparation for a speech. Then, —

"The d — " The inevitable click, the equally inevitable gurgle; and then, with magnificent force, an unexpected rally on the finish of his phrase, "—amned old scoundrel!" he said thickly, and his fingers tightened on his lifted stick.

Cundie raised her eyes in gratitude. Then she let them fall suddenly, while the scarlet dyed her cheeks. From the steps of the Quebec bank, not twenty feet away, her grandfather stood watchng her, waiting to catch her eye.

CHAPTER FOUR

“**W**HO was your nice boy, Cundie?” her grandfather asked her over the dinner table, that night. He had not put the question to her earlier. Something in Cundie’s face, when she had joined him, had warned him to let the matter rest a while.

“Boy?” Her voice was careless; her eyes were on the truffles she was fishing out of an entrée and piling tidily on the farther side of her plate.

“Man, perhaps, would be more accurate. The tall, fair one you were shaking hands with, outside the Seminary Chapel?”

“Oh, him.” Cundie retrieved the last of her truffles and laid it on the pile. “That’s my opposite neighbour.”

“The maniac?”

She nodded.

“Only that I’m coming to the conclusion that he’s sane.”

“You’ve met him, then?”

“No,” she answered, with more literalness than truth; “I’ve only bumped into him now and then. And it finally came to where I

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really had to speak to the poor man."

"Poor?"

Cundie attacked her recreated entrée with appetite. Then, when she could speak again, —

"Not his bank account, Granddaddy; something more in your line."

"What then?"

"Shell-shock, I'd say. His foot drags a little, too. Really, it's rather pitiful; he looks so strong and wiry, otherwise. It's got his speech."

The doctor all alert within him, her grandfather bent forward.

"How do you mean, Cundie? That is rather in my line, as you say."

Thankful that she was once more in safe waters, Cundie launched out into a description of the stranger's malady.

"It seems to be something that has gone wrong with his throat, and, perhaps, a little in his upper jaw. When he starts to talk, his face, all around his mouth, draws and twitches horribly. Once he gets going, it's all right."

"Nerves," the doctor commented briefly. "Iron tonics, and massage, and psychotherapy."

"It isn't all nerves, though." Cundie spoke slowly, thinking the matter out. Not only was she the grandchild of a famous doctor;

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but she had taken her V. A. D. training with honour, and had used it with skill and great enthusiasm. "There must be something wrong with the muscles. As I say, he starts off perfectly, once he gets going. Then, all of a sudden, something goes bad inside him. You really can hear it click. Then he chokes and gurgles and snuffles hideously. T. and D. seem to be his chief stumbling blocks," she added, her fork once more in her entrée.

"The dentals." The doctor pondered. "That means the tongue. Any scars on his face, Cundie?"

"N-no, I think not." Cundie searched her memory. "No. I am quite sure."

"It may be merely shell-shock, as you say. That often affects the speech, and I have seen a good many cases that involved the muscles of the face. I wish you'd introduce him to me, Cundie, when you get a chance. Is he in the dining-room now?"

"I don't see him. In fact, I'm not sure I ever have seen him down here." Cundie was trying to decide how to recover her ground with dignity, and tell her grandfather exactly the extent and nature of her knowledge of the good-looking stranger.

Her grandfather went on, quite oblivious of Cundie's mental pother.

"Well, whenever you get the chance.

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Meanwhile, I'll talk it over with Wilton, when he comes down, next week."

"Wilton?"

"The shell-shock man. But you wouldn't know so much about him in England. He is an American alienist who came up here at the beginning of the war, dropped everything and gave his whole time to the study and care of what he calls trench neuroses, though deuce knows that any number of them developed before the men got out of training-camps. Anyway, I used to know him pretty well, ten or twelve years ago; and he wrote me, the other day, that he was coming across from Ottawa, while we were up here. Meanwhile, we'll try to get to know this man, and, if it seems wise, we'll have him and Wilton for a jolly little dinner."

"Jolly! Granddaddy! A clinic, you'd better say."

Her grandfather smiled on her amicably.

"Call it a Christian Science experience meeting, if you want to, Cundie. But the trouble exists, on your own showing, and you're not a total ignoramus in medical matters."

Anxious to divert him from the subject of her neighbour, of whom she really knew so very little, Cundie played the trump card of her pack of experiences. She had been hold-

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ing it in reserve, to confound her grandfather in her inevitable hour of need.

"Rather not!" she told him with an airiness that was half pride and half bravado. "Did you ever know that I cut a man's leg off once?"

"C U N D I E !" Her confounding had been as powerful as she could have wished.

"Yes," she answered as nonchalantly as she could. "I didn't know but mother would have told you."

Her grandfather's reply shook her young nonchalance to its foundations.

"She probably hesitated about shocking me completely." The voice of the veteran practitioner was very stern.

To her own fury, the tears glittered in Cundie's eyes. Then one of them went sliding down beside her nose. Her grandfather saw it and was slightly mollified. After all, she was his Nancy's daughter, this young upstart of a V. A. D. But the medical journals had been made aware of the harm done by those same V. A. D.s in their experiments with life and limb. However, —

"Tell me about it, Cundie," he bade her more quietly. "You mustn't mind if I was upset at first. You see, I hadn't heard about it, and a child like you — "

This time, the accent on the word made it

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forgivable. Indeed, she looked a veritable child as she sat there, with her flat, wiry, little body, her sleek little head and the tear just lodged beside her nose. Then, all at once, her childishness vanished from his sight, and it was a woman who sat there, facing him, a woman and a fellow-worker, for, —

"It wasn't much of anything, Grandaddy. I'd had the stiffest sort of training, you know, and all the instruments I really needed, and there was nothing else to do."

"Tell me," he urged again, when she paused, and, this time, his tone held neither shock nor censure, only interest. "Why the only thing to do?"

Her answer came with sharp economy of words.

"Because it was the only way to get him out of it. The machine guns were playing all around him. They would have got him in another few minutes; and a dead mule was lying right across his leg."

"Machine guns?" What were you doing in a place like that?"

"I got caught there. They had taken an awful time, filling my ambulance. And then I found this man badly wounded, held down by his leg and in the middle of the range of fire. He was bleeding horribly and would have died, anyway, without an operation, so

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I took the only chance there was to get him back to the dressing-station." The fork in her hand was shaking.

"But why didn't somebody help lift away the mule?"

"Because there wasn't a living soul in sight, except my badly-wounded men in the ambulance. Not one of them was a walking case. Really, Granddaddy, there was nothing else to do, and he begged so. He even begged me to shoot him, and get it over at once." The fork steadied sharply. "That's the way I got my decoration," she added quietly.

"Your decoration? Cundie!"

"Why not. Lots of the girls got them. They didn't amount to much, just a little governmental pat on the head." And, her story ended, she went back to her entrée with unabated appetite.

"Who was he?" her grandfather asked her, after an interval of trying to hold down his pride.

She shrugged one shoulder.

"How should I know? My work was to dump him down at the dressing-station and go back for more. We never had a chance to follow up our cases. In fact, we never really wanted to. If we hadn't kept the whole thing absolutely impersonal, we'd have gone on our nerves, inside a week."

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And the doctor bowed in silence before the wisdom of his grandchild. He ate in silence for some minutes. Then, with the pertinacity which had made him one of the greatest death-fighters New York has ever known, he turned to the chubby little French waiter standing beside him, *ménu-card* in hand.

"Lachance," he queried, as he took the card; "do you happen to know the tall, thin, fair man across the little hall from Miss Barth?"

The waiter tilted his head sideways, like a very thoughtful little owl.

"No, sir. The house is so large now, and they eat down in the grill sometimes. Men are in a hurry and don't care for real service." He expanded his chest and tweaked hard at his ready-made bow tie. "Where is Miss Barth's room?" he added, rather unexpectedly, considering the absoluteness of his negative.

"Two—three—O—One."

The mild blue eyes behind the spectacles lighted with recognition.

"I know him. He is in the old house, just at the corner where the old new wing joins on. I used to go there often in the old times before the bedroom stewards had it all to do. He's a nice room with a good view of the terrace."

Cundie was the first to untangle his pro-

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nouns. She had adored the fat little man at sight, and that helped her understanding.

"It's a delightful room, Lachance; but we had to fight for it. They wanted to put us in the tower, like the princes —"

"Was he here since you came?" Lachance asked eagerly.

Again she jumped across the gulf between their meanings.

"No. He had gone. Did you see him?"

"Oh, yes. He eat down here, all the time. They made him up a dining-room on the floor where his room is; but he wouldn't eat there. He was down here at a table, just like anybody. He's a nice man."

"Always," Cundie assented gravely. "Did you serve him?"

Once more the shrug.

"No. Only Louis and the captains. Louis looked out for him; the rest of us didn't get near him. I served Sir Wilfrid Laurier, though, very many times."

But the doctor dragged him back again to the point of departure.

"Lachance, I wish you'd find out for me who is the man across from Miss Barth's room. I'd really like to know."

The little man was off like a shot, as soon as the last words were spoken. His assent came back across his shoulder.

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"All right. I'll ask about him. Louis may know, or one of the kitchen checkers, or maybe I'll find the head bedroom steward. He's generally outside there at about this time." And Lachance's wagging coat-tails vanished behind the brass-bound door. Ten minutes later, he came hurrying back again, his round face beaming. "I knew I'd get him somehow," he said, with an inimitable chuckle, as he halted beside Doctor Howard's chair. "Louis didn't know him, nor the bedroom steward; but Joe, the fellow that cooks your bacon, heard me asking. He is Selkirk. He comes here, every year or two, for a few weeks. This year, he has stayed longer. He isn't very well, this year, and he can't eat any hard things, only just soup and porridge and game pies and things like that."

"Game pies." The doctor's interruption came very thoughtfully. "Not functional indigestion, certainly, if his stomach can cope with them. It's evidently muscular, or merely nerves."

"But you can suffer horribly with merely nerves," Cundie reminded him a little shortly.

"Yes, and be horribly difficult to cure," her grandfather assented. "I rather think you may be right about it, and it's a case for Wilton, after all. The great question is how to bring it about. When does this Mr. Selkirk

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come down for his meals, Lachance?"

"He doesn't come. He eats in his room, just soft things, and wet things that he can drink out of a cup. They say he's a very polite man, even if he doesn't talk much; he comes from Boston," Lachance added. "Boston is a nice city; I've got an uncle there, and he came up to visit me, one year. Is Monsieur going to have a salad next, or just the cheese and coffee, as usual?"

And there, as the lawyers say the case rested.

CHAPTER FIVE

AND there, for several days, the case continued to rest, at least in so far as the doctor was concerned. Now and then he saw Selkirk from afar, passing swiftly through the lounge from the lift to the door and back again, striding up and down the terrace, or climbing up the glaxis. He was always alone, always in a hurry when people were about. The doctor, watching keenly, noted one reassuring fact; that Selkirk never appeared to care whether or not he was followed, never flung the over-shoulder glances to which so many nervous invalids are prone. So much, at least, was in his favour. Probably the case was curable, after all. The doctor watched him from afar, from very far, and waited for Wilton to come and advise him what to do.

Cundie, meanwhile, was meeting Selkirk rather often, for their rooms were on opposite sides of a tiny hall at right angles to the main one. She generally passed him with a friendly, casual nod. She had done her share towards brewing an acquaintance. It was Selkirk's turn now; although how it was pos-

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sible for a man to take his turn, when his bearings clicked unpleasantly each time he spoke, Cundie for the life of her could not decide. Of course, he could copy her tactics and walk up to her on the terrace and lay his hand confidently in hers. She blushed a little, in the middle of her laughter. Still, it had been worth while. How else could she have escaped from that ogre of a Major? Anyway, Selkirk must have discovered by this time that she had had no intention of kidnapping him where he stood. Perhaps it was time she relaxed a little of her gracious curtness and suggested to him that it was a very pleasant day.

And then, one very, very pleasant day, the curtness relaxed itself, and suddenly.

Cundie was at loose end, that morning. While they were at the grapefruit stage of breakfast, the doctor had been called to the telephone. He came back to the table, beaming, but rather abashed.

"I don't know what you will think of me for a cavalier, Cundie," he told her, while Lachance was pulling out his chair. "The Major has succeeded in getting the Ursuline nuns to open up those records for us. They are to be sent into the chapel at half-past ten. Of course, it's a tremendous opportunity. Do you really mind postponing our drive? If you

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do, of course — ”

Cundie laughed outright. He was so like a little boy, offering to give up his favourite knife in case of need, that she lost no time in reassuring him that she did not mind it in the least. It was the very morning for a long walk, the complex was on her, and the urge; she had an inhibition as concerned the car — and her reassurance ended in a gale of laughter. To a mood like Cundie's, urges were piffle, and complexes and inhibitions were the merest tosh.

The doctor reassured, and fed, and sent on his way rejoicing, Cundie stood long at her window, staring out at the morning and deciding what to do with it. The river looked especially entrancing, bluer even than the sky above it, and flecked with moving gold. The grey old King's Wharf, just below her window, was bordered with small ships: the massive little *Montcalm*, the *Druid* with the derricks in her bows, the lighter *Lady Grey*. Cundie had learned to know them all and to recognize the voices of their bells. Farther up the river, an ocean liner came swinging around the bend of Cape Diamond and slowed down, while she trumpeted for a pilot. The little white Sillery boat was sailing up almost into her anchor chains, while, lower down, the squat Levis ferries were just meet-

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ing in midstream. The river was very full of allure. Cundie hunted her hat and coat, determined to get on something, anything that owned a deck, and spend the morning floating on the blue and gold.

As a matter of fact, she did nothing of the kind. Outside the court, she stopped for a momentary glance up at the glacis, and that glance was fatal. There are many other rivers in existence. That long grassy slope rimmed with grey masonry and bounded with its double bastion is unique. It is impossible to ignore its invitation.

The climb was a steep one, and even Cundie was rather winded when she reached the top. Panting, she halted to look down at the distant stretch of river and mountain which falls away behind the prim old houses that face the glacis and the southern sun. Just back of the old houses, standing up like a very modern exclamation mark, was the new tower of the Château, slicing the view into two separate panels of loveliness: the great blue waterway to Europe, and the soft blue mountains, the geologic backbone of the globe. To the left, the Saint Charles valley lay basking in the sun that gilded the little houses strung along its banks and dotting the nearer hills. Then the Parliament tower cut off the view, and the rest was city.

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Cundie moved on again with some regret. Even in her short visit, she had learned that the picture was never twice alike. Sometimes the grouping of the river craft, sometimes the clouds and sun changed it completely from anything that she had seen before. Always it was lovely. Always it beckoned her to stay. However, she was out for exercise, that morning, not for scenery, so she turned away reluctantly, and started off along the path which edges the top of the glacis, turning with the angles of the citadel. Her plan was to go around the citadel to the extreme edge of the cliffs, follow them across the Cove Fields and on to the park whose modern drives and bastions cover the old rough ground where Wolfe, on another September morning, drew up his plucky little force. She intended it; but her stars, Sirius leading, willed otherwise.

She had finished the circuit of the citadel and come out on the open ground above the river, walking at a crisp, swift pace. Then she stopped again. The tumble-down houses left here and there along Champlain Street and the rotting ruins of the wharves that used to drive out boldly from the ancient timber coves: these always moved her strangely. They were such pathetic survivals of the day when Quebec was the ship-builder of all Can-

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adian trade. The craft was ended, the craftsmen dead, their memory fading; but these forlorn old hulks still guarded the old tradition, had already guarded it against the attack of one invading railway and forced it to come to naught. Nothing left but hulks, and a tradition bound to be dear to anyone who loves the sea!

Farther up the river, Sillery Point jutted out above the cove where Wolfe had made his landing. Farther still, and on the opposite shore, she could see the tip end of the monstrous bridge —

Sight was forgotten in sound, the sound that always drove Cundie to a sort of temporary madness, the sound of a dog in agony. It came from over the top of the next hummock in the Cove Fields. Its source, therefore, though near, was quite invisible. Cundie forgot the view, and the bridge, and Wolfe, and the coves, and the fact that a stiff wind was blowing, and her hat not too tight a fit. She only remembered the dog, and ran.

Moreover, Cundie was the rare exception to the general rule of womanhood. She could run. And fast.

Therefore, it was no time at all before two hulking boys looked up suddenly, at the sharp command, —

“Drop that stick! Let that dog alone, or

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I'll beat the life out of you!" For Cundie, when she saw red, was given to being explicit.

Poised on the crest above them, the two hulking boys saw a being that seemed to be all blazing eyes and tousled red hair and uplifted stout stick; a being who looked, to their first glance, a picture of wrath incarnate. They hesitated for a minute; then, measuring the inches of their antagonist and subtracting them from her temper, they decided it was safe to go back to their earlier occupation which had to do with the freedom of a forlorn and very dirty Aberdeen terrier puppy, perhaps as much as six months old. Already the puppy's back showed ridgy weals, and one forepaw was held piteously in the air; but with even less skill than mercy, they renewed their discipline.

Cundie saw. She wasted no more words, though she did stop for one prayerful instant, asking that she be kept from doing murder. The next instant, her stout cane had come down with a smashing blow upon the nearer hulking shoulder. To her later vast surprise, her foes turned and fled headlong, probably because they could not foresee the later course of a duel that began with such emphatic feinting.

And Cundie, left in possession of the field, promptly turned craven woman once more,

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and likewise fled towards safety. But, fleeing and craven, she carried the puppy, now squirming and squealing angrily, clutched under her left elbow.

She did not stop running, nor did the puppy stop his squeals until they came around the corner of the drill hall and into the comparative safety of the open square. Then unceremoniously Cundie dropped down on the drill hall steps and, still breathing hard, began to look over her captive's wounds. The captive was ungrateful. His ears lowered and six needle-pointed teeth shut into Cundie's finger, just as the door behind her banged open, and a beautifully-millinered young officer fell headlong over the unexpected human bunker in his course.

"I beg your pardon!" he said as blandly as he could, while he retrieved his cap.

Cundie was sucking her finger, and wondering whether it probably would poison her to swallow so much grime. She removed the finger long enough to say, —

"Sorry; but I couldn't help myself. I had to see how much those brutes had hurt him." Which was specific and yet a little incoherent, lacking preface. Then she clarified her meaning by unrolling the front of her coat which she had bundled around her raging captive.

The captive, his temper fairly smothered

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out of him, sat up and blinked at them in a perfect agony of self pity. Muddy from nose to tail-tip, his broad little back crisscrossed with ridgy lines which were swelling fast into a general puffiness, and his paw dangling limp, he was a sorry little picture, and Cundie felt the disgusting pain in her throat that always assailed her in the presence of infant misery.

"Show me, baby dog," she said gently. And she held out her hand.

The bleary brown eyes turned to her slowly; then, with a heavy sigh, the little Scottie placed his dangling paw in her palm, and laid his enormous head upon it, in token of his fealty. It was not till some time afterward that Cundie remembered about her hat, and also remembered how the beautiful young officer had blown his nose like Gabriel's trump, before he went his way.

Going back to the Château, Cundie spoke but once.

"I'm going to keep you, little man, and take you home to play with Rastus. We'll cure that paw of yours in no time, and make a man of you. I believe," she added thoughtfully; "I believe I'll call you Stevie. Somehow, it seems to fit." Later, though, she could not tell whatever put the name into her head; but the name stuck.

Cundie drew a long breath of relief when

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she was at last inside her room. The adventure was ended, and she could come down to practical details of soap and water, and witch hazel and Elliman for the dangling paw, and a good, fat fee for the chambermaid. As for the housekeeper, no need to question. One look into her eyes showed the kindly heart and the sensible brain behind; and, once Stevie was a little bit presentable, Cundie herself would present him to the manager and convince him that such a black little atom would be nothing but a nuisance in the baggage-room.

And Stevie, after his own great perilous adventure, followed as it was by soapsuds, and Elliman, and a broad bowl of milk, curled himself up on Cundie's rose-coloured dressing-gown and snored till the welkin rang. Quite naturally, Cundie looked forward to unmitigated pleasure in her new toy.

Just before dinner time, however, the glorious vista of her expectation lost a good share of its gilding. Earlier, Cundie, her finger on her lip, had admitted her grandfather for a private view, and had gone over to Fisher's to get a collar and leash, had come back to find her infant awake, alert, refreshed, forgetful of his paw and ready for a play. He met her on the threshold, his gauze bandage trailing behind him, the tattered ruins of a satin

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pump stretching his jaws into an unearthly grin. For one ecstatic instant, he poised himself on his hind legs and waved his paws at her. Then he dodged between her feet and out into the hall.

"Catch him! Quick!" Cundie gasped to the steps behind her, for the Château halls are an endless maze, and once the wee black morsel made his get-away, there would be scant chance of finding him before he came to harm.

The steps belonged to the chambermaid, just coming into the little hall to finish doing up Mr. Selkirk's room for the night. The room door stood open, for the maid had been called off in the middle of her duties and was on her way back to finish them. She was a young English girl, and quick-witted. Instantly she dropped to her knees, spread out her skirts across Stevie's path and shouted, —

"Whoosh!"

Stevie swerved, then dived headlong through the open door.

"We've got him! Shut the door and ask Mr. Selkirk to grab him," Cundie panted.

"Mr. Selkirk is out, Miss. He always goes for a walk," the maid panted back again.

"Catch him for me, then, there's a good girl. I'll hold the door."

The promise was superfluous. Stevie hardly had the inches to reach up to turn the knob,

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even had he had the skill.

There followed an interval of skurrying to and fro, punctuated by squeals and growls of puppy wrath. Then, —

"He won't let me touch him at all, Miss Barth," came through the keyhole.

"Just snatch wherever you can get hold of him," Cundie advised; "only be sure you don't hurt his lame paw."

From the sounds, it became evident that the snatching process was unsuccessful. The growls increased. Then, —

"I dassent, Miss," came from inside the room.

"Let me in, then," Cundie ordered, forgetful that it was she herself who held the door. "You're sure that Mr. Selkirk won't come in?"

"Certain sure, Miss. Not that he wouldn't help, if he did. He's a very nice gentleman."

"So am I a very nice lady," Cundie said grimly. "However — " And she opened the door a crack and squeezed in.

Stevie, across the room, wagged his tail in gratified recognition. Here was somebody quite unlike that grabbing chambermaid, somebody who had cuddled him, and let him sleep on her wadded dressing-gown, and generally given him his way. Then Stevie changed his mind abruptly and for cause. Growling like a little demon, he plunged under

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the bed and took up his position of defense with his back against the wall.

"Now you'll get him easy enough, Miss," the maid encouraged Cundie.

Cundie had her doubts. Her charm for the puppy seemed weakening fast. Down on her knees beside the bed, she cooed and wooed and snapped her fingers invitingly. Stevie gnashed his teeth at her in reply. The maid, also on her knees, though at a safer distance, continued her encouragement.

"You'll get him, Miss, after a minute. Just duck down your head a little more, so he can see the whole of you. Those Scotties do be awful wise. Or maybe it's the hat that frightens him with all those feathers." And then, after another interval of woosings and gnashings, "I do believe you'll have to go in after him."

Cundie hesitated. The bed was broad and low; the going in would involve an unseemly amount of squirming, and the room was not her own. The scarlet rose in her cheeks at certain of her misgivings. Then she clamped her teeth upon her sense of decorum, flattened herself on the carpet and crawled in. No matter how much she had to squirm, no matter whose the room, she was not going to give up Stevie now. Her head and shoulders under the bed, she paused to measure distances.

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Stevie measured them, too, and hitched a foot or so along his wall.

"You'll have to go a good bit farther, Miss," the maid encouraged. "If I were you, I'd turn round endwise and roll myself right in. Then you'd have him easy, squeezed in between your stomach and the wall."

The instructions vexed Cundie. However, it was no time for dignified remonstrance. She shut her teeth anew and wriggled on. Then, when only her shoes were visible, —

"Be ready to head him off, in case he dodges," she warned the steps behind her, where evidently the maid had risen from her knees. "Now!"

And so it happened that Selkirk, returning from his evening walk a little earlier than usual, stood transfixed on the threshold of his room, staring in amazement at the maid who knelt in the middle of the floor, her cheek to the ground and her fat hands buttressing her on either side; at the pair of suede pumps and silk stockings that stuck out from underneath his bed, whence came a torrent of curses in a furious puppy tongue.

CHAPTER SIX

ONCE again there was something in Cundie's manner that forbade question, when she met her grandfather in the hall, that night, ready for dinner. To her relief, her grandfather was too absorbed in an open letter in his hand to think of questions.

"From Mrs. Davis," he answered Cundie's queries.

"The Major's wife? I didn't know he had one."

"He has. Rather an entrancing one, I should say; a Victorian remnant."

Cundie's voice was thoughtful.

"I wonder how much they really do fight," she said.

"Not at all. She adores him for his virility, and he treats her like a precious bit of china, beautiful and brainless. They get on capital-ly."

"You know her, then?"

"She was very friendly to me, when I was here before. Naturally, I called on her, the other day."

"Called? And didn't take me? Why not,

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I'd like to know?" Cundie demanded in hot wrath.

"I was afraid the British lioness would pull out the dove's tail feathers," the doctor replied mildly.

"Mm. So bad as that? Perhaps I didn't miss much. What is she writing to you about?"

"A dinner party." The doctor's accent was a falling one. "She wants to know what night I can come to her and bring my dear little niece."

"Good heavens above!" Cundie ejaculated. "It's worse as you go on. She's probably an elderly little fat pussy-cat, with a pink and white skin."

"No; she's fully five feet ten, with a long transparent nose and frizzles. And the niece is not the worst of it. Listen. 'To meet some wandering compatriots of yours from — I forget the exact name; but it was one of the great industrial munitions centres in the war. The man brought a letter to the Major. There's a wife and daughter, too; they are all at a loose end. Come and help me entertain them. You'll speak their language, and your little niece must be lonely for another girl to play about with. They are at the Château, too. Their name is Jenkins. Perhaps you've run across them already. In that case, you

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can use the Major's name as introduction'."

"The sweet old innocent!" was Cundie's comment.

But the doctor took it more seriously.

"Wandering compatriot from a munitions centre be for ever damned!"

Once they were seated at their table, Lachance greeted and their order given, Cundie became aware of a great lack in the conversation. Whereas, when she had left her room, she had been resolving that wild horses should not drag out the story of her adventure underneath her neighbour's bed, she now felt rather aggrieved that her grandfather failed to comment on her colour and her glowing eyes. With the memory stewing and bubbling inside her, it would have been some relief to have evaded his questions. But no questions came. The fact was that her grandfather was casting about in his mind for an excuse that would get him out of Mrs. Major's comprehensive invitation.

"You see, they've got you, when they put it that way," he was grumbling; "leaving you to name the night. It's an awful trick of a mean-minded hostess — Not that I mean to imply that Mrs. Davis — Cundie, aren't most of our nights taken, for the next week or two?"

Cundie saw her opening.

"Not a single one. That is, unless you care

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to use Stevie for an excuse. I'm not at all sure it's safe to leave him to his own wicked devices."

"No use. She adores dogs, and has a Peke that's suffering from senile dementia and fleas. She'd probably tell us to bring Stevie along."

"Tell her he'd bite the Peke's tail off," Cundie suggested. "He's quite capable of that, or anything else."

"So bad as that, Cundie?" The doctor began to look interested. "What now?"

"I think he's bad enough for anything," she said viciously. Listen, Granddaddy; and then, if you want to disinherit me and send me home to mother in disgrace, I'll say that you are fully justified." And she plunged headlong into her tale.

When the doctor could speak, —

"By all the powers, Cundie, you are a handful. Sawing off a man's legs! Being discovered by another man, hidden under his bed with your watch dog in your arms — "

Cundie held up a row of fingers dotted with scarlet tooth marks.

"Not in my arms, if he knew himself, Granddaddy."

"Anyway, he was party to the misdemeanour. At least, I'm glad you had the chambermaid as witness that you weren't there to steal your neighbour's cuff-links. Cundie, this

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really is atrocious. Your mother wasn't a patch on you for getting into scrapes. I don't see how we can get out of this situation decently, unless we ask the man to dine with us, one night."

Cundie sniffed.

"Corn flakes and malted milk!" she said disdainfully. "Do you plan to put Mrs. Davis off for that?"

The doctor's face fell.

"Hang it! I'd forgotten about her. No. We'll get her in first and over with. Your shell-shock man sounds much more interesting, especially if you'll bring Stevie down and put him in a high chair between you." Then he relented. "It isn't Mrs. Davis herself, mind you. She has her own quaint charm, and I'd love to take you there, some night when they're going to be alone. It's these munitions Jenkinses that I balk at."

And, in the end, the reality was more upsetting even than his fears.

"What do you want me to wear, Granddaddy?" Cundie had asked, once the dinner party had been fixed for the next night but two.

"Anything, to show you aren't a Jenkins," the doctor had responded tersely.

Therefore Cundie had spent a strenuous afternoon with her wardrobe. Stevie had as-

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sisted her, to the best of his young ability, trying out the fabrics one after another, as the gowns were laid out on the bed. He examined the trimmings first, and registered his preference for the shiny-beaded ones that rattled. Then he made his bed, treading in careful circles, on the front breadths. All in all, his vote was for a peach-pink velvet with a pair of crystal tassels; but Cundie, rescuing it just five seconds too late, decided it had been Jenkinsy, and chose a little slip of a thing of the exact colour of her hair, quite without decoration, but cut and fashioned by a wise old hand. Stevie undertook to add a row of punchwork to the hem. When his mistress slapped him soundly, he ran, weeping, around the bed and, when her back was turned, jumped up on the further side and dug himself a funkhole in a heap of pale-green chiffon frills. It was some little time before Cundie remembered him and began to look him up. When she finally unearthed him from his nest, the mischief was too extensive to make a small thing like a spanking any real relief.

Cundie and her grandfather were the last to arrive. Cundie had seen to that, and her grandfather, wiser than most men, had not needed to ask the cause. Such absolute simplicity of line and decoration is not only priceless and demands a perfect figure; but it also

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demands an audience. The eyes of the old doctor glowed contentedly. No mere Jenkins could ever equal Cundie, even if Cundie's adventures now and then were calculated to lift his gooseflesh. To-night, moreover, Cundie had chosen her manners to match her gown. The doctor was completely satisfied as, with Cundie at his side, he halted on the threshold of the Davis drawing-room and looked about him.

Cundie looked about her, too, and gasped, not from astonishment, but for breath. The room hit her in the face, and smothered her, it was so full of Things. True, they were pretty things, and interesting; many of them, indeed, were ancient and rare. The only trouble was, there were too many of them. They made one instinctively worry about the daily dusting. There were ever so many small tables and shelf-things, all crowded thick with little knick-knacks of silver and glass and shell and ivory. There was not a square foot of empty space on any of the walls. Mezzotints hung cheek by jowl with signed photographs by Bachrach; an ancient map of Quebec nudged the corner of a very realistic painting of Salome.

At first sight, Cundie judged the painting to be the work of the domestic artist. Then, as she beheld her hostess, she swiftly changed

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her mind. Mrs. Davis was as tall and thin and stately and transparent-nosed as the doctor had described her. Moreover, she wore a lace tucker in her dinner gown and a funny, squablike little feather in her hair, while a mourning bracelet with a pearl-circled lock of hair by way of clasp adorned the delicate hand that she held out to Cundie. Cundie noted the thick blue veins with no surprise. Mrs. Davis was so evidently blue-blooded that some of the colour was bound to come to the surface.

"And this is your dear little niece, Doctor Howard," she was saying, in a high, thin voice that matched the tucker. "My husband has spoken of you often, my dear," she added to Cundie, very kindly.

Cundie's eyes gleamed a little.

"Does he tell you how I fight him?" she inquired.

Mrs. Davis seemed to find the query amusing. When she had stopped laughing softly, —

"As if anybody would dare to fight the Major! Really, I don't know what he would think. But come, let me introduce you to your compatriots. I know how you will enjoy having another nice girl to go about with. You must have found it very trying to do so much sight-seeing quite by yourself."

Cundie swallowed. Then she rallied bravely.

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"But Quebec is so polite to strangers," she explained, with an unconscious imitation of her hostess's stress on every other word.

"You find us so? I am very glad to hear it. Of course, we mean to keep up the tradition of our ancient manners; but everything to-day is very changed. Mrs. Jenkins, this is Miss Barth. You'll have ever so much to talk about, all you Americans."

"But I'm not an American," Cundie explained mildly. "Not that it makes any especial difference, only that I don't want to be sailing under false colours."

Mrs. Jenkins looked up with an expansive smile. She was a large woman whose satin frock clanked under its load of beading.

"Well, I must say, dear, that's awfully nice and modest of you," she said, in manifest approval.

"Modest?" Cundie's mystification was quite genuine.

"Yes. Ever so many girls, placed as you are, would have let it go at that."

Cundie puckered her brows. This was as bad as talking to the Delphic oracle.

"Go at what?" she asked.

"Let it go that you were an American, and claim the credit, when it doesn't belong to you."

"The credit of being an American?" Cundie

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inquired gently.

"Yes, of course. For me," the satin-and-bead breast expanded with satisfaction; "it has always been my dearest boast that I was born an American."

"Oh," said Cundie.

Mrs. Jenkins dropped her voice a little, as one who puts a delicate question.

"What are you, Miss Barth; that is, if you don't mind telling?"

"Not at all," Cundie responded cheerily. "I'm English."

"Really? But you hardly show it. It's a fact, Miss Barth. Even standing there beside my daughter — this is my daughter, Miss Lottie Jenkins — I'd really take you for an American."

There was a little pause. Then, —

"Thank you," Cundie said very meekly. "Perhaps in time — "

But her grandfather, trying to make conversation with Miss Lottie Jenkins, had caught the glance of petition Cundie flung him.

"Introduce me to Mrs. Jenkins, Cundie," he said, appearing at his grandchild's elbow; "and then I want to show you all this wonderful old print of the Place d'Armes."

But even while he was making his bow to Mrs. Jenkins, that good lady's eye was on Cundie, her lips were opening for fresh con-

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versation.

"Good evening, Doctor Howard. Very pleased to make your acquaintance. Mr. Jenkins, meet Doctor Howard." And then, "*Cundie!* What a very — er — remarkable name!"

This time, Cundie dared to laugh outright.

"It shows the earmarks of my father's classic training" she explained.

"How's that?" Mr. Jenkins asked genially, pressing his little body into the group.

Cundie answered him directly. She had taken to the lean little man on sight, he was so simple and plain and downright, so generally unlike his portly and flamboyant wife. One could enjoy a man like that, when he became polyplutocratic; but his wife never, never. At least, not just at first.

"I was named Nancy for my mother, Mr. Jenkins," she said, and even Mrs. Jenkins caught her change of tone. "Of course it made any amount of confusion, so my father began calling me Nancy Secunda."

He laughed. He had begun his second year of high school, and that, in his day, had involved a nodding acquaintance with the Latin grammar.

"That's very nice," he said. "And I like the *Cundie*, too."

"I've always heard the English people were

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great on nicknames," Mrs. Jenkins added darkly. "Not that I see now just where this one comes in. It doesn't matter now, though, for here comes the gallant Major. I suppose he's going to tell us dinner's ready. I'm sure it must be time."

The Major looked astonished. As a rule, his guests did not proclaim their hunger broadcast.

"Very soon, Mrs. Jenkins. We wouldn't dare mention such a thing till James allows us."

Too late, the Major recollected that the nominal head of the house of Jenkins was called James. Mrs. Jenkins had already fixed her husband with an accusing eye.

"What has James got to say about your dinner, Major? It seems to me he must have been taking a good deal on himself."

The Major rushed on to his real errand. At a first glance he had seen that the social mellowing, inevitable for a man of Mr. Jenkins's business contacts, had passed Mrs. Jenkins by. The little man was obviously very loyal to his wife; but the Major suspected that he must deplore her now and then. He decided that in the ignoring of certain of her remarks lay the only road to conversational safety.

"But, before dinner is served, I really must finish my introductions," he said, with labor-

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ious suavity, as he stepped aside to give place to the man behind him. "Stevenson, I think you met Miss Jenkins, when she first came in. And this is Miss Barth, from London and Devonshire. That's where some of your own forbears came from; isn't it?"

But the question was disregarded. Cundie and the young stranger were shaking hands like the old acquaintances they were.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A GOOD deal to her disappointment, Cundie found herself seated between the Major and Mr. Jenkins at the table. Stevenson was at the other end, between Miss Lottie Jenkins and their hostess, the table being further balanced by a rather colourless woman in a frock that seemed to be created merely in order to show her shoulderblades, and her inconspicuous husband for whose creation there appeared to be no especial reason of any kind. Cundie would have enjoyed a prompt settling down into reminiscence with Stevenson who looked nicer than ever in his dinner clothes; but, watching his girl companion's evident pleasure, Cundie could not find it in her heart to grudge her own loss, for it was pitifully obvious that such pleasures came but rarely into the life of Lottie Jenkins. The people Miss Lottie had fitted herself, with such infinite pains, to meet and talk to, were bound to be frightened away by her exuberant mamma. The girl was rather likable, Cundie thought. Shorn of her finery, her hair tidied and her rather scrawny person put into a print morning frock

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and planted in the middle of a congoleum-rugged kitchen, she would be vastly more attractive, more her natural self. But the same fertile brain that had evolved the bead-loaded satin had evidently planned the girl's too elaborate gown; and, after all, she wasn't to blame for her parents, anyway.

And then Stevenson looked up to meet her thoughtful gaze. He smiled, and Cundie forgot the house of Jenkins utterly. The voice of Mrs. Jenkins recalled her.

"I was just saying to the Major," Mrs. Jenkins piped across their host; "that I guessed you'd probably had your tea before you came."

"My — tea?" Cundie ransacked her brain for possible clues. Did this astounding woman think only in terms of what she doubtless called, in speaking to her nearest kin, 'a meal of vittles'?

"Yes. I know you English people always think you've got to have tea, whatever comes, in offices and all. They say it's one of your greatest racial customs."

"Oh. Do you really think so?" Cundie offered rather tentatively, for it was the only response she could think up, on the spur of the moment.

"That's what they all tell me, and how you make a meal of it, with buttered bread and

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sconces and jam. For my part, I can't see where you get your appetite in the middle of the afternoon; but it's in all of the newest movies, so it must be true."

The Major came to Cundie's rescue.

"Speaking of England, or rather Scotland," he said, bungling in his effort to fit in his bridge of conversational escape; "I had a letter from my nephew, Sandy Grahame — "

Mrs. Jenkins, in her haste to speak, swallowed her soup the wrong way. When words were possible, —

"*Sandy!*" she echoed while she wiped her eyes. "And Cundie! What queer names you Canadians do have!"

True to his type, the Major tried to explain.

"Not Canadians, either of them, my dear Mrs. Jenkins. My nephew is Scotch from Edinburgh, and his real name, of course, is Alexander, while Miss Barth — "

"*Why of course?*" Mrs. Jenkins demanded. And the Major gave up the attempt.

"You were speaking about your nephew," Cundie jogged him, when the succeeding silence had lasted a good deal too long.

"Oh, yes. Sandy. He writes he may be coming out here before the winter. He's never really settled back, since the war. You see, he got a good deal crocked up — "

"What!" Mrs. Jenkins was plainly horri-

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fied. The word, to her mind, connoted negro minstrels.

"Cut about. Crooked up," the Major explained very patiently.

"Do you mean wounded?"

"Yes. Only the boys themselves never used the word."

Mrs Jenkins closed the question as if she had been driving in a bung.

"It's in the Holy Scriptures," she said.

There came another pause, a long one. Then Cundie jogged the Major's mind again.

"I think a good many of the men have found it hard to settle down," she said, and her voice gentled as her phrase went on.

"Ours didn't." Mrs. Jenkins was once more agog.

This time, Cundie permitted herself the luxury of a retort.

"Perhaps they weren't over, long enough to get unsettled."

Mrs. Jenkins flung up her chin, and her satin gown clanked warningly.

"They were in it long enough to win the war," she countered. "It would have gone dragging on and on till now, if America hadn't gone in and saved the day."

Even the opinionated Major lowered his crest before this onslaught. When he spoke again, it was with his body turned directly to-

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wards Cundie.

"I think, in Sandy's case, it was a physical condition. He was gassed at the second Ypres show, and he got a nasty scalp wound, a little later. And then, on the Somme, he got it in the leg, and it ended his fighting. They say he fretted himself into an actual fever, when the Big Push came. He had been at the War Office, doing pretty well; but he ran himself down with his fretting to get back to France until he had to give up everything and sit it out at home. I fancy my sister must have had the very devil of a time with him."

Cundie smiled.

"I don't so much blame him," she said very thoughtfully. "In fact, I know a little about it, myself. All the last part of the Somme, and a good deal of the next summer, I was driving ambulance all up and down behind the lines. As soon as they found the push was on, they packed a lot of us women down to Havre, and told us they'd send us back to England if we dared show our faces outside the town. We just raised Cain, we were so furious — I beg your pardon?" For Mrs. Jenkins was once more bending forward.

"Do I understand you to say, Miss Barth," she asked with a frigid distinctness which carried down the table; "that you were driving an ambulance in France, during the war?"

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"For three or four years, Mrs. Jenkins."

Mrs. Jenkins lifted her eyes to the electric dome behind which, as nearly as she could reckon it, heaven ought to be.

"What could her mother have been thinking of?" she demanded of the heavenly host in general. "It was no place for any woman, least of all a young one. Think of the things she must have seen and heard, things barely proper for a man's eyes and ears, unless he was a chaplain!"

The dinner over, Stevenson sauntered up to Cundie's side.

"The old girl doesn't much approve of you," he said.

Cundie laughed. Then she relented.

"The poor old dear! But I've a theory that it's hard work to go outside your native country for the first time, after you're thirty."

"Thirty!"

"I didn't say how much after. It's the theory that interests me, not the exact age limit of adaptability."

"It is her first time, then?"

"Do you need to ask? Besides, she told me, before dinner. This is a sort of trial trip, a thin edge of the wedge. If she decides she likes it here, they may go across to London, later on."

"On the *Leviathan*, I'll bet my hat; and put

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up at the Cecil for a week, and then come back on the *Majestic*. In other words, once they've bitten into the wedge, they'll take the whole cheese at a gulp."

"Mr. Stevenson! I'm afraid she'd say that you were very vulgar."

Stevenson showed his teeth in the grin of a naughty schoolboy.

"Thank the Lord I can be, on occasion. It's the greatest possible preventive for blood pressure. Anyhow, you started it."

Cundie swerved from under the indictment.

"I rather like the daughter."

Stevenson nodded.

"She seems an awfully decent little chap who has all sorts of good sense inside her, only she doesn't dare be plain and simple as the Good Lord meant her to be. That's the charm of the father. He does dare. But then, he's got the moral backing of his self-made millions. But, I say, how do you suppose we both of us happened in on this festivity?"

Cundie's shrug was charmingly deprecating.

"Space-fillers, probably. At least, that's the way I interpreted the note. Poor Mrs. Davis had to be decent to the Jenkins family. She preferred to take a chance on us as a possible combination rather than invoke certain failure by asking her own old friends."

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The young man's eyes twinkled.

"Then, from all the signs, she's come an awful cropper in her reckoning. Mrs. Jenkins evidently hasn't the least idea of combining with you."

Cundie's forehead wrinkled with anxiety.

"Was I very nasty to her?" she begged. "Do reassure me, for my conscience is beginning to get prickly."

"She only got what was coming to her. Not that I think anything could penetrate that — "

"Oh, I'm not alarmed about Mrs. Jenkins," Cundie said hastily. "It's Mrs. Davis that is worrying me. She's such a dear, and such a perfect lady in her tucker and her topknot, just like one of my grandmother's Bristol cups with *Love the Giver* written on them in gold. Only she doesn't need the label. You love her anyhow on sight."

The young man smiled.

"You've got her, pat. You see, I come here pretty regularly and I've learned to know her well. They entertain a good deal; the Major is brother to my boss and a good friend of my old Dad; and a spare man is always sure of invitations, as long as he can be counted on not to show up at dinner in brown boots. But tell me: did Sainte Anne come up to your expectations? And what have you been doing

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with yourself, since then?"

The memory of the past three days rose up and blotted the rest from Cundie's mind.

"Bringing up a puppy," she answered unexpectedly and with an aggressive promptness that ruled lesser interests from their discussion.

"Bully for you! How old?"

"About six months, I'd say."

"What kind?"

"Scottie."

"They're good, and not too common. Registered, of course?"

"Really I don't know."

"What! Where'd you get him?"

Cundis hesitated. Then, according to her habit in unforeseen emergencies, she flung out the absolute and quite discreditable truth.

"I stole him."

"Miss Barth!"

"Yes. And the funny part of it is that I never thought to see it in that light before. You see, it was on the Cove Fields. Some beastly men were abusing him. I told them to let him alone. They just looked me in the face and laughed, and went at it again. And then I smacked the nearest one with my stick. Really, I hit him hard. He swore, and they both bolted; and I took Stevie in my arms and ran."

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"Stevie?"

There came a little silence. Across it, Mrs. Jenkin's voice could be heard in fussy farewells; and then the doctor joined them, seeking Cundie. There were renewed good nights, a little perfunctory chatter about more meetings later on; and the dinner party was at an end.

"I'd give my boots to know why she named the little beggar *Stevie*," one of the guests was remarking to himself, as he walked away.

But Cundie had she heard him, could not have answered, even if she would.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN elaborate interchange of notes, meanwhile, had been going on between the doctor and Selkirk, all that day.

"Dear Mr. Selkirk," the doctor had written, early; "my niece, Miss Barth, has been telling me about the disgraceful adventure of the little dog. Won't you take dinner with us, to-morrow night, and give us a chance to apologize and laugh it off together?"

This note he had seen put into Selkirk's box, before he went to breakfast. Selkirk's reply was waiting for him at noon.

"Dear Doctor Howard, your invitation is most alluring, especially if the dog is also to be included in the party. Unfortunately, though, I am on a very pap-ish sort of diet, for the time being. It hurts my pride so much that I can't bring myself to eat in polite society. Thank you, however, for putting so great temptation in my way. Most cordially, A. Selkirk."

"Alexander! Monarch of all he surveys," Cundie had commented, when she had read the note. "As if we cared what he ate! And

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yet, I'm rather sorry for him. It's always seemed to me very degrading to be on a diet."

"Necessary, though. Still, I can understand his not caring to dine with strangers. What about asking him for a drive?" For the doctor had come up in his Packard.

"That will be all right; and I'll take Stevie, as he suggests."

"Better not," the doctor cautioned her.

"Why not? The sooner he gets used to modern methods of transportation, the better. Probably he'll love it. Most dogs do."

"I have noticed," the doctor said very ponderously; "that Stevie appears to be an exception to every rule. Meanwhile, what about to-morrow afternoon?"

Accordingly another note was put in Selkirk's box, directly after luncheon.

"Dear Mr Selkirk, diets are the doctor's last resort, and it's no wonder every patient takes them for just what they are. I know all about it, after thirty years of strenuous practise. Let the dinner go, and drive down to Cap Tourmente with us in the afternoon. My niece wishes me to tell you that Stevie is going, too."

Cundie and her grandfather were driving to the Falls for tea, that afternoon. On their return, they found a second note from Selkirk.

"Dear Doctor Howard, to-morrow seems to

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be my unlucky day. Once more I must refuse your hospitality. I have an iron-bound engagement for the afternoon. My regards to the little dog, and ask him to thank you properly for your kindness to a stranger. Faithfully yours, A. Selkirk."

"For the afternoon," the Doctor repeated. "It doesn't make any difference to us when we go. What do you say Cundie? Shall we try it again?"

"I'd say we'll let him go to blazes," Cundie retorted viciously. "If he wants to pose as Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, with a click in his epiglottis and a crick in his temper, then we'll let him. I only hope that, next time, Stevie'll bite his boots." And then she changed the subject effectively by asking what time they ought to have the car, that night.

Cundie was not in the dining-room until long after her grandfather, the next morning. It was Stevie's doing; Cundie had the normal girl's healthy dislike of early hours. At the first crack of dawn, Stevie, who had been left to himself, a good share of the day before, was seized with a sudden desire for self-expression. Humped on the rug beside the bed, he began weeping when the clock was striking six. He looked, and it sounded, so piteous that Cundie, only half awake, after a warning *Shhhhhhhhh!* or two, reached out an arm and

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scooped him up into the blankets, fondly imagining that he would cuddle down in their warmth and finish out his nap. The imaginings of the heathen were no vainer. Stevie sat down astride her neck and nibbled at her nose. Dislodged from there, his temper waked up and he attacked her ankles, blanket and all, in good earnest. Cundie kicked him off the bed again and again he wept. She groaned, arose, spanked him soundly and shut him into the bathroom. By the time she was back in bed again, she was learning the acoustic properties of tiles. Stevie was seated in a wee forlorn bundle on the exact middle of the floor. The echo of his profanity came hurtling back from all four walls and met above his head and mingled in a most terrific din. Once more Stevie had conquered. Cundie flung back the blankets, stamped across the floor and seized her comb. Prudence demanded that she should open the bathroom door on the way; and an ecstatic, an angelic Stevie came flying out across the threshold, stumbled over his own nose in his haste, picked himself up again and ran to mumble her bare toes in a wave of almost agonized affection.

Nevertheless, Cundie came in to breakfast, telling herself it had been almost worth while. Only Quebec, and only the very, very end of

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September can give such mornings, crisp and clear and beautifully blue, with the eastern sky still stained with wild-rose colours left over from the sunrise. The river showed reflections from it, too, down by the Island, now gorgeous in its autumn clothes of scarlet maple and lemon-coloured birch. As a matter of routine, Cundie had gone out on the terrace first of all. Then the lower view had called her and, leaving the terrace, she had gone down through little Du Fort Street, past the Laval monument that glorifies the spot where, in her mother's day, the huddle of old houses used to stand, blocking the outlook of the Golden Dog gnawing his perennial bone on the post office wall. She hesitated, then she went on along the Grand Battery towards the Ramparts. The Battery had charmed her from the start. She knew that it held some of the tenderest, saddest memories of her mother's life; and then it was so ripely, hoarily beautiful: the grey old Seminary buildings with their many-storied galleries and their high-walled garden on the one side; on the other, the useless old guns sticking their fat old noses over the grey wall, making their pathetic pretext of guarding the city from an advancing foe. And the view! The gorgeous mass of Island foliage swimming on the great blue tide which forked to flow around it; the

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shallow north channel passing the great red gash at Montmorency Falls, passing on again to wash the beach of The Good Sainte Anne whose spires were pricking the blue sky; the southern channel sweeping around the point of the Island and out of sight, the great Canadian highway for all Atlantic-crossing ships! One of them was just coming up the river. Cundie had seen its smoke, then the point of its bow and then its whole great length as it rounded the bend at the Island and came sweeping up to its pier. Its white paint was shining in the early sun, its brass and glass were a-glitter and its raking yellow funnels topped with smoke plumes: a very modern note in the antiquity.

Cundie's smile of absolute approval at the contrast was quite unconscious of her own personal modernism, as she sauntered slowly down the Battery, towing after her a wrathful Stevie who, unable to break his leash, and absolutely objecting to this early-morning exercise, had sat down solidly behind her and refused to rise.

And then a voice from still behind, —

"What's the trouble? Broken his wheels?"

Cundie turned quickly. Stevenson was tramping down the hill at a great pace, the early sun shining on his big round spectacles and on his strong white teeth bared with his

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jolly smile. He looked as wholesome as the morning itself.

"Summer is over, and I'm getting him ready to go on runners," she replied.

"I'd advise a self-propelling motor. Is this your famous Stevie?" Fists in pockets, Stevenson ambled around the puppy, viewing him from every side. "Not too bad; but I'm not sure it's altogether a compliment, that name of his. His head is too big for perfect modesty, and something seems to have gone wrong with his legs. Want me to draw him for you?" And, taking one hand from his pocket, he held it out for the leash.

"I was thinking of going back to the Château," Cundie said undecidedly.

"Oh, I wouldn't. It's too soon. Anyway, I'll pull him on a bit. I'm sure he needs the air, and your arm must be tired, hauling this great dog by main strength. I say, let's go on around the Ramparts and cut up across Palace Hill."

"How long will it take?" Cundie asked prudently, for she was beginning to think yearningly about her breakfast.

"Depends on Saint Stephen here. Get up on your legs, old man, and come ahead!" And Stevenson gave a knowing sort of tweak to the leash.

His namesake chose to misinterpret it. For

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a minute he sat back, growling and watching this new godfather, with the whites of his eyes gleaming defiance. Then he jumped forward, shut his teeth in the godfather's trouser-leg and tried his baby best to swallow him piece-meal.

Very gently Stevenson bent down, clamped one hand around the little black neck and pried the little jaws apart with the other thumb and finger. Then he swung his godchild in the air and shook him hard.

"For shame!" he scolded. "A huge great dog like you and a gentleman, to behave like that! Shame on you, sir! Now get down on your legs and walk off properly." And, to Cundie's immense surprise, Stevie did trot off quite happily at the heels of his new master.

"Little brute! I think he rather likes me," Stevenson observed contentedly, after watching the dog. "They are queer little beings, those Scotties. You can't whip them into obedience; they turn on you, if you even try it. You've got to argue with them till they know that you are master. Well, how did you enjoy the party, last night?"

"Not as well, either of us, as if we had thought to bring you home in the car."

He laughed.

"I wanted a smoke, anyway. But I can see it is a little startling to go to a dinner with a

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lot of strangers, and find out you're all living under the same roof. In fact, between the Château and Quebec, it's sometimes hard to tell which is the tail and which the dog. Each one of them believes it wags the other. Seen our friends, the Jenkinses?"

"Before breakfast?"

He stopped short and stared at her remorsefully. Stevie took advantage of the opportunity to bolt between his new master's feet, run around his left leg and bolt between again. Then he sat down on the pavement and lifted up his voice in frightened lamentations over the general tangle. It took time to untangle Stevenson and to console Stevie. Then, —

"You poor thing!" Stevenson said penitently. "Do you mean to say I've lugged you all this way, before you'd had your breakfast? Come along up here. It's the shortest cut; that is, if you don't mind the hill. Is this your usual time for breakfast; or are you extra late after so much festivity?"

"As Mrs. Jenkins would say, we English are very late about all our meals," Cundie reminded him demurely. "As a general thing, I'm only beginning to be hungry at this hour; but Stevie had me up and out at half-past six, and I am ravenous. Have you had your breakfast already?"

"Only an orange and a cup of coffee. I like

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to get a bit of exercise, before I really stoke; I find I carry on better all day, if I start out this way. In our work, you know, we have to take extra care we're keeping fit."

She nodded gravely. More than once, she had seen the tragic end of flying men who had had no time nor chance to think whether they were fit or not.

"How soon do you go up again?" she asked him, still very gravely.

"Not till next week. They gave me extra leave, for I was a little out of condition. Summer is our hardest season, scouting for fires. We have long droughts till the forests are like tinder, and one careless little match can wipe out miles of perfectly good wood. The timber limits, up where I am, are practically endless, and it keeps us on the jump to look out for them properly."

"How many of you are there?"

"Three for our district. At certain seasons, we could use a dozen; but the people are learning to be a little bit more careful. Nowadays, the same man doesn't start a fire but once." For an instant, his eyes gleamed, hard.

Cundie laughed

"Because you kill him, the first time?"

"Not quite. We make him remember what he is up against, though; and I must say

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they are less irresponsible than they used to be. Thanks for our walk. I'm sorry if I've starved you."

Cundie ignored his accent of leave-taking.

"Wait a minute, till I drop Stevie in my room; then come in and stoke with us," she bade him hospitably. "My grandfather will have gone down to the dining-room without waiting, so do you mind meeting me at the door? I'll be only a minute."

She was as good as her word, somewhat to the surprise of Stevenson who had been trained to believe that a man's whole social duty is to kick his heels and wait. Cundie was a refreshing exception to his experiences as, every hair and every fold of her gown in place, she came flying back again and, smiling casually at Louis and his captains, led her guest down the room to their own window table.

Lachance saw her coming, saw Stevenson behind her and was ready with an extra chair, so Cundie dropped into her usual place and left her companion to the cordial mercies of her grandfather. When the two men were seated, —

"We are so hungry, Grandaddy," she said plaintively. "It was all Stevie's fault that we are late and starved. He routed me out at cock-crow, and he'd have been sitting on his haunches on the Grand Battery till now, if

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Mr. Stevenson hadn't come along. Don't you think it would be very nice to find out whether Mr. Stevenson could make time to drive with us, this afternoon? He knows all the places here, you see and it would be a wonderful education for — Stevie." Eyes and lips added to the mockery of the little pause.

CHAPTER NINE

IN the end, Miss Lottie went with them.

Later that same morning, Cundie overtook her, loitering aimlessly along Saint John Street. Saint John Street is the most uninteresting spot in the whole city, bar none. Therefore Cundie felt privileged to hail her with the question, —

“What in the world are you doing here?”

“Seeing the sights,” Miss Lottie explained vaguely.

“You’d better say you’re trying to find some that are worth looking at,” Cundie corrected her. “Come along with me.”

“Where?”

“Grenier’s for shredded wheat. Then for a thermos bottle to hold Stevie’s milk.”

“Who is Stevie?”

“My angel-dog. It’s ruining me to feed him out of the Château kitchen, so I am laying in stores from outside.”

“You’ve got a dog? Did you bring him out from England with you?”

“Rather not! I — I got him here.” Doubting the Jenkins sense of humour, Cundie decided to veil the truth. “He’s quite

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a darling little Scottie; you ought to see him. By the way, we're driving to Cap Tourmente, directly after lunch. It's such a perfect day; why don't you come with us? Mr. Stevenson is coming, too, and I shall be taking Stevie."

"Is he named for him?" Miss Lottie queried rather ambiguously; but Cundie understood, and the red colour flamed in her cheeks.

"If he is, it was a result of unconscious cerebration," she evaded.

"I don't see why. Mr. Stevenson is really very nice," Miss Lottie Jenkins laughed a little fatuously; "nice enough even to name your dog for him."

Cundie smiled.

"He is nice," she assented quietly. "My grandfather likes him immensely. However, I didn't think of him at all when I named Stevie. I'd only seen him once and for a very little while. Then you'll come with us?"

"Of course. That is, if you'd really like to have me go along."

"I shouldn't have asked you, otherwise," Cundie said flatly, aware of a jarring note in their talk. Why couldn't such people take their invitations simply, and not bother why one gave them? "Will two o'clock be too early?"

"Oh, no. Where is Cap Tourmente?"

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"Down at the end of the view," Cundie told her explicitly.

"The view?" Miss Lottie's voice was once more vague. It began to be plain to Cundie that, for all her relative niceness, Miss Lottie shared her mother's limitations.

"Down the river. The great, big view we get from almost everywhere. Cap Tourmente is the round knob that blocks it in. The saddle-shaped mountain, just this side, is Mount Sainte Anne where the clouds catch and hang, to warn the sailors of bad weather."

"Really? How funny! And do we go anywhere near the Shrine?"

"We pass it. You've been there, of course?"

"Yes. We all went down there on the sight-seeing autobus. It wasn't very satisfactory, though. The guide roared so hard into his horn that we couldn't make much out of it."

"I hate guides," Cundie said sociably. "But, anyway, there's any amount to see, all the way down there, to say nothing of the Shrine itself."

"Naturally, we didn't go inside the churches," Miss Lottie said, a little stiffly.

"Why not, I'd like to know?" Then Cundie modified her abruptness. "What was the matter? Didn't they give you enough time?"

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"We had time enough," Miss Lottie replied, still stiffly. "But we are Baptists."

Cundie stared. Then she laughed a little, suspecting a joke.

Then she discovered, from the shut of her companion's lips, that nothing further from a joke could have been intended. And then, sheer curiosity triumphing, —

"What difference does that make?" she queried flatly.

"About entering Popish churches?" The other girl's tone showed that she was scandalized.

"Yes. I often used to say my prayers in them in France."

Miss Lottie sought to excuse the heresy.

"Oh, yes, over there in war time, when you hadn't time to pick and choose."

Her words angered Cundie

"And down here, too, the other day. I said my prayer and asked a blessing on the wishes I left there in the church."

"Left? In the church?"

"Yes. As we always leave our hopes and plans before the altar, if they're good for anything at all."

Miss Lottie faced her new friend rather aggressively.

"What kind of a Christian are you, anyway?" she demanded.

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"Kind? Oh, yes, I see. I am an Anglican, of course."

"I don't see any *of course* about it. Aren't there any Baptists in England, then?"

"I — I suppose so, only I've never happened to meet any." Then Cundie cast aside her growing irritation and, because they had turned into an unfrequented street, tucked her hand into Miss Lottie's arm in a friendly, casual fashion that speedily allayed the other's righteous wrath. "Anyway, the dear Lord didn't pick and choose. He went into all sorts of places to say his prayers, or just said them, quite simply, wherever He happened to be. But, about this afternoon: I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll all start out together and, when we get to Sainte Anne, we'll send the others on without us, and I'll show you the place and make you love it in spite of yourself. The whole idea back of it is so big and beautiful that anybody, whether he's an Agnostic or an Anglican, a Buddhist or a Baptist, ought to be willing to kneel down there and say a little thank-you-very-much to the Force that made him, no matter what name he calls that Force. You really can't help loving it, once you realize just what it truly stands for."

And Cundie was as good as her word. All the way down across the Côte de Beaupré,

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she devoted herself to the girl beside her, showing off the landmarks taught her by the Major: the site of the Wolfe encampments; the little bower of a cottage just before they crossed the bridge above the Falls, the cottage with its Washington traditions and its drawing-room where Kipling suddenly spouted his limerick about

"The boy of Quebec

Who was buried in snow to his neck",

while the boy himself, still powdered with snow, stood by and giggled while he listened; the Wolfe house, a little farther down, and then the long rows of ribbon farms, one end on the river, one end on the road, so subdivided among many sons that now and then a holding was so narrow it was said the grazing cows had to back slowly home at milking time. Then, as they entered the long street of The Good Sainte Anne, Cundie told over again and still more simply the little old story of her mother's romance. And she ended it almost exactly as she had done before, —

"I owe Sainte Anne so very much, you see, that I like to come here every now and then, to thank her for her handiwork."

"Her handiwork?"

"Bringing my father and mother together, in the first place. Otherwise, there mightn't have been any me." Cundie spoke lightly;

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yet her companion felt a vein of sincerity behind her words.

Wherefore she turned to stare at Cundie, this product of the twentieth century with supernally good clothes and three years of driving ambulance in France.

"You don't really mean you think it had anything to do with it?" she asked flatly.

"It?"

"Sainte Anne. With your father's proposing to your mother."

Cundie laughed.

"Not after he once had had a good look at her. Both he and my grandfather say she was the dearest thing that ever breathed. But the bringing them together — "

"Nonsense! You don't mean to say you cling to Papal superstitions?"

Cundie kept her temper with an effort. The family tradition was very dear to her.

"Papal superstition nothing!" she said shortly. "I'm only telling you what happened."

"Mere coincidence."

"You think so? Well, let's try it out. When we go inside the church, you shall get down on your knees and ask The Good Sainte Anne to grant you some very especial wish, and promise her that you will give her something for her poor, if she grants it soon."

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"Miss Barth! But I'm a Baptist!"

"What if you are?" Cundie asked ruthlessly. "And, anyway, your Baptist friends will never know. I promise I won't ever tell your tithing man, or whatever it is that corresponds to our Dean."

"I couldn't. It wouldn't be proper. Anyway, she wouldn't do it for a Protestant like me." It was obvious that Miss Lottie Jenkins was beginning to waver.

"But that's the splendid thing about the Catholic Saints: they are so much broader than we are, and they do any quantity of good turns to us. Saint Anthony finds everything I lose, from dogs to diamonds. I just tell him they're gone, and offer him some money to buy bread for his needy — Oh, I could tell you dozens of things. Here we are. Granddaddy, would you and Mr. Stevenson think us awfully rude if we got out here and sent you on alone? I want to show the Shrine to Miss Jenkins. She has only seen it through a megaphonic guide."

"We'll wait," the doctor said, as he drew out to the side of the road and stopped.

"No. We couldn't get into the proper mood, if we knew you were kicking your heels and looking at your watches. I want to teach her to see the place and care about it the way mother did, and we do. Go on to Cap Tour-

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mente, and come back here for us in about an hour."

The Packard, rounding a small bend in the narrow road, drew out of sight; slowly, on account of the tangle of dogs and babies that bestrewed the road. Then Cundie turned to her companion.

"Come," she said quite briefly. "We'll begin at the very beginning, the way the pilgrims do." And she pointed to the spires above them and told how the great, deep-toned Pilgrim Bell beats out its welcome, as the pilgrim trains slide down the track and come to a halt before the parvise gate.

Inside the Church, she led Miss Lottie quickly past the racks of crutches at the entrance. They were too obvious. She wanted to make her companion feel the spirit of the place, not its physical symbols of result. And so, far up the middle aisle, close to the feet of the miraculous statue, she drew the girl into a pew and, for a moment, dropped on her knees. Then very softly, for there were others kneeling all about them, she spoke of the flower-veiled high altar, of the golden shrines on either side the chancel where the Holy relics were kept, of the rose-arched statue of the Saint which is carried at the head of the pilgrim processions. She pointed to the exquisite panels of the altar rail, where the

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scenes from the life of Our Lord are cut in purest marble by a master hand. With a gesture, because they were too close to trust to whispers, she called attention to the three wheeled chairs drawn up at the feet of the statue in the aisle, each chair holding its crippled, helpless, hopeful human burden, praying and waiting for a sign from heaven.

Throughout it all, she dwelt only on the spiritual side of the picture: the immense faith in a Power outside and above one's self that had built and maintained and filled the Shrine for generations. It was the faith itself that mattered, and the Power that called it forth. The outward form of it might be peculiar to one special creed; but the spiritual fact of it was universal, belonging to them all.

Then, her gay eyes very gentle, Cundie rose from her knees and, beckoning to her companion, led the way outside.

"I wanted you to feel the very essence of it, first," she said. "Otherwise, you'd never care about the Santa Scala, nor grasp what it means to the people who go there in perfect faith. It isn't meant for us, of course; but we can imagine what it stands for to them."

But the Chapel of the Holy Stairs chanced to be empty of the faithful. In the upper chapel, a trio of tourists were making tawdry jokes about the place, and Cundie swiftly led

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her companion down the hill again.

Back in the sacristy once more, Miss Lottie lingered over the cases of offerings until Cundie imagined that every motor horn from outside came from the Packard. And so at last, —

"Now for the church again," she ordered; "You've seen the best of it, and I hope you won't be afraid to tell your Baptist friends that it's just as much a part of the dear Lord's scheme of things as their chapels. We all of us have our own favourite ways of going about our worship; it all comes to the same thing in the end. But you needn't tell them anything about the rest of it, until the finish."

"What finish?"

"Of Sainte Anne's answer to your prayer to grant your wishes."

"But I haven't prayed to her. I couldn't."

"You can, too. Why not? Or don't you ever say your prayers?"

"Not to a Popish saint."

"Tosh!" Cundie told her undevoutly. "It's all in the same family — that is, if you have any reverence at all for anybody's viewpoint but your own. Besides, taking your view of it, how can you prove there's nothing in it, unless you try it out and see just where it fails? If you aren't sure enough of your own theology about the saints to put it to the

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test — ”

And so, little later, a very thoughtful Miss Lottie Jenkins came slowly out from the church to take her place in the Packard. Her face was grave, and flushed a little on the cheekbones. Her eyes were shining curiously.

On the way home, they turned aside at the Saint Charles bridge and swung north along the bank to pass the cross that marks the spot where Jacques Cartier spent his first winter. Then Stevenson glanced at his watch.

“It’s still quite early. What if we keep on around the city to show Miss Jenkins his second wintering place? It’s only just beyond the end of the Quebec bridge, tucked in under the end of the Cap Rouge viaduct. By the way, that’s a stunning piece of work. I know the man who did it. He’s very modest about it; but, if it weren’t all but buried by the bridge, it would be known from coast to coast. Beg pardon?” For the doctor, answering with the barest monosyllable, had swerved suddenly and halted by the wooden footway, looking back.

“Oh, Mr. Selkirk; isn’t it?” he said very cordially, as he stripped off his driving gauntlet and held out his hand. “So we have run you down. You’ll let us give you a lift, I’m sure. We’re only going on around Cap Rouge,

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unless you'd rather we took you straight back home." And, letting go Selkirk's hand, he opened the door invitingly.

There was an instant while Selkirk was very obviously hesitating. Then he gave in to the inevitable.

But Cundie's eyes were agleam, as they drove away, with Selkirk sitting rather glum and dumb at Miss Lottie Jenkins's side. Not for nothing was she too a girl. For years, a centre of her social set, she nevertheless had a pretty fair notion of what almost any girl of the Lottie Jenkins type and in her place, endowed with the exuberant Mrs. Jenkins as attendant chaperon, would be likely to ask of The Good Sainte Anne.

Moreover, if Cundie's surmise was correct, it appeared that the Saint had lost no precious time in going about her work.

CHAPTER TEN

THAT had been Wednesday afternoon. The next Wednesday found Cundie, with her grandfather and Stevenson, rushing through an early luncheon on the *Richelieu*, in order to be free to go ashore at Murray Bay, just coming into sight around the ragged point of *Cap aux Oies*.

The trip had been the doctor's doing, instigated thereto by a random word of Stevenson, the week before. Cundie would have liked to balk. She was vastly interested in watching to see what The Good Sainte Anne was going to do next, for her window faced the terrace where, every now and then in the past week, she had seen Selkirk promenading up and down at Miss Lottie's side. Miss Lottie, viewed through opera glasses, was distinctly blissful, though her companion was quite tongue-tied by his mysterious inner mechanism. Cundie would have loved to stay on, observing from day to day the progress of events. Besides, there was the question what to do with Stevie.

"Leave him in the baggage-room," her grandfather suggested callously.

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"Never. Once he proved he could exist down there, I'd never get him back into my room. Besides, they'd tease him. Unless," she added doubtfully; "I could get the head porter to take him home. Stevie adores him."

"So does everybody else who comes here," Stevenson said, lounging up to them just in season to catch her final words. "He's an institution, a good deal like Lachance; they both came in here when the house was young. What's the discussion?"

"What to do with Stevie, if we go round the Saguenay."

"That's easy. Take him along."

"Can I?"

"Not in your room. But they've a baggage master on board who is the patron saint of every dog that travels on the lower river. He coddles them to death, talks to them like Christians, and even lets them sleep on top of him in his bunk, if they get lonesome. Stevie will have a whale of a time with him, and lay up any amount of experience for his trip to England. Besides, we have long stops at Murray Bay and Tadousac, where he can go ashore."

And so the matter was settled.

The whole idea of the trip had come from a very casual question from the doctor, while he and Stevenson were driving on to Cap

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Tourmente after they had left the two girls at Sainte Anne's hospitable door.

"How long do you expect to be in town?"

"Only a week more."

"I'm sorry," the doctor told him quite directly. "I was hoping we'd see a good deal more of you."

The young man's colour came.

"Thank you," he answered just as directly.

"I'm sorry, too, awfully sorry; but I've got to report at the hangars, a week from to-night."

"Where are they?"

"In the mountains back of Saint Alphonse, two thirds of the way up the Saguenay. It's the place where you tied up, over night."

"I haven't been up the Saguenay."

"Really not? It's pretty well worth while, especially at this season. Why don't you come along with me, next week? I might be able to put you on to a few things, along the way."

"I wish we might. We'd be in great luck to have you for our unofficial guide," the doctor told him cordially. "I am realizing that I never really saw the Côte de Beaupré till to-day."

Stevenson nodded full agreement. It had seemed to him, too, that he had never really seen it till that afternoon when, across his talk with the doctor, Cundie's running thread of

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explanation had come into his ears. How she saw things, anyway! How she entered into the spirit of this new race, interpreting it to her chance companion as Stevenson, for all his familiarity and his ready tongue, could never have begun to do!

Whether or not Stevenson, passing The Good Sainte Anne, said a little prayer to her for the success of their next week's expedition, it would be hard to say. The saints are often as generous in minute practical details as in the greater spiritual needs, and Sainte Anne herself could have given no more wonderful a day than the next Wednesday dawned, crisp and fresh and golden. The little clouds danced up across the sky, and the river danced along underneath them. After they had come out from the southern channel into the tangling currents of the Traverse, the mountains of the north shore stretched ruggedly before them, their ragged steepnesses clothed gorgeously. The backbone of the continent had put on its best clothes in honour of their passing; yellow birch outshone the yellowing tamarack, the scarlet maples splashed across the patches of dark green balsam, and the salmon-pink of the wild cherry, edging every clearing, added its vivid note to the tawny colour of the fields. Here and there a waterfall came clashing down, sometimes

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cascading in a mass of foam, sometimes a pale blue-grey ribbon falling sheer and straight against the sheer rock wall. All the way from Cap Tourmente to Baie Saint Paul, one after another the mountains came filing into view, each with its short nose and lofty brow pointed to the river and a little bit down stream, as if to greet the stranger coming to their shores. And every little way, on the craggy rocks that lined the foreshore, the wee, pointed lighthouses squatted solidly, as beacons for the passing ships.

The boat was on time, that day; below decks, it was crammed with freight. Therefore Stevenson, coming back from a tour of inquiry, brought the news that they would stop for at least two hours at Murray Bay.

"Time for a good long drive," he told them jubilantly. "If you'll come down with me now — we are nearly in — I'll get out Stevie for you. Then I'll rush ahead and pick up the best car I can find."

"What is there to see?" Cundie asked, as she followed him. "That is, besides good clothes."

Stevenson laughed.

"You won't see many of those about the roads down there, just tweeds and homespuns and thick shoes; that is, among the people one knows. But you want to see the little old vil-

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lage at the head of the bay, and the seigniorie. Then, when I've rushed you through the best of the homespun shops, I want to take you up the Murray valley to call on a dear old friend of mine who very likely will be working at her loom. Steady on, Stevie, old man! Don't hang yourself. Yes, here's your mistress." And dropping the squirming, squealing puppy into Cundie's arms, he dashed away and had leaped ashore before the gangplank rails were down.

In the general rush to go ashore, Cundie and her grandfather were jostled and pushed aside. Then a woman caught her bag in Stevie's leash and jerked him out of Cundie's arms. Cundie gave a cry of terror as he fell; so tiny a thing was sure to be trodden under foot and killed. Instantly a man just beside her, a tall, broad-shouldered man, wiry for all his leanness, stopped short and flung out his arms, making a barricade.

"Stand still," he ordered arrogantly, and his voice showed that he meant to be obeyed. "A little dog has fallen down, and will be trodden to death, unless we take great care. Can any of you see him?"

Sight was needless. Stevie's howls of rage and fear might have been heard in either Quebec or Tadousac, according to the direction of the wind. They came from some-

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where very close to his rescuer's feet.

The man bent forward, straightened, then turned to the woman at his side.

"Can you reach him? He's just where I can't get hold of him."

The woman, original cause of all the trouble, was peevish. Absurd to delay a whole boatload of tourists, most of them about to see Taft's house and Murray Bay for the first time, just for the sake of a dog!

"He's exactly in front of you," she answered tartly. "Pick him up, yourself, and let us get ashore."

The man turned to face her, speaking with a polite, but icy, crispness that cut his sentence into separate words.

"Please pick up the little dog!"

The woman stared and sniffed. Then, as she saw the haughty face above her, she bent down, picked up the wriggling Stevie as if he had been a scorpion, and placed him silently in the stranger's outstretched hands. He turned at once to Cundie.

"Here he is, safe and sound, and a fine little chap," he said. "He's had a narrow escape; but I don't believe it's done him any harm."

Cundie gripped the youthful hero of the adventure in a pair of very thankful arms. The youthful hero showed his customary gratitude, and Cundie sucked her thumb, before

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she spoke.

"It was wonderful the way you did it," she said then. "If you hadn't been so quick to think and so enormously strong, it would have been the finish of poor Stevie — I beg your pardon?" For the stranger, turning his whole body sharply about, was staring at her in undisguised amazement.

It was a minute before he came back to his manners. Then, —

"I beg yours," he answered very quietly. "Forgive my rudeness, please. Now and then I am a little absent-minded, and it makes me do atrocious things. As for the rest of it, I'm only too glad I was on the spot to be of use." While his words rambled on, his eyes kept coming back and back to Cundie's face. Then, with a sudden tightening of his lips, the stranger saluted and stood back for Cundie and the doctor to pass in front of him.

"You'll never make me believe it was absent-mindedness," Cundie said shortly, when they had joined Stevenson, standing on guard over a new car, and had told him of Stevie's narrow escape.

"What then?" Stevenson asked, as he packed her into the car, Stevie and all.

"Most likely a strong resemblance to the dear old aunt in the country who used to knit his stockings when he was a boy," Cundie said

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viciously. "That's the degrading part of it; I never remind people of their contemporaries up in town. It is always some aged and valuable relative who lives in the simple wilderness. But you never saw anybody stare so, in all your mortal life."

"Shall I hunt him up and bash his head?" Stevenson asked politely.

"You couldn't find him. He deserves it, though. He looked too nice to have such — There he is now! That tall man, standing by the yellow buckboard."

Stevenson followed her glance.

"Talking to the driver? He must be a decent sort of chap, I'd say, for that is one of the seigniorie turn-outs. Most likely he is going there to stay."

The unexpected word had caught Cundie's attention, and the man was side-tracked.

"Seigniorie?"

"Yes. They've a tail end of the feudal system operating down here, a trail of manor houses, one for each town. The seigniorie runs from town to town, and nine miles in from the river. The people pay a few cents' tax an acre for their land."

"What does the seignior do?"

"Takes in the tax, and acts as target for their grousing." Stevenson laughed shortly. Then he turned to the chauffeur, speaking in

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French. "To the village, *chez* Ferron. Then we'll go on around the Murray. When we get back, if there's still time, we can run up through Cap-à-l'Aigle as far as the ravine."

"French?" the doctor commented.

"Yes. They hate speaking English, if they can help it, though most of them understand. Now for it, to see how much ground we can cover in the next two hours."

They covered it all, it seemed to Cundie. Moreover, Stevie was so meek after his late adventure that she could give her whole attention to the sights she had been brought to see. And then, as they were driving back to the boat once more, an extra and unexpected sight was given them. Just before they came to the great gate of the seigniorie, the same yellow buckboard swung out into the road ahead of them. In the buckboard was the staring stranger, more arrogant than ever and sitting very upright, as if he were exceptionally pleased with himself. As their chauffeur sounded his horn and the buckboard drew aside for the car to pass him, the stranger turned his head to find three pairs of eyes looking into his. His shoulders stiffened ever so slightly, and the red ran up across his cheeks; but he managed a fairly creditable bow, as they swept past him.

"Evidently he's made his manners and is

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going on around the Saguenay with us," Stevenson commented. "With you, rather. Hang it all, I wish I were going to have the trip back again with you!" He spoke directly to the doctor; but it was Cundie who appropriated the words. Under cover of the robe, she gave an expressive little squeeze to Stevie. Stevie, tired with jaunting, snarled drowsily and slept on.

Stevenson hurried them back from their short walk at Tadousac.

"It's the Saguenay you're out for," he explained; "and there's only one place on board where you can see it properly. Get on all the warm things you own, and come up to the very bow of the top deck. You'll find me, just in front of the wheelhouse. I'll cut on ahead and bag the chairs."

"What's the bandbox?" Cundie inquired, once they were settled down with furs and rugs piled high about them, for even at the Tadousac wharf one begins to feel the death-like chill of the river of mystery.

Stevenson smiled, in obvious self-approval.

"That's our supper. The powers that be below have arranged to serve their dinner just in the best part of the whole river. I wasn't going to let them spoil your trip, so I breathed a word in Lachance's ear, last night. He's given us a chicken and things, and a lot of

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their best thermos fixin's. We are going to eat right here, and I'll bet anything that, once we've swung out into the wind, you'll find your appetite. By the way, I've just been heaping coals of fire upon your staring stranger."

"Where did you get your shovel?" Cundie asked.

"He put it into my hands, slipped on that beastly brasswork of the stairs and came down, bunk, on his nose and, incidentally, on my feet. A lesser man than I would have called him a worm and stepped on him. I hauled him up — he's amazingly heavy, and as stiff as a poker — and wiped him off and sent him on his way. I must say, he limped like blazes. Ah —h—h! Now we're off."

Only a few minutes afterward, their desultory talk had sunk into the silence which is the only fitting tribute for the river, endlessly deep, endlessly still, endlessly lonely as it winds its way between the overhanging mountains that bar it in on either hand. Straight over the *Richelieu's* bows, the yellow October sun sank into a yellower sunset, and the mountains were mottled with yellow patches, half-smothered in the general green. And then the sun went out of sight, and the water turned black, and the mountains narrowed in upon them, and the icy silence grew oppres-

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sive. But the heavens were purpling above them, and the little stars pricked their way out and peeped down in friendly fashion. Bit by bit, the darkness softened and became faintly luminous, then clear and silvery until, above the lower peaks, the young moon rode into view, turning the ink-black river to a sheet of molten steel. After all that, Cape Eternity came upon them almost with a sense of anticlimax.

It was ten, that night, when they tied up at Saint Alphonse. Stevenson took leave of them there. Cundie and the doctor were to sleep on board, ready for their early start down the river. Stevenson's last act, achieved by much silver and more quibbling, had been to rescue his namesake from the baggage-room and leave him in Cundie's hands. But Cundie, as she snuggled down into her blankets and hugged the shivering little morsel: Cundie, remembering the look on Stevenson's face when he had left them, suddenly knew that the next day's journey would be an empty thing.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SELKIRK, an unopened letter in his hand, crossed to his window. The morning of itself was enough to tempt him to look out; but all he wanted was to know whether Miss Lottie Jenkins was already on the terrace which lately had become their trysting place. Selkirk was coming to where he liked Miss Lottie tremendously. She was the sort one could tell things to, the sort who never interrupted, nor laughed in the wrong place. Some women were so afraid you were going to be so sorry afterward that you had told them things that they cut you off, half through. She heard you out, before she offered either applause or consolation.

In arriving at this point in his appreciation, Selkirk had quite ignored the fact that he had never given Miss Lottie's sympathetic attention any adequate test. His clicking inner mechanism had kept him from speaking any but the most economically-chosen words; his months-long habit of silence had accustomed him to keeping his personal concerns mostly to himself. But a certain ingrained idealism bottled up inside him along with the rest of his

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mental personality had churned him up to this belief, and he was moderately certain that Miss Lottie would measure up to any spiritual test. Moreover, he felt an equal certainty that he was going to provide that test, and soon.

Miss Lottie was not visible. Cundie was, and, as a natural consequence, so was Stevie. Stevie was enjoying his favourite trick of sitting solidly down and waiting to be drawn, like a new sort of sled, or the horse-things they use for children's barber-chairs. However, Cundie and Stevie did not interest Selkirk in the least just then, and he turned his attention to the letter in his hand. He recognized the writing at once.

"What the devil does the old boy want now?" he thought profanely, as he tore the envelope across.

A moment later, his eyes were blazing angrily, his comely face flushed like a ripe tomato.

"Wilton!" he said aloud, after his customary gurgling and grimacing prelude. "Well, I will be damned!" And the condemnation had nothing to do with the three distinct and separate clicks that had punctuated his few words.

He stood for a moment, whistling to himself, while his eyes rested unseeingly on the squad of green-sashed Seminary boys just tak-

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ing their morning drill upon the terrace. Then he turned back to the opened letter.

"My dear Mr. Selkirk," he read, in the doctor's black and illegible hand-writing; "it is so hard to get together any sort of a quorum of one's compatriots up here that I am venturing to ask if you can't come to luncheon, to-morrow, to meet Doctor Ralph Wilton. Miss Lottie Jenkins has agreed to balance up the American quartette, so that my niece will be the only alien — unless, indeed, she brings your young friend, Stevie."

"Wilton? Ralph Wilton? That's the psychiatrist-fellow who used to lecture at Harvard in my day. I thought he'd chucked his Americanism, though, when he came up here to study shell-shock. Hm! Wilton? And the old doctor is a foxy one. Which of us does he put down as Wilton's patient? Not himself, for sure. Doctors are always so damned altruistic, where treatments are concerned. Miss Jenkins? Miss Barth? Myself?" Suddenly he began to laugh uproariously, the first time, indeed, that he had let himself go in laughter for many months. It changed the whole look of the man, improved him wonderfully. And then there came something, the old something that had put first Cundie, then her grandfather, on guard. His lips shut with a snap, and straightened, stiffened. His blue

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eyes, though, still held their gleam. "Myself, I'll bet anything," he meditated. "The dear old boy has got me down for shell-shock, and has summoned Wilton for an observation. By Jove, it's rather good of him, after all. I'd almost like to stay and see the farce play out; but, all in all, I think I'll have to run up to Montreal, to-night, on business. I wonder if I ought to file my S. C. D. certificate with them, before I go."

As a general thing during their almost daily walks together, for wholly obvious reasons Selkirk had allowed Miss Lottie to do all the talking. Not that she minded. She had never had so good a listener in all her life before. Mrs. Jenkins was one of the too fond mothers who insist that a daughter's happiest hours should be spent in the society of her parents; and Mrs. Jenkins, no matter where or with whom she was, invariably did three-quarters of the talking. If the conversation ever strayed from the subject of her choice, she merely cut in and dragged it back again. Her husband and daughter, well accustomed to her methods, found it easier, all in all, to let her enjoy her monologue. Mr. Jenkins sought his needful outlet among his business mates who were glad to listen to his terse opinions; but poor Miss Lottie, it is safe to say, had never had a real listener until the

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night of the Davis dinner party. Even that listener had drifted off in pursuit of Cundie, once the meal was over.

As for Cundie's society on the following day, Miss Lottie had left Sainte Anne feeling that she had been treated to a very instructive lecture, amusing enough and with frequent pauses for assenting nods; but a lecture just the same and rather hopelessly improving. The only moment of actual personal interest for her had come when, taking her ancestral bits in her teeth, Miss Lottie had bolted across her theological enclosure, jumped the bars and found herself on her knees before an alien shrine and with a vague little secret stirring in her heart, half hope, half prayer, that she would have died, rather than confess to that austere Baptist, Mamma Jenkins. Confessing, Miss Lottie was quite well aware that she would have been impeached for heresy, dragged home and disciplined without delay.

Asked, Miss Lottie would have denied absolutely that their overtaking Selkirk had any connection with anything that had gone before. If she felt a small, tingling thrill when he stepped into the car and took his seat beside her, she accounted for it solely on the score of his remarkable good looks, since most of the men whom she had met before had been very toothy, and rather drab and lanky

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as to face and hair. Nevertheless, Miss Lottie continued to tingle. It made her unusually talkative, and Cundie, who was thirsting for a gossip with Stevenson, was delighted to let her have her way. Nor did Miss Lottie who, after all, was her mother's own child, though with a difference, quite grasp the fact that her charming new companion was limiting his remarks to an occasional half-inarticulate grunt. Neither did she take it in, during the days that followed. Selkirk's eyes showed that he was interested in her monologues; his evident desire for her society was all that any girl could wish. Miss Lottie enjoyed the new experience to the uttermost: the frequent company of a personable man, and the chance of doing practically all the talking.

Therefore she had a sudden sense of surprise, a few days later, when Selkirk, interrupting her disquisition on the habits of her chambermaid, demanded tidings of the doctor's luncheon party. He had to repeat his question twice, to catch Miss Lottie's attention.

"You had a good time, then?" he asked her, after the lengthy description of the festivity called forth by his question had rambled to its close.

"Very. Doctor Wilton is a charming man, and so good-looking. He was full of inter-

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esting stories of his work in France during the war. Miss Barth told a good many interesting stories, too; but," Miss Lottie spoke with a nippy certainty that would have done her mother proud; "for my part, I wouldn't be willing to so much as mention a good many of the things she talks about."

Selkirk smiled.

"Miss Barth is very English, and very, very modern," he made consoling answer.

"Yes. Isn't it too bad?" Miss Lottie's reply satisfied her conscience absolutely. She had always been taught that, in talking to a man, nothing was more disastrous than mentioning another woman with anything but open praise or gentle pity. Miss Lottie felt she had been very loyal to tradition in the present case.

Selkirk smiled again. He often did, when Miss Lottie talked; and yet never once had he actually swerved from his original liking. He had liked Mr. Jenkins too, absolutely. Men always did. Selkirk's questionings about the family centred in Mrs. Jenkins, whether his gullet was large enough to swallow her whole and blindly, as one swallows a Malpecque oyster, trusting her to his later and leisurely digestion.

"Did Wilton talk shop?" he asked, after he had done with his smile.

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"Shop?"

"Medical."

"Oh, yes. He and the doctor talked a good deal about things like mental hygiene and knee jerks and proper co-ordination and all that."

"Say anything about stammering?"

Miss Lottie went very red.

"Yes, a little. Not much, though; only incidentally."

Selkirk laughed. It would have appeared to Cundie, had she been listening, that for a man as sensitive as he sometimes showed himself, the laugh was very wholesome.

"What a pity I wasn't there!" he added. "I might have been able to give him a few points."

His casual allusion jarred Miss Lottie from her reticence.

"Oh, I do wish you had been there!" she said fervently. "They had the craziest notion, those two doctors, that stammering always shows a nervous disease."

"In the listener?" Selkirk asked her rather dryly, and his face, for all his smile, showed his displeasure.

Like all Miss Lotties the world over, she took his displeasure as aimed at herself. The fear that she might have blundered made her nervous.

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"No. In the one who stammers," she answered shakily. "For my part, I wanted to cut in and tell them that the only stammering person I have ever known is one of the sanest and best-poised men alive."

Any ingratiating smile, any mark of self-conscious coquetry would have made the personality insupportable. But the girl had been too much in earnest to choose any but the simplest, crudest phrase and utter it as crudely. Therefore, —

"Thank you, Miss Jenkins," Selkirk told her very gravely, for he saw no need to pretend that he misunderstood her meaning. And then, yielding to a sudden impulse born of her kindness, an impulse he was destined to thank until his dying day, he spoke directly of his disability, telling its cause.

Five minutes later, his shoulders very stiff and straight, he was clapping his hat hard down on his head and tramping up the terrace, quite alone.

Miss Lottie had heard him out, listening. At his final rather halting words, however, she had burst out laughing.

So far as Selkirk was concerned, that laugh was destined to upset Sainte Anne's arrangements absolutely. Or had the Good Sainte, wise and far-seeing, rearranged her earlier plans to suit herself?

CHAPTER TWELVE

A GOOD deal to everybody's surprise, Stevenson turned up at the Château, two days later. Cundie found him talking to her grandfather, when she came to breakfast.

"Whence? Wherefore?" she hailed him.

"Saint Alphonse, yesterday morning. I came down on one of the old boats, and got in an hour ago."

"That's very nice. Are you going to be here for a while?"

"That's as may be. When I got to the hangars I found some lunatic had taken up my plane, the day before. He was a friend of the superintendent, and claimed to have been next thing to an ace in France — "

"Counting which way, king or deuce?"

"I'd thought the deuces all died on the spot. Anyhow, this one deserved to. He got off with a sprained foot and a broken collar bone; but my poor old bus is badly wrecked. It is going to take a good while to fix her up; and, as long as a flying man is no good without his plane, I thought I might as well be kicking my heels in town as up there. What

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have you people got on, for to-day?"

Cundie wrinkled her nose in disgust.

"Grandfather nothing; but I am tied up: dentist this morning and a tailor man, this afternoon."

"Hard luck!"

"You are responsible. Not for the tooth. Salted almonds did that; I suspect they were some of the original bitter almonds of the scriptures. But for the tailor. I fell a victim to your homespun."

"Souvenir of the trip? Blue, of course."

"Never! I hate blue. It's rosy. At least," she amended hastily; "as near to rose as my hair will let me go. Anyway, I've got to be busy, the whole day."

"Then dine with me to-night, both of you," the young man urged. "It's my turn, you know, and it will give us a ripping chance to talk over our trip. Afterwards, if you like, we'll go down into the grill for the dancing."

"Saint Lawrence on a gridiron! What an awful picture!"

Stevenson laughed.

"It does sound rather awful; doesn't it? They don't use the big room below in winter; they just clear out the middle of the grill and have the dancing there. At seven or so, for dinner? And, by the way, how is my young namesake?"

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"Temporarily sanctified, though I'm afraid it isn't going to last. His Saguenay trip seems to have tamed him down a little. Do you mind, considering my kennel duties, if we don't dine till half--past? It's a lot of work to get Stevie fed and settled for the night."

"Good morning, Miss Barth. I suppose it must seem very strange to you to be looking out on all this glorious sunshine."

Stevenson, facing the direction whence the voice had come, made a spasmodic sort of salutation, gave forth a spasmodic sort of noise that included the sound *g'morn'ng*, and swiftly vanished, leaving Cundie to face the redoubtable Mrs. Jenkins as she came rustling in for breakfast. Mrs. Jenkins belonged to the almost extinct race of women who, whatever the fashion in undies, would always make you aware that ample silk petticoats still draped their equally ample legs.

"For my part," she was wont to say, when in the society of strictly her own sex; "no matter whatever comes, I shall always believe in wearing a good silk petticoat, even on one's last journey to the tomb." And the latter-day children of her audience so far believed her that they used to predict that, on that journey, her astral body would come back to rustle the slippery folds, in order that the mourners might be certain they were there.

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This morning, though, no thought of that last journey troubled her mind; she merely rustled from unbroken habit, and let it go at that. A woman of her build, and hungry for griddle-cakes and coffee, doesn't stop on her way to breakfast to philosophize. Mrs. Jenkins had stopped for the pleasure of baiting Cundie whose nationality appeared to give her great offence.

Cundie met the baiting very calmly.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jenkins. Aren't you very late, this morning? I thought you usually had your breakfast, hours and hours before I get down. But why strange?"

"To see this glorious sunshine," Mrs. Jenkins iterated, for her vocabulary often ran short and let her down.

"Yes. It's lovely," Cundie assented, still quite calmly. "But aren't all the mornings nice, at this end of the year?"

"At home, of course. And they seem to be about the same, up here." Abruptly she side-tracked. "After all, Canada is only a part of the United States, and I presume we shall take it over before long."

"Yes?"

"Yes." Mrs. Jenkins swelled visibly with her racial pride. "It would be the obvious thing for us to do, after Cuba and the Philip-pines; and ever so much better for the Canadi-

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ans to be a part of our great democracy. I'm sure you must agree with me in that, my dear Miss Barth."

"Really, I hadn't thought it out as far as that," Cundie evaded rather cleverly. And then, "But what about the sunshine, Mrs. Jenkins?" she urged. "Why should I find it strange?"

Mrs. Jenkins smiled at her with infinite condescension.

"Oh, my friends all tell me England is always very foggy." She fairly flipped her answer into Cundie's face. Then her appetite grew quite unmanageable. She nodded benevolently and went on.

Cundie, her various duties done by her tooth and her frock and her puppy, gave an unusual amount of time and thought to her dressing, that night. She was looking forward to their dinner with a good deal of pleasure. She had liked Stevenson, the first time her eyes had rested on him. He was simple and sincere and absolutely nice. Each time that she had been with him since, her original impression of him had strengthened. Not that any sentimental yearning mingled with her liking. Cundie had explained to herself quite downrightly, months before, that in all probability she would live and die an old maid. She liked many men, and they liked

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her, on both sides as good pals. She had never felt inside herself any deeper stirrings of her personality, nor had the fabled "sixth sense of all nice women" ever thrilled her with its mystic warning of a proposal to come. She just jogged along very happily through a not uneventful life, taking her many friendships as they came, keeping them, but never consciously trying to change them into the kind of thing Miss Lottie had so evidently prayed for. If they ever did change — But that would be a bridge to be crossed only when she came to it. For the present, Cundie took and enjoyed the friendships, and let it go at that.

Of them all, she had found Stevenson's the most satisfactory. He had passed the supreme test: it was rarely necessary to explain things to him. He knew, without. She had found this out, on their river trip; most of all in the breathless appreciation of the hour between the falling sun and the sailing up of the moon from behind the blue-black cliffs. Looking backwards the next day, Cundie knew that the breathlessness had been only for Stevenson and herself. Her grandfather had taken it more tranquilly, sitting back in his chair and smoking. She and Stevenson had risen and stood leaning on the rail, their faces front, meeting the ice-cold

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breeze. The same aching sense of dumb, overwhelming beauty, Cundie knew now, had weighed them down and kept them silent. The same relief had come to both of them, when the *Richelieu* had turned her searchlight on Cape Trinity, probing the mystery of the night and the river with its prosaic beam of light. The sudden let-down had been good for both of them. It was a comfort to exchange trite comments on the tourist-haunted scene.

Cundie had done more than a little thinking about Stevenson in the next day or two. He had the occasional reticences, the aloofnesses of all flying men. It was as if he had learned to measure things in the angle of his high perspectives. Paltry things, trivial things he allowed to fall into their proper place in the general scheme. Not that he could not be trivial, too, upon occasion; but he was never paltry. He merely alternated the moods of a thoughtful and high-minded man with those of an irresponsible, but uniformly decent, small boy. And Cundie, thinking him over, found it hard to decide which mood she preferred. Nor could she ever predict which mood would come.

Cundie drove her last hairpin home, then took a long look at herself in the mirror, a thoughtful look, quite unlike the usual cursory

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glance that finished her dressing. She was too sensible a girl to deny that she could look attractive on occasion, and that this was one of the occasions. She was glad of it. It would make Stevenson take more pleasure in his little dinner party. Then Stevie whimpered and nestled in his sleep. She bent to cuddle him, to rouse him from any ugly dreams that might molest him after his greedy bolting of his supper. As she was still fussing over him, she heard the clink of her neighbour's dinner tray, and she laughed softly to herself, wondering how much longer it would take Miss Lottie to woo him from his solitary habits. Her face was very gay and winning as she finally rose from before the puppy and went hurrying to the lift, in sudden panic over her tardiness.

After all, she was down ahead of her grandfather. Stevenson, waiting in the lounge, saw her approach, then stood back, as the Major unfolded himself from a chair just opposite the door into the court.

"My dear Miss Barth, you're looking as fresh and jolly as one of your own pink English daisies," he said gallantly. "Quebec agrees with you; that's certain. But where have you been, this long come short?"

"Here in the Château mostly," she made gay answer. "You didn't approve the results

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of my historical research; and I have assumed family cares, since I saw you." She explained Stevie briefly. "No, though. I did have him before your party."

The eyes of the old soldier twinkled.

"Seen anything of Mrs Jenkins?" he asked.

"This morning. She was explaining to me that the States would probably take over Canada, now that they've done their duty by Cuba and the Philippines," Cundie recited demurely.

The people in the farthest corners of the lounge looked up to smile in sympathy with the Major's mighty laugh.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "That kind are always like that. My wife took her to the Cathedral, the other morning, and when the choir sang *God Save the King*, she piped up on *My Country, 'tis of thee*, and sang the whole damned plagiarism through. We need at least a thousand of the real, old-stock Americans like your grandfather to come up here and live down the noisy new-bloods. The trouble is, the real kind that count are likely to walk by, unnoticed; the ones that tweak the eagle's tail get all the attention. Oh, well. But I've been wanting Mrs. Davis to call you up and ask you to come for dinner, one night soon. My nephew Sandy blew in on us, two weeks ago. He's rather a likable youngster, and I want to make things nice enough for him so

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that he'll stay on, all winter. I'm waiting for him now."

Cundie decided it was time to take to cover.

"And Mr. Stevenson and my grandfather are waiting for me," she said, with a slight move in their direction.

The Major tried to detain her.

"What if they are? Let them wait a little longer. I'm expecting Sandy now, any minute. There's been a kitchen tragedy, and we decided to have our dinner here. Mrs. Davis is bringing an extra niece along. I want you to meet Sandy."

"Thank you so much. I'm sure it would be very nice; but Mr. Stevenson is waiting —" And Cundie made her escape, just as the endlessly tall door porter swung back the door to let in Mrs. Davis and her train.

As a matter of course, Louis led them to Lachance's table, far down the room. Lachance was an institution, even as Stevenson had said. Those who were used to being served by him generally ended by refusing to eat from any other hand. He had just seated them, and was waiting for Louis to give the last approving pat to the flowers, when the Major led his little party to a table in the corner by the door. Cundie's back was turned that way; but Stevenson, facing them, exclaimed, —

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"Good Lord!" For Cundie had repeated to them her conversation with the simple-minded Major.

"What now?" she asked.

"The Major's nephew. His beloved Sandy. They've just come in."

"Is he as bad as that?" Cundie queried, while she tried to manage a casual three-quarter turn in her chair, and brought disgrace upon herself by catching her glass in her dangling apology for a sleeve and deluging the table.

"Bad nothing!" Stevenson told her, while he joined Lachance and Louis in energetic sopping. "Canadian ladies," he added pointedly; "as a general thing don't make themselves so conspicuous, when they are asked out to dine."

"This isn't out; it's only putting up two extra chairs. And English hosts don't swear in public. Thanks, Louis. I'm sorry; but it was Mr. Stevenson's fault for startling me." And then, when their small tumult had subsided, and Louis had carefully replaced the flowers on the fresh cloth, "What about the nephew Sandy?" she inquired.

"Merely that he is gazing at your back hair, in manifest elation over your excitement at his appearing to you again."

"Again?"

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"Yes. He's the Johnny that rescued Stevie on the boat, the one who stared. Moreover, he still shows signs of his grovellings on my boots. He limps like anything."

With Stevenson and her grandfather vying with each other for the better story, with their three-cornered reminiscences of their river trip, Cundie had little trouble in spinning out the dinner endlessly. Apparently, as Stevenson noted with surprise, she had forgotten the nephew absolutely. The fact was, however, she was possessed of a sturdy determination that the Major should lead his prize relative quite away from the dining-room and from the house, before she stirred. At last, though, she turned as if by accident and looked around the room. As she had expected, the coast was clear. She gave a neat little start of surprise.

"Granddaddy! How disgraceful! We have kept poor Mr. Stevenson sitting here till everybody else is gone." And, without more ado, she rose.

Down in the lounge, the coast was also clear. It was with a thankful heart that she followed Stevenson towards the open door of the grill, now rearranged for dancing. Not that she had any special objection to meeting the Major's nephew; but she had grave doubts about the Major's form of introduction which

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might be more enthusiastic than she would quite enjoy. Therefore her relief fell from her when, just inside the grillroom door, the Major sprang up from his chair and seized her by the elbow.

"At last! You must have had a very private and special *ménu* to have kept you all this time."

"A very good dinner." Cundie smiled at her host. "Mr. Stevenson knows how to choose. And we had a little accident at the start that delayed the serving."

"We saw you, and wondered what was happening," the Major responded very frankly; "but my nephew Sandy — oh, there he comes now, dancing with the girl in the blue ruffle — said you had upset something with your sleeve."

Cundie smothered her rage at this accurate-minded and far-sighted stranger.

"What an observing person!" she remarked dryly. "Good evening, Mrs. Davis. Are you going to fox-trot with Grandaddy?"

But her attempted diversion failed. As well try to stem the tide of the Ganges with a kitchen colander as divert the Major from any idea that had lodged inside his dear grey noddle.

"My dear Miss Barth," he explained across his wife's amused disclaimer; "he was certain-

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ly observing, as far as you were concerned. From the time I pointed him out to you till we were outside the dining-room, his eye was on you like a terrier's on an old grey rat."

"Thank you," Cundie told him very gravely, for it was plain that the Major's tongue had run away with him and bolted down an unexpected bypath. And then, "Which did you say was your nephew?" she asked him, thus giving herself a chance to stare at the dancers.

She saw him coming directly towards her, dancing lightly, rhythmically and with no sign of the limp which Stevenson had mentioned. As he came very near, she let her glance wander across him, and again across, negligently, casually. Then, when it was evident that he was going to stop beside her, she turned to Stevenson with a gay, inviting little smile.

The Major's nephew did stop as he had intended. It was too late for him to do anything else, without upsetting his partner. By the time he had come to a full halt, however, Cundie and Stevenson were the room's length away, and dancing with a perfect accord of step and rhythm which denied any hope that they had never danced that way before.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MRS. Jenkins was giving a party. "In the Canadian Suite," she explained to Mrs. Davis and, later, to Cundie. Then, interpreting their short pauses of indecision as awe at her fine quarters, she added, "Yes, I know it does seem rather extravagant. In fact, I keep telling Mr. Jenkins we aren't getting our money's worth; but, after all, what's money? Everybody says that the Canadian Suite is the show place of the whole Château; it's going to be a comfort to be able to say we had it when we were here. We're to have an extra room, just along the hall, set out as a dining-room." And then she added her final, stupefying bit of information. "I want you to be sure to be here by six o'clock. We have ordered the waiters to be on hand at a quarter to, and they'll get so cross, if we are behind hand." And the good lady smiled and nodded at the telephone, as if to thank it for its patience in standing still while she transmitted her long message.

Mrs. Davis, who was of the older school, could see no way of escape from the festivity. Connie was younger, and temporized.

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"I'll ask my grandfather, Mrs. Jenkins and see what he may be doing, that night. It's so awfully good of you to ask us, when we haven't called." Cundie knew that Mrs. Jenkins would never see the malice in the last words.

Nor did she.

"Oh, I don't believe in standing on ceremony. Nobody does it, nowadays; at least, not in America. But I suppose the English will always be great sticklers for convention." Mrs. Jenkins prided herself on the phrase, and repeated it in another form. "You are so much more sticklers for convention over there than we are in our nice, independent America. I suppose it doesn't go with our great spirit of democracy."

"Yes?" Cundie assented very patiently. "Well, as I said, I'll ask my grandfather. Of course, he has a good many things on hand, with Major Davis and his — "

"The Davises are coming," Mrs. Jenkins interrupted. "I asked them first of all."

"Oh." And then Cundie remembered her manners. "How very nice!" she added as spontaneously as she could.

A minute later, she was asking for the Davis number on the telephone.

"Oh, Mrs. Davis? Good morning. I'm Cundie Barth. Are you really going to the

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Jenkins *festa*? The dinner party? Yes. But at six o'clock? And how on earth do we know what to wear? Did she tell you how many? Yes. The two of you. Oh, yes, your nephew. And Mr. Stevenson. And Mr. Selkirk? Never! Why, he's the funny man across the hall from me, most awfully good-looking, but he has something wrong with his machinery so that he clicks and rattles when he tries to talk. I didn't suppose he ever went anywhere. Miss Lottie's particular friend? Oh, yes. Well, if you are sure to be there, you and the Major, perhaps Granddaddy and I will risk it." Then Cundie remembered the nephew, reddened to the roots of her tawny hair and abruptly hung up.

It was three days since she had glimpsed the nephew, dancing discreetly with the niece in blue. She had only glimpsed him. She had seen to that, and Stevenson had been her alert, though unconscious, ally. She had danced away with Stevenson just twenty seconds before the nephew had managed to bring the niece to a halt on the spot where they had been standing. She and Stevenson had made a couple of turns of the room; then Cundie, who had mastered the intricate geography of the Château, remembered that she might have dropped a little bag-thing under the dinner table. It really wasn't worth going back for;

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and it might be in her room, anyway. Well, if he insisted, they could just run up those stairs, on the chance that the dining-room door might be unlocked, though generally that door was kept closed.

It was unlocked. The bag was not under the table, nor had the sweepers seen it. Possibly she had dropped it near the lift. And then, before Stevenson quite knew what was happening, they were talking cosily on the window-seat that curves around the great red drawing-room, their shoulders turned to the belated tourists who still thronged the place, their eyes upon the glittering strings of Levis lights that border the different levels like a many-stranded necklace. By the time Cundie's conscience awakened to the fact that her grandfather would be missing them, he, most guileless of men, was hunting Stevenson with contrite apologies. It was so hard to get away from the Major; he was always so cordial and so full of interesting talk. But the doctor did hope that Stevenson — And so on.

"Where is the Major now?"

The doctor looked a trifle confused. He had not meant to explain the reason for his belated attack of remorse. It appeared that the Major had gone home and taken his family with him. Mrs. Davis had been upset by the memory of her empty kitchen, and the

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fact that she must get up early to do breakfast.

Reassured, Cundie put a casual question.

"What do you think about the nephew?"

"Well enough," her grandfather answered temperately. "He seems to be a decent young fellow, perfectly wholesome, very dictatorial, but not specially endowed with brains. I did like, though," the doctor added, with tardy justice; "the way he looked out for Mrs. Davis when there was a girl in reach. It shows there must be something nice in a young man, when he remembers that an older person still has some claims."

" 'See what white teeth he has!' " Cundie murmured.

But her grandfather had turned to Stevenson, and did not seem to hear.

Three days later, Cundie was showing off her sporting ancestry. As often happened, Stevenson had moved across to their table for the cigarettes and coffee, and Cundie was offering heavy odds against the chance of meeting Selkirk at the Jenkins dinner.

"Of course he'll be there. Miss Lottie has put a leash on him, and leads him around with her like Mary's lamb." The doctor spoke with the occasional obtuseness of the mature.

Stevenson, though, was wiser.

"Like a dumb captive, you'd better say. I've

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met them often on the terrace; but I've never heard Selkirk get in a single word."

"Heredity is a mighty force." The doctor seemed pondering aloud.

"How hateful you are, both of you!" Cundie told them. "And you aren't fair. He took to Miss Lottie on sight —"

"So did we all." Stevenson accented his second word.

"— and no wonder for she really is a dear—" Cundie flushed with her own stress on the essential fact of the situation.

"For my part, I'm getting to where I prefer the old girl."

"— and any amount finer than her mother." Cundie ended on a violent crescendo across which the doctor's voice cut like an oily knife.

"I am not so sure of that, Cundie. The more I watch the two of them, I think that the old girl, as Mr. Stevenson calls her, is the better material. Miss Lottie has put on a superficial polish, and caught a little of the polite patter of the day. But, fundamentally, there's a difference. The daughter is silver-gilt. The mother, I suspect, if we could grind down deep enough, would prove to be —"

"A nugget of pure gold." Stevenson capped his phrase. "I'm with you there, doctor. It doesn't take long for the gilding to wear thin. The girl is obstinate and opinionated,

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and she has the brain of a guinea fowl. She's an awful climber, too."

"What about the mother?" Cundie reminded him.

"As simple as a transparent slate. Of course," he laughed across at her in boyish mockery; "you are bound to spite her because she has such an awful down on the English. I admit she's a bit of a problem now and then; but, give the two of them an equal chance, and I think you'll find the daughter will funk it, and the old lady will make good."

Cundie rose.

"Well, anyway we're beasts to be discussing them like this, just when we're pledged to eat their salt. And I was talking about Mr. Selkirk. Ten to one against his putting in an appearance, with his pap bowl in his hand!"

"Done!" Stevenson said promptly. "The pap bowl settles it. I'll take you on."

Cundie tried to hedge.

"I didn't mean a literal and material pap bowl."

"But you said it. Between gentlemen of honour, mental reservations don't count. Either the actual bowl, or the bet is off."

"Better make it half-price without the bowl, Cundie," the doctor advised. "You'll stand a better chance of winning in the end."

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And so it proved. For in the end the pap bowl was missing; but so, indeed, was Selkirk. Stevenson, making his bow at Cundie's elbow, ventured a query.

"Where is Selkirk, Mrs. Jenkins? The Major told me he was coming."

"Dear Mr. Selkirk! You know him, then?"

"By reputation, very well," Stevenson told her gravely. "I was introduced to him, one day; but that was all. He was too interested in some one else," Stevenson turned an expressive glance at Miss Lottie, posted at her mother's side; "to be attentive to mere me."

Miss Lottie took it on herself to answer, preening herself meanwhile, and looking very self-conscious.

"Poor Mr. Selkirk! We did beg him to come, almost got on our knees before him; but it was no use. He simply refuses to go out for meals. Of course," she smiled very meaningly; "a gentleman with that kind of an ailment — "

"Why in the world couldn't she have had the decency to call it a disability?" Cundie asked herself disgustedly, while Stevenson was putting his own query aloud.

"What — er — what kind of an ailment has he got?"

Miss Lottie tittered.

"That's telling. I never betray a confi-

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dence, you know. It isn't nice."

To the general surprise, Mrs. Jenkins rounded on her daughter.

"And what's more, Lottie Jenkins, it isn't nice, as you call it, to let people know you've received one. If I were in Mr. Selkirk's place, I'd never trust you again as long as I lived."

"Good for the old lady!" Stevenson murmured, as they moved away to make room for the Major and his family.

Mrs. Jenkins's voice came after them.

"Just poke about anywhere and look at things. I don't suppose you get up here, every day."

Cundie's eyes moved towards Stevenson's face. He whistled softly and lifted his brows.

"All right, then; let's go to it," he advised her. "It's ages since I've been up here, and then only with my hand in my pocket and a bellboy at my heels. I'm afraid I don't remember the exact geography of the place; but we'll take a chance on any door that happens to be open."

"Yes; but what's the object of it?" Cundie asked, after an interval of aimless prowling.

"Originally, when the Château stood mainly for artistic charm, it was meant for a corner of old Canada where the primitive furniture and old handiwork, picked up nobody knows

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where, could be kept on show. Nowadays, it's another bait for millionaires. They like to say they've had the suite for their own quarters."

"But do you suppose half of this stuff is really old?"

"Absolutely. And some of it is quite unique. Not that one hears much about it now. In time, it will very likely follow their stunning collection of ship models and a lot of their old brass into the basement. In the old days, when the little old red bridge was in existence, the whole rambling, unpractical house was a joy. I used to come here with my Dad, every winter, for a month of out-door sports. He was a great old chap, in the same class with your grandfather and the Major, did everything: skied, snowshoed, curled, did figure skating, and even played goal at hockey, after he was sixty. It was on a bet, and his team won."

"I wonder," Cundie's voice was thoughtful; "whether we are ever going to be the equals of our forebears."

"Not in the same way. We muss around too much with amateur psychology. We take our urges and our inhibitions as our grandparents took their toddy and their composition tea, and they aren't half as beneficial. If I could be the equal of my old Dad for one

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short hour — Hullo, Major! What do you mean, sneaking up behind us to listen while we sing your praise?"

"I was sneaking up behind you to steal this fine young lady and carry her off."

"But why?"

"Because you've had her long enough; it's not fair to the rest of us to tuck this gorgeous vision — really, my dear Miss Barth, the Queen of Sheba would look just a frump beside you — into a corner where we all can't see her. Besides, I want to take her out and let my nephew meet her."

"Why don't you go after your nephew and bring him here?" Stevenson asked sweetly.

"Because again, you young rascal, this room has two perfectly good doors." The Major laughed out joyously. "You see the old fox is wise enough to discover your game. Come along, the two of you. Miss Lottie is beginning to look sulky, and Sandy is stiff with boredom. They can't seem to hit it off together at all."

Ten minutes later, Cundie was prompt to join the general move to the table, spread in a room down the hall. She had met the Major's nephew, and he had proved superlatively uninteresting. There was nothing at all against him. He was like dozens of the perfectly conventional, perfectly colourless men

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that she was meeting constantly at home. Obviously well-bred, and educated as far as Eton and Oxford could educate a rather inert mind, [possibly] a little stupid and probably very contented with himself: in dress and speech and bearing he could be counted on to be neither attractive nor antagonistic. He just was. And what made it worse for Cundie, he appeared to be distressingly eager to make an immediate impression.

Cundie was used to his type, however, and knew how to handle it with the minimum effort. She smiled prettily at his enthusiasms, laughed gently at his witticisms, and punctuated his remarks with a series of *Oh!s* and *Really?s* that led him on to a perfect orgy of self-pleasure in his easy conquest. Then, at the first mention of dinner, she slid away from him and attached herself to her grandfather's side.

The dinner itself was good; but the arrangement of the table was death to general talk. Cundie found herself between her grandfather and Mr. Jenkins who was given a place with no especial relation to his wife. Mrs. Jenkins had the two Davises on one side of her, the nephew on the other with Miss Lottie beyond. Stevenson was on Miss Lottie's other hand. Miss Lottie was more exuberant than usual. It might have come from a mod-

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est desire on her part to call attention from the meagreness of that portion of her gown that showed as she sat at table. Stevenson made manful efforts to play up to his duties to the daughter of his hostess; but Sandy Grahame sat dumb, inert, with his eyes fixed stolidly on Cundie. His stare was not so much curious as vaguely assertive. It hit Cundie like a blow; under its impact, her table manners suffered. She slopped her soup, and dropped her fork, and ended by knocking her elbow against the dish of salted almonds the waiter was humbly offering her. Even her long-suffering grandfather felt privileged to rebel, while he was picking the nuts out of his waistcoat.

"My dear," he said; "if this is the result of too much festivity — "

"Shhh!" she hissed at him. "Do eat fast and get this terrible dinner over. Unless that basilisk down there — "

Mr. Jenkins interrupted affably. Considering the fact that he was holding his share of nuts in his fist and looking wildly about in search of a proper place to drop them, his error was quite pardonable.

"I was in there, myself, a day or two ago. Nice old place, with all its gilding and pictures; but they were just in the middle of a funeral and — "

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Dinner over at last, the men left to smoke and gossip over the finish of the wine, and the four women trying to adjust their backs to the rigid lines of old Canadian furniture, Miss Lottie came to sit down at Cundie's side.

"Too bad about poor Mr. Selkirk; isn't it?" she said.

Purposely Cundie misunderstood.

"Of course, anybody would be sorry to miss your mother's party," she said gracefully.

"No; I didn't mean that, of course. I was speaking of poor Mr. Selkirk, himself. The whole thing is so absurd, and such an awful shame, the way he feels about it and all. If I were in his place, I believe I'd just turn it into a good joke and go ahead."

"Perhaps's he can't."

"Of course he could. Really, when you think of it, it's awfully funny. But perhaps you don't know about it."

"Certainly not." Cundie hoped that she was closing the subject.

"No. I suppose he wouldn't tell you. He told me about it, one day on the terrace when he was feeling blue. Let's see. It was the day after your dinner for Dr. Wilton. Listen; that is, if you really won't ever let him know I told you —"

Cundie had risen. She stood there, stiff and imperious, frowning a little and looking very

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stern and capable.

"I certainly shall not tell him anything at all, Miss Jenkins. The matter is not my affair, and I do not care to hear anything about it that you know."

She was still standing there, dominant, when the door opened and the group of men came back into the room. Grahame came in last of all. As he saw Cundie, his face changed, grew animated. It was as if he suddenly had come upon the trail of something that earlier he had sought in vain.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE next day, he attempted to express himself. Cundie, mistaking her distance and hurrying to cross his path at right angles, met him point blank at the top of the footpath leading up the glacié beside the sunken road. Cundie was taking Stevie for his customary morning ramble around the top of the glacié. Even her brief experience of the puppy's outdoor antics had taught her it was well to exercise him in unfrequented paths. It was impossible to look dignified and only remotely aware of passers-by while she was freeing her feet from the tangle of leash which Stevie delighted to weave about them, or while she was extricating terrified children from Stevie's growling caresses, or while she was chastising him for nipping the rather baggy ankles of aged spinsterhood. Stevie was a darling and, occasionally, an unmodified delight. Nevertheless, it would take time, and care, and training, very, very much training, before he would be a restful comrade in a crowded city street. Stevie's sense of humour was growing faster than his sense of shame.

She was making her daily pilgrimage, then,

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around the glacis, when she saw Grahame coming towards her up the slope. He was walking very slowly, as if the hill pulled on him. His limp, of which Stevenson had spoken, though negligible upon the dancing floor, looked very bad indeed when seen against the background of all out-doors. Cundie saw it with the vague, impersonal pity the war had left her for all its injured men. Not for an instant had she connected it with Grahame's sprawling fall aboard the *Richelieu*. Had not the Major told her how his nephew had got it badly in the leg? He must have got it very badly in the time of it, to have had it leave such mark on him for all these years. Too bad! But there were thousands, tens of thousands, in worse case than he.

She quickened her pace, hoping to reach the little bridge ahead of him. Whatever the merits of his legs, his brain and his consequent conversation had not appealed to her, the night before. It had been no hasty judgment, either. He had held her pinned fast in a corner for one mortal hour, as measured by the tall clock against the opposite wall. In the penultimate end, Cundie was driven to making him break all his own pauses. In the actual end, the Major came and plucked him away, and told him it was time he said goodnight, because his aunt still had to go to bed early

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in order to be up in season to put on the porridge. Cundie loathed porridge. Nevertheless, she ordered it, next morning, and ate it in a mood of thankfulness that it existed. Now she was regretting that it had called Mrs. Davis up in such good season.

She quickened her pace abruptly. Stevie, taken unawares, yelped his displeasure at the sudden tug on his collar. Grahame heard him, looked up, saluted and at once put on full speed, with the manifest intention of making the bridge their trysting place. Stevie watched his approach with signs of welcome, Scot for Scot, waving his tail and showing his needle-pointed teeth in a fraternal grin. Furthermore, he stopped short.

"Come, Stevie!" Cundie spoke curtly, jerking very gently on the leash.

Stevie disliked jerks. He made his customary retort. He sat down solidly on his sturdy little haunches and refused to budge. Cundie tried to draw him after her; but the path, covered with loose gravel, offered obstructions and damage to the spot that Stevie sat on. He wept piteously. And Grahame was gaining on them in the race.

"Come, Stevie! Quick! There's a good dog," Cundie coaxed him.

Stevie loved that wooing tone, and sprang to meet it. It took him three complete cir-

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cuits of Cundie's ankles and a final bolt between them to meet it to his satisfaction. Then, lacking leash for further gymnastics, he sat down and panted and watched out of the whites of his sinful eyes, while Cundie unwound herself, then greeted Grahame, just halting beside her on the upper path.

When at length the three of them moved on once more, Stevie was leading by a leash's length, and wearing a smug air of satisfaction that clothed him as a blanket.

"Good old man!" Grahame commented. "He's awfully well-built, too. I saw him out with you, the other day."

His manner was so much that of a tactful elder, offering a bribe of sweeties to a very fractious child that Cundie immediately became fractious enough to justify it.

"His tail is at least half an inch too long," she contradicted.

Plainly Grahame considered himself an authority on dogs, and objected to having his judgement opposed.

"It is very hard to tell much about a half-grown dog," he said stiffly. "I think, though, that you will find that he shapes up well, by the time he's two years old." He took a step forward and bent down, his back seemingly as stiff as his voice had been. "Perhaps, though, his coat is a bit long. How about his

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under co — Oh, the devil!" There was no stiffness in the way his back unbent itself and his thumb flew to his mouth.

"I'm sorry." Cundie spoke dutifully, but her voice was quite impenitent. "He never lets strangers pull his hair like that. In fact," she turned her brown eyes full on Grahame, alternately nursing his thumb in his other hand and putting it back in his mouth again; "I very much doubt your standing for it, yourself."

Grahame's stiffness relaxed. Cundie's point was well taken.

"I fancy not," he murmured. He took his finger out of his mouth as he spoke, looked at it pityingly, then licked it very tenderly. The whole performance was so like a small boy that Cundie laughed outright.

"But I am awfully sorry," she added more peaceably. "Stevie really is a little demon, and the veterinary told me I mustn't whip him, just govern him by moral suasion. Don't you believe you'd better go somewhere and have some iodine put on?"

If she hoped that her suggestion would free her from his society, she was doomed to disappointment. Grahame had caught at her earlier phrase.

"Stevie?" He lifted his yellow brows. "Named for Stevenson?"

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"Naturally. However," Cundie added very dryly; "there are a good many Stevensons in the world. Come, Stevie, we must hurry if we are to get back in time."

"How soon are you due back again?" Evidently Grahame was preparing to fit his pace to hers.

"As soon as ever we can get there. Come, Stevie!" And she gave another little tug which Stevie resented after his usual fashion.

"But you weren't headed for home just now; that is, unless you've moved, over night," Grahame reminded her with a literalness that Cundie found exasperating.

"I merely said *as soon as possible*," she said quite distinctly. "The possibility includes the giving Stevie his usual mile or two of run." For Cundie had summary methods of dealing with persistent bores, and Grahame had been either too obstinate or too opaque to heed her warning signals.

Now his face cleared.

"You really are going on, then?" he asked eagerly.

Cundie gave it up, and laughed. What else, indeed, could she do in the face of such futility?

"It depends on whether you insist on acting as the twentieth-century Horatius, Mr. Grahame."

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"Oh, but my name is Alexander. I thought my uncle would have told you," he explained, evidently a good deal at a loss what his name had to do with it, anyway.

"Yes? Oh. But I meant at the bridge, you know, against Lars Porsena. In Macauley's poem," she added, as no sign of comprehension came into her companion's wide blue eyes.

The honest red, though, did come into his cheeks.

"I'm afraid I'm rather a duffer about poetry," he said quite humbly, for him; "except, of course, things like *Gunga Din* and *Ring out, Wild Bells* and that sort. I've always liked the real things better than when they're dished up over again in rhyme, cut up in lengths like spaghetti. But, I say, what if we walk along?"

Cundie drew a long, a very long, breath.

"Perhaps it would be just as well," she said then.

Grahame prodded the seated Stevie with his stick. Stevie, without troubling himself to rise, snatched the stick in his teeth and mumbled it, growling hideously.

"Get up, old man!" Grahame continued to prod him, using his voice this time. "Get up and come along, not sit there in a heap. You haven't got a game leg, too; have you?"

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And then he waited for a question.

None came. Cundie, at best, could never be goaded into an expression of sympathy. Besides, she was increasingly determined to make this insistent stranger and his ailments none of her business.

"Come, Stevie dear. Come walky-by," she coaxed him.

Grahame persisted in lugging his personality forward. He was not used to having it ignored like this; certainly not by marriageable girls. In Grahame's universe, there were just two classes of girls anyway: the married ones, and the ones that wanted to get engaged. Not that it was all his fault. In England and since the war, a young man of good family, rich, sufficiently good-looking, is not allowed to pine upon his parent stem for want of pretty hands stretched out to pick him. Cundie was a new type to him. He determined to give her another chance.

"Quebec is beautiful," he observed; "but I do find that these hills pull hard on my leg."

Cundie's reply was totally unexpected.

"I dare say. They pull hard on both of mine," she told him, yielding to an abrupt impulse towards literal truth.

Grahame stared. Then he changed the subject; or, rather, approached it by another road.

"My uncle, Major Davis, told me you had

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been in France."

"Yes. Come, Stevie. No; not that path. This way."

"How long were you over?"

"Three years. Stevie dear, you really must come along."

"What were you doing? I mean, what special work?"

"Whatever I knew enough to do. It didn't make much difference what, you know, so long as they could use me."

"I say!" Grahame stopped short and gazed at her with too evident admiration. "How absolutely ripping of you! The girls I know who went over were awfully snifty, wouldn't do a single thing outside their regular lines. You must have been a regular godsend to your O. C."

"He never mentioned it. Come, Stevie."

But Grahame refused to be daunted. On he went.

"Didn't I hear something or other about an ambulance?" Once more his tone was such as one uses to a fractious child.

Once more Cundie recognized the cadence. She lifted her brows.

"I'm sure I don't know," she answered negligently.

"Didn't you drive one?"

"Yes. Hurry, Stevie! Really, you must

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keep up."

"Splendid! How did you ever come to think of doing it?"

"I was used to driving down to the green-grocers, every day at home." But Cundie imparted even this nugget of personal history grudgingly.

"Of course. Through the high street and all, so you were used to traffic?" Grahame's voice was carefully soothing.

"Yes."

"I suppose you had an enormous number of adventures, while you were in France. Some day, perhaps, you'll tell me about them. Indeed, we may find that our trails crossed somewhere between the coast and the other edge of No Man's Land."

"I was never in No Man's Land," Cundie told him calmly. "As for adventures, of course I had an occasional puncture, and once I broke my axle. That was all."

Grahame smiled. His face was rather nice when he smiled. It looked friendly and good-tempered. However, it lacked the fun and iniquity of Stevie's little grin. All in all, Cundie preferred the dog.

"Come, Stevie," she said.

Grahame appeared to be pondering his next conversational venture. In the end, he decided upon this, as the most original one in

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sight, —

"And, of course, you have innumerable thrilling rescues to your credit. How many lives do you suppose you must have saved?"

"I never counted. Ste — vie dar — ling! Oh, there he goes! Quick! Quick! Catch him, please!"

"I'm afraid I can't," Grahame explained, with his usual leisurely politeness. "I'm sorry; but you see my leg won't let me run."

"Mine will," Cundie retorted, once more unexpectedly. "Good bye!" And she was off like a shot, leaving her catechist behind.

When she had overtaken Stevie, and had stopped him by the simple expedient of stepping on his trailing leash, she bent down to pick him up and hold him before her where she could talk straight into his merry, glistening brown eyes.

"You gave me a fine run for my money, old son, and I'm fair puffed, as you and your beautiful compatriot would say. However," she gave the dog a little shake, then cuddled him against her throat; "I'm not so sure you didn't deserve your fun, for the grand way you played up to me. Oh, Stevie, Stevie, how would I have felt, if I had accidentally lost hold on your leash, and you'd refused to budge? Come now. It's time we made for home; but, all things considered, I think that

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we'll go back another way."

They made for home in absolute silence, except for two short words that seemed fairly wrung from Cundie's lips, as she was passing under the Louis Gate.

"*My leg!*" she said, with curt, disdainful emphasis. Then she returned to silence and her meditations.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

“I DON’T know, myself, why I was so nasty to him, Stevie,” Cundie told the little dog, after she had put the lights out, that night. “There’s nothing essentially vicious about the creature; it’s only that he tries to make himself so horribly obvious, and then falls a victim to his own bromides in the end. Stevie, whatever you do, don’t be too obvious. Keep people guessing, and they’ll come after you to see what you will probably do next. Once you let yourself become an incarnate platitude, they’ll shun you like the chicken pox.”

Stevie, already curled up in the hollow of her arm, snarled drowsily in answer. Cundie snuggled him, and he snarled again, this time to tell her that he hated bedtime talks. Therefore Cundie took away her arm and clasped her hands above her head. Then she pondered.

Thinking the matter over, she decided that, ever since the *Richelieu* trip, Grahame must have spent a good share of his time upon her trail. Cundie had not what is called a good eye for faces. Clothes were likely to make

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more of an impression on her memory. Indeed, without Stevenson at her elbow, it is doubtful whether she would have given a second glance to Grahame when she saw him in the Château dining-room. Not, at least, unless his second staring at her had jogged her recollection. But his hat and overcoat and, above all, his stick and the way he handled it, had looked curiously familiar to her, that morning.

Now, turning the episode over in her mind and remembering his allusion to previous views of Stevie, she suddenly became aware that she had met him often in the course of her morning walks around the glacis. The top of the glacis was not a popular walk at that hour of the day. But why should Grahame be so keen upon her trail? And why, oh, why, should he be so insistent in calling attention to the member he invariably named 'my leg'? Indeed, as long as he owned two legs, it was hard to tell whether he laid especial claim to the lusty one or to its invalided mate. His pride, it seemed to Cundie, would not naturally fix itself about the bad one. And — yet — And how Stevenson would laugh, if only — she — dared — tell him — about —

It seemed to Cundie, starting up in bed and dazedly snatching at the telephone beside her,

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that she had only been asleep for half a minute. An automatic glance at her little travelling clock, however, told her it was half-past two. The room wavered and danced before her sleep-clogged eyes. Then all at once it steadied; her shoulders stiffened and her person grew taut.

"Yes?" she was saying. "My grandfather? When? Just now? Is it serious? Oh. Conscious? Pain? The telephone kept on showing light and you got no answer, and so you sent up a boy? I'll be there at once. The night watchman has called the doctor and waked the housekeeper? Thank you very much." And then, as she hung the receiver, Cundie's steadiness wavered. "Oh, Granddaddy darling! What ever should I do, if you should — " She stiffened. "But you won't. We aren't going to let you. Just wait and hold on to yourself till I get there."

While she was speaking, her fingers were busy, piling her hair on top of her head and skewering it with many pins, dragging on her clothes and hunting low-heeled shoes. Then, thrusting her arms into the sleeves of her wadded dressing-gown, she started for the door. Stevie started with her. Roused and rested from the deep sleep of puppyhood, he foresaw a picnic, and was ready for his share of the festivity. Cundie gently pushed him

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aside and opened the door. A long-drawn wail of wrath followed its closing. Instantly the door across the way flew open, and a tall figure in a purple bathrobe stepped into the hall.

"Let him come into my room. He'll be all right with me. And be sure you call me as soon as I can be of any use." And then, almost apologetically, Selkirk added, "Not that I mean to be prying, you know; but that idiot girl had left my transom open, and sound always carries farther in the night."

Afterwards, Cundie remembered it was the longest speech that Selkirk had been heard to make. In the time of it, though, she only realized its kindness, and the friendly smile with which he took the excited Stevie in his arms and stroked his head.

She found her grandfather conscious, suffering from a good deal of pain. An almost-empty glass of aromatic spirits of ammonia, and the telephone receiver flung out and away to the length of its cord showed that his common sense had not deserted him in what evidently had been a sudden and a sharp attack. The doctor, when he came, gave diagnosis promptly.

"Acute indigestion. A nasty attack, but I'm sure he's coming through all right. It's getting frightfully common, nowadays. Motori-

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tis, I call it. Nobody walks much, and not so many take any regular exercise. They go for long drives, come in hungry as hunters, eat too much and then do nothing to work it off. This time, it got your grandfather rather badly; but his keeping his head and getting the ammonia to work while he signalled for help got us here in time to counteract too much pressure on his heart. In sudden crises like this, a doctor generally makes a good patient. It's only in long cases that they raise the deuce. But look here: what about a nurse? They asked about one, in the office; but I don't imagine you want the bother. You seem to know pretty well what to do, yourself."

Cundie nodded.

"Thanks to the war. I'm glad you'll trust me."

The doctor's brown eyes, eyes with a jolly twinkle behind their professional keenness, swept her over from her tight, reddish top-knot to the sturdy shoes that stuck out below her elaborate gown.

"I'd like to take you on my permanent staff, Miss Barth. Just say the word and I can keep you busy from now on to spring." Then his laugh left him, and he spoke crisply. "Just watch him carefully for the next hour or two, and give him his medicine, if there seems to

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be pain or any great uneasiness. Not that I expect anything of the kind. We've scattered the congestion, his heart is pumping away splendidly, and he's beginning to get drowsy. He'll probably have a comfortable sleep, and wake up in fairly good condition. I'll be in again, soon after breakfast. Best keep him quietly in bed until we've given him a thorough looking over."

Fifteen minutes after he had gone, there came a little clatter of the telephone, too soft to be called a ring. Rather in doubt whether or not it was a call, —

"Yes?" Cundie said tentatively.

The answer came back very softly. Selkirk's voice. But Cundie, who was reacting from the fright and strain into a very feminine sense of desolation, felt no desire to smile at the clicks and gulps that dotted the course of their succeeding talk.

"Miss Barth?"

"Yes, Mr. Selkirk."

"What is your bulletin?"

"Very good. It was acute indigestion; but the heart stood out against it splendidly. My grandfather evidently kept his head. He took aromatic ammonia and then tumbled the receiver off the hook, as signal to the office there was trouble. The doctor got here in almost no time at all."

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"Has he gone?"

"Quarter of an hour ago. He said the worst was over, and Granddaddy would probably go to sleep and wake up as well as ever."

The voice lowered.

"Of course I know that you are speaking in his hearing. Do you mind telling me, yes or no, whether the danger is really over?"

"Oh, yes." Cundie's emphasis left the hearer in no doubt.

"I am very glad," Selkirk said simply. "And you will be sure to call me, the instant I can be of use?"

"How good you are!" Cundie spoke impulsively. "I had never expected to find such essence of neighbourliness in hotels."

"It's pretty much with hotels as it is everywhere else, I fancy. Not that I've been especially good."

Cundie's laugh was refreshingly natural. It showed better than words that the night's real danger was at an end.

"Of course it may be only just your normal level," she said, with more than a touch of her old gayety. "Still, I confess it seems to me abnormal that anybody should offer to take in Stevie, in the dead of night. How is he behaving?"

"Wonderful. I gave him my Burberry for a bed, and I haven't heard a chirp from him

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since then —except his snores.”

“I’m so glad, and grateful. Good night, neighbour! Don’t lie awake on our account. We’re convalescent, and doing splendidly.”

Hanging up the telephone, Cundie became aware that the night was far less lonely, that friends were nearer than she had supposed. Not even Stevenson, now probably snoring lustily quite at the other end of the great building, could have shown himself readier to be of service, more tactful in his offers of assistance. And, for all the ridiculous irregularities of his speech, Selkirk’s voice and accent showed him not only kind, but one out of her own world. Cundie, returning to her easy chair beside the bed, gave herself time to sum him up concisely: dignified, gentle and absolutely self-effacing until there came a definite need to bring his personality into the lime-light; then tireless and tactful in giving help. Cundie stressed her final phrase. Long ago, she had discovered to her discontent that, when it came to offering assistance, tirelessness and tactfulness by no means always joined hands and kissed each other.

Later in the day, she told some of this to Stevenson when, obedient to the doctor’s orders, she was giving herself an airing in the Packard. She had picked up Stevenson in the court, just as she was starting. As usual,

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he was eager to go out with her for the little run.

"Not that I am going to let you drive, to-day," she told him. "You can hold Stevie on your knee and stroke his ears. I shall get my mind freshened sooner, if I have to keep it steadied on the steering wheel. At present, it is jumping all over the map."

"You had a stiff night of it, all right." Stevenson obediently settled his namesake on his knee, while he was speaking.

"And good help from all my neighbours," she retorted.

"All but one. He slept through it all, without a qualm." Stevenson's voice was regretful.

"How could he know?"

"The way the others did, I suppose."

Cundie held in her laugh till she was out of Du Fort Street and safely headed round the Battery. Then, —

"I hope you aren't implying that my voice carried along miles and miles of halls and up three flights of stairs," she rebelled. "Anyway, your turn is coming now. They also serve who hold Stevie on their knees and keep him from tumbling head first on the accelerator." And then, by way of Stevie, the talk came around again to Selkirk, and Cundie repeated her summing of his character.

Stevenson heard her out; nodding assent to

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every phrase.

"You've got him down, cold," he said, when she had finished. "And I'm glad. I've had a couple of rather big talks with the fellow lately; I think he's worth while, a good deal too much worth while to be handed over, neck and crop, to the tender mercies of Miss Lottie. Now he's given us each the chance, what if we take him on and try to make things more decent for him?"

"I haven't meant to be indecent." Cundie defended herself a little hotly, for her conscience was clear in Selkirk's quarter, and her nerves were slightly on edge, after the alarm and vigil of the night before.

Stevenson met her testiness with an unruffled smile.

"Good Lord, I know all that," he responded amicably. "You can't be much of anything to a hermit crab, especially when he's tonguetied. Now he's opened up a little — "

"You mean it's rather up to us? All right, if you'll stand back of me, I'll do my share." And then once more she yielded to the instability born of her anxious night. "Not that I need to ask you," she added. "You always do stand back of me, you know. You began doing it at the start." Speaking, her eyes were on the road ahead of her, measuring her chances in the thicker traffic that crowds the

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lower end of Palace Hill. She missed the sudden glistening of Stevenson's brown eyes.

The other neighbour to whom she had alluded had come to her soon after four o'clock, that morning. Answering a soft knock at the door, she had been astounded to see Mrs. Jenkins, her head so frilled with pale-green satin and Venetian lace that it looked exactly like an enormous brussels sprout, and her body looming huge in a gold-embroidered robe of pale-green silk.

"My dear, I just had to come," she puffed. "I heard the watchman telling the night maid about it, outside my door just now, so I thought I'd just pop into my wrapper and run down to see what I could do to help."

Cundie suppressed her wicked instant of amusement at the idea of Mrs. Jenkins popping in any but a strictly literal sense.

"Thank you so much, Mrs. Jenkins. It is most awfully good of you. But what a shame that you should be disturbed!"

"Nonsense! I always sleep with one eye open. It's a relic of my younger days when I had more things to worry me than I do now," Mrs. Jenkins said quite frankly. "Now what are you going to let me do, to help?"

"Really, there doesn't seem to be — " Cundie was beginning, when Mrs. Jenkins cut her short.

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"But of course you didn't know I used to be a nurse. Not a trained one; what they call 'a practical'. I kept it up till I was married," she smiled at her memories, and her fat face under its bulging frills was very womanly and likable; "to the corner druggist where I used to buy the things I needed. He wasn't a big man then; but his heart and his head were just as sound as they are now, and we had a good time together, pinching and working along." She pulled herself up short. "Not that it matters, though."

"I think it matters a whole lot," Cundie said heartily. "It must be a perfectly wonderful thing to look back on."

Mrs. Jenkins evidently slept in all her rings. Her hand looked like a moving jewellery shop, as she held it out to Cundie; but its grasp was wonderfully human, just the same.

"Dear child, I hope you'll have as good, or better." Then she added, with a swift return to the matter-of-fact, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do, this very minute. I'm going to bring down my little electric stove and make us some good hot tea and a slice of toast. After we've got that down, we'll be better able to decide what next."

The shapeless wad of gilded and laced finery moved down the hall. Cundie looked after it with wet, but merry, eyes.

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"Bless her darling old heart!" she said quite softly. "She's worth any number of the rest of us, after all."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WITHIN two or three days, Doctor Howard was quite himself again, though burdened with instructions about diet and about taking daily exercise regardless of weather and of antiquarian lure. Cundie rejoiced accordingly. The experience had tried her courage; the fear for her grandfather's health had bitten into her very life. From her little childhood, he had been to her a fairy prince sojourning among mortal men; and this northern trip of theirs, living over again her mother's girlhood, had been a rare delight.

Once he was convalescent, though, and Cundie had time to take stock of her experience, she realized that she had been in danger of being smothered with kindness. It was not only the indefatigable Mrs. Jenkins who came in a dozen times a day, nor Selkirk who continued to be the neighbour Cundie had dubbed him, nor Stevenson whose advice and comradeship were waiting for her in all her leisure hours. It was the other people from whom one is not usually trained to look for unselfish service. The wee red page, bringing

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Stevie in from one of his incessant promenades, waved away Cundie's outheld coin disdainfully.

"I don't want your money, Miss Barth. I'm doing this because I'm sorry for the doctor."

It was the lift man who came, running, to bring the mail. It was Lachance who, using his seniority in the house as lever, pried his way through the regulations about bedroom stewards and brought up their meals himself, choosing them cannily from study of their appetites and arranging them as temptingly as never was before in their combined experience. It was the fine-faced, clear-eyed head porter who knocked more than once to say, —

"I'm just going off duty, Miss Barth. Can I get you anything from the shops? It's no trouble; I have to pass right by."

"It makes me feel a perfect worm," Cundie said to Stevenson, after this last episode. "We haven't done one single thing to deserve it, either."

"Only been yourselves," Stevenson made crisp reply. "This whole place has an atmosphere and standards of its own. Once they know you and know you like it here, it ceases to be an hotel. It's home."

Cundie and Stevenson were in the Packard, driving to Sainte Anne. The trip had been Stevenson's suggestion.

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"When are you going down to your ancestral saint, to say your thanks?" he had asked her, the night before.

Cundie, looking up to answer, felt surprise. Stevenson's voice had been as unconcerned and casual as possible; but his eyes had betrayed his earnestness. What was back of the query she could not tell. Therefore she met it frankly.

"Do you know, I've been waiting to go down there. I'm not joking. But the Shrine does make us reverent, no matter what our creeds may be. Besides, it is so twisted up with my family history — In this case of Granddaddy — I wonder — " She floundered, then broke off.

Stevenson finished out her answer.

"I wonder if we couldn't go down together, some day. Perhaps I could get The Good Sainte Anne to buck me up a little, too."

"You? Mr. Stevenson! Are you ill?"

He shook his head, laughing, though his eyes were still very grave.

"No. Hearty as an ox, thank God! But I has my worries."

"Can I help?" she asked him simply, ignoring his attempted lightness.

Instantly his laugh vanished.

"I wish you could," he told her very gravely; "but I'm afraid I must buck up and put it

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through, alone."

"Your work? Your flying?"

"Neither. It's something that — just is" he concluded lamely. And then he laughed again, a forced laugh, this time. "I suppose we all of us get it, now and then, like Selkirk's speech and your friend Sandy's leg."

"Don't mention the two of them in the same breath!" she bade him hotly. Then, "Tell me, do you know what's really wrong with Mr. Selkirk?"

"Do you know what's really wrong with Grahame's leg?" he countered.

"I don't want to! No," she added, in honest contrition; "I don't mean that, exactly. It's only that I get so tired of the way he constantly hurls it into the conversation. Of course, I'm sorry for the man. But I'm not so sure about Mr. Selkirk."

"Not sorry for him?" Stevenson looked shocked. Not even yet had he probed all of Cundie's theories.

"No. Not really. He wouldn't care to have me sorry; he'd rather I took it as it came and then forgot it. I don't believe, the more I see of him, that Mr. Selkirk is the kind of a man who wants to be pussy-catted up and down his shoulderblades."

"Rather like the man I met in hospital at Boulogne who told me there would be one

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good thing about his wooden leg: he'd never need to be anxious about his garters, as long as he had a thumb-tack handy? But I do believe you're right about Selkirk. I know that he's revolted absolutely from Miss Lottie's fostering care."

"Miss Lottie isn't a patch on her mother, and never will be," Cundie said very vulgarly.

Stevenson laughed at his own mental picture, as he answered, —

"No? Spread out very thin, she'd just about make a summer shoulder-cape for the old lady. As for Mrs. Jenkins, she's a good, solid lump of the right stuff." And so the subject of Selkirk was abandoned.

Now and then in the course of their drive down across the Côte de Beaupré, lovely even in the sadness of the falling leaves, Cundie wondered about the mood of her companion. Gay, his gayety was rather forced; his wit flashed, rather than bubbled. He was sad, rather than earnest: a minor cadence throbbed in his voice, usually so resonant with his enjoyment of his Great Adventure: life and what it brought him. Indeed he had struck the keynote of his mood, just as they were starting.

"Do you want to drive?" Cundie had asked him, as she stood beside him in the court, waiting for the car.

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"Do you want me to?"

"Not unless you'd rather."

He shook his head.

"I wouldn't. This country makes me horribly nervous. I fully expect to kill one of these French-Canadian babies; they are so totally irresponsible and so trustful that you won't get them. Do you know, I've a most unaccountable affection for the little beasts; they are so funny and so cheeky and so essentially human in their fractious hours. I've a hunch that, some day, I shall come to grief with one of them."

Cundie looked up at him in swift surprise.

"You believe in hunches?"

"What flying man doesn't?" His face was grave, his eyes were clouded. Then, with an apparent effort, he flung the shadow from him. "Are you ready? Come."

A good deal to their surprise, they found a belated pilgrimage ahead of them. The short introductory service inside the church had ended and, just as Cundie had parked the car outside the gates, the head of the procession showed in the doorway: the choir, the rose-arched statue, high-carried on the shoulders of its bearers, the priests and then the pilgrims, men first, women after, all singing away for dear life and for their hopes of eternal happiness to come. At first, Cundie could

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make out only the rolling thunder of the *Magnificat! Magnificat!* antiphonally answering some inaudible canticle; but when the procession was once free of the church steps and pacing slowly along the walk that borders the parvise, the theme changed to the one unforgettable, indescribable Hymn to The Good Sainte Anne!

*Daignez, Sainte Anne, en un si beau jour,
De vos enfants agréer l'amour!*

Again and again it came hurling itself after the simpler cadence of the verses, and it was to the throbbing beat of its final repetition that Cundie, with Stevenson close behind her, followed the worshipping pilgrims back into the church and, heedless of man-made theologies, knelt with them to receive the blessing.

They were quite silent when they came out again. Cundie's lashes were wet; and Stevenson, whose lips were pinched tight together, showed white beneath his tan. Quite silently they stepped into the car, and Cundie bent to start the motor. Then Stevenson broke the hush.

"Don't turn quite yet," he asked her suddenly. "If you can spend the time, let's go on down a little farther. There's something I've been making up my mind to tell you; and I can say it better," he laughed mirthlessly; "if I've all out-doors to say it in."

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Wondering very much, she merely nodded and started the car on down the road, past the Juvenat, and the Santa Scala, and the railroad shops, and on along the open road to pretty Beaupré village; through that and on around the turn that leads to Saint Joachim and Cap Tourmente beyond.

It was not until they had come into Saint Joachim that Stevenson broke the silence. Then he spoke whimsically.

"Perhaps there's a certain suitability in my coming from Sainte Anne to her husband's village to tell you my family history," he said. "Not that I'm at all sure that you will be interested."

Cundie slowed the car to a foot-pace.

"Of course I'm interested and pleased that you care to tell me."

"Thank you. It's rather a dull story, though. But I wanted you to hear it, before I went away."

Cundie's eyes showed that she was startled. Her answer, however, was quite calm.

"You are going soon?"

"I'm ordered to report at once. I have to go up, to-morrow morning."

"I'm sorry," she said simply. "We have come to count on you tremendously, Granddaddy and I, and we shall be quite lost without you."

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And, with this slight preface, Stevenson began to speak.

He made awkward work of it at first. Egotism had small part in his make-up, and it was against all his mental habits to go over the story of his life. As he went on, though, he forgot the awkwardness in the real reason for his telling, and he made his little narrative vivid, gripping, infinitely pathetic at its close. It was a simple story, too, and a very common one. Plenty of money and all the advantages it brings, until the war came; then a sharp business crash that took the family money and undermined his father's health, leaving him a helpless invalid. And a mother and young sisters, and some little brothers to be educated and kept free from too much pinching, now and for many years to come.

"And there really isn't anybody else to put it across, you see," Stevenson said very simply, when he came to this. "The poor old Dad is done for, financially and as a working unit; the little boys are too young to help, and they must have their chances for an education. That was bad enough; but, just the other day, some bonds went wrong, and made the outlook worse than ever."

"I'm so sorry." Cundie had hard work to keep her voice level. Apart from her own interest in the story, she would have given so

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much to have her good friend's life all sunshiny like her own.

"Thank you. And for listening to it all. But I'm not entirely egotistic in wanting to tell you about it — or, at least, I am." Stevenson was reddening furiously now, his usual fluent speech breaking badly. "I didn't want to have — " He drew a long breath. Then he spoke bravely, his honest eyes straight on Cundie's. "The fact is, Miss Barth, I didn't want you to think I'd — I'd been just fooling about — things, these last few weeks. I've been horribly in earnest; and I'd been hoping — hoping — " Again he floundered on again, after apparently sticking fast. "Hoping that somehow or other the thing could be arranged. And, all these last days, I'd been thinking that perhaps you — You see, you've been such a perfect brick to me, and I was getting a big rise, next month. And then the day after your grandfather was ill, I heard about this last upset, and — Well, I knew I'd got to stop hoping."

Cundie drew a long, sobbing breath. Then her hand went out blindly, seeking his.

"You — must?"

"I've got to."

"Can't you — Can't we find a way?"

Then his fingers shut on hers, crushing them till she could have cried with the pain,

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had not all her tears been needed for the deeper ache of mind and heart.

"Cundie! You care?"

"From the first day," she told him proudly, lifting her head to smile at him through her tears.

He met her smile with perfect bravery, for all the agony that was penned up within him.

"Then nothing else matters very much," he told her just as proudly. "It's like getting the Victoria Cross. Once it's gazetted, you don't dread dying half so much, because you've got all eternity to remember about it in."

"But can't we? Granddaddy will help us plan," she begged. "It mustn't end just here."

"It won't. It can't. We've had the best of the experience. We shall always have the memory. Else, what's eternity good for?" He was silent for a little while, his arm around her quivering shoulders, his eyes resting unseeingly upon the ripened stacks of grain that dotted the fields. "Cundie," he said then; "it's very magnificent of you to talk about arranging things. I appreciate it, dear; but it's no use. Some things like this can't be arranged. It isn't that I'm too selfish to let myself think about a girl, just because she has more money than I do; but, in this case, there's the uncertainty ahead. With such a family as mine,

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so big and so without resources, and so untrained in meeting practical emergencies, almost anything may happen at almost any time, to tie me up past all untangling. And, besides — ”

“Yes? Besides — ”

His gaze devoured her. Then he went on.

“I was talking about hunches, you know, saying that all flying men are bound to have them.”

“Yes.” It was a whisper, and breathless.

“And — Probably it is nothing. Probably it’s only because these other things are upsetting me; — but — but this time, for the first time in all my flying, I dread going up.”

“Stevie!” The little name which, only half consciously, she had been cherishing, cuddling on her tongue for weeks, came with a great sob of utter fear.

When he had soothed her a little, —

“That’s why,” he added very, very simply, very boyishly; “I wanted to have the whole thing out with you, before I went away.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

AS a matter of course, Stevenson dined with them, that night. Moreover, he and Cundie carried off the situation so well it was only once or twice that the Doctor was uneasily aware of things unsaid. Even so, he misinterpreted the silence absolutely and regretted it. Cundie was the apple of his eye. She was his own Nancy reincarnate, but with a whole set of new and modern and likable attributes thrown in. He was in no haste to give up his share of her to any other man; but he was sensible enough to know that it was high time Cundie began to think about marrying.

He would have given her to Stevenson without an instant's hesitation. He liked Stevenson better than any other young man he had met since his own Nancy's day; or, perhaps, with Cundie in the foreground of his thoughts, he had looked at him with keener, more analytic eyes. Besides that, too, there would be the added gain of keeping Cundie on his own side of the Atlantic. Married to an Englishman, blessed with a family of children, he must inevitably see her but rarely.

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The doctor watched them very closely, and decided that the day was not far distant when he would be able to hold their two hands clasped in one of his, while he lifted the other in grand-paternal blessing. The mental picture made him extraordinarily happy, and a kindly fate saw to it that he was never undeceived.

The talk above the table, that night, after drifting about uncertainly, ended by fixing itself on Selkirk.

"I've been seeing quite a lot of him lately," Stevenson said, in answer to a question from the doctor. "He's an awfully decent chap, one of the very best."

"Too bad he's so handicapped," the doctor responded gravely.

"Yes. It's a rotten thing for a man of his age. He's sensitive, too, knows it makes him ridiculous."

"Oh, I wouldn't put it so strongly as all that," the doctor said. "Wilton says he'll come out of it in time; they nearly all do, when the trouble is so fully localized."

"Come out of — ? Wilton? Who is he?"

"The great shell-shock man. I think they call him the final authority on such cases. He says, when it affects the nerve centres only, quite apart from the brain, it is practically always curable."

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"Nerve centres! Brain!" Stevenson went off into a gale of laughter. Then, "I beg your pardon, doctor; but it is funny. I think I do remember Selkirk's mentioning that Wilton had been down. He seemed to get a good deal of quiet amusement out of the fact. I begin to understand why. What do you think is the matter with Selkirk, anyhow?"

"Shell-shock, undoubtedly. From my accounts and, of course, without having seen him, Wilton thinks it is a clear and very typical case. The speech is badly affected by the muscles of his jaw. Also the muscles of his leg. You've noticed how he drags his foot?"

"Frankly I hadn't, until he spoke of it, himself. But for once, Doctor Howard, you're all wrong. Selkirk never got overseas at all."

"Honestly?" Cundie was looking up in round-eyed wonder. "What was it, then? Something congenital, or anterior poliomyelitis?"

Stevenson looked dazed, and the doctor hastened to explain.

"Infantile paralysis? But there are none of the earmarks of that, Cundie. What is it, anyway; that is, if you know and are at liberty to tell us, Stevenson?"

"I do know, and I got the idea, while he was telling me, the other day, that he wanted me to pass the story along. He had told Miss

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Lottie, just after you had asked him to luncheon with her; he as good as said he had meant to ask her to hand on the facts to a few of us; but — Well, anyway, the girl giggled in his face, and Selkirk evidently shut up in the middle of his words. As far as I know, he hasn't looked at her since. Poor devil! In his case, I'd be just as bad."

"But whatever is it?" Cundie urged impatiently.

Stevenson waited, searching her face as if fearful of seeing there some reflection of Miss Lottie's ill-timed mirth. It might be hard to keep from laughing, hearing the story only second hand; and Cundie was only human, after all. He hesitated, dreading disillusion. When he spoke, his words came bunglingly.

"It was a fool dentist. Selkirk was detailed for home duty in Washington, through the war, worked himself to death, and ended with an awful siege of sciatica. It still bothers him. He was laid up for months. Then one of those focal-infection maniacs got hold of him and dragged out all his teeth, thirty-one perfectly sound, healthy teeth. They were put in to stay; and the dentist — I suppose he was badly upset by his finding, for he hadn't troubled to X-ray — ended by breaking Selkirk's upper jaw. And so — " Stevenson blushed scarlet and came to a full halt, watch-

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ing Cundie closely, plainly fearful of untimely laughter and the consequent impairment of the ideal of her he had built.

No laughter, though, came into Cundie's face, nor was it in her mind. She spoke at once, gravely, her voice all full of gentle sympathy.

"You mean that his new teeth won't stay in place? How absolutely awful!"

Stevenson drew a deep breath of relief. He might have known. And yet the thing was so preposterous; and teeth, for all their latter-day prominence, are always more or less in social disrepute. In Selkirk's place, he probably would have taken himself to the hinterlands of Persia.

"But can't it be remedied, Granddaddy?" Cundie was asking.

The old doctor answered guardedly.

"I haven't seen his mouth, my dear; and of course I'm not a dentist. Sometimes, it's possible to get such things into shape again by a second breaking; but it would mean a great deal of suffering —"

"He wouldn't mind that," she countered. "Not after the purgatory he's been living in. And he's too nice a man —" And then, with a sudden accent of utter desperation. "I wonder why it is," she added; "that all the very nicest people seem to have the hardest things

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to bear." For an instant, losing her grasp upon herself, she looked up at Stevenson with swimming eyes and quivering lips. But Stevenson smiled back at her so bravely that the doctor, watching them both, never suspected that her tears were not for Selkirk.

Stevenson breakfasted very early, the next morning. As he came out into the court, where the cab was waiting to take him to the boat, he was astonished to see Cundie, with Stevie at her heels, walking towards him from the upper arch.

"That wretch of a Stevie!" she explained, with bright carelessness for the benefit of the waiting servants. "He had an evil dream and dragged me out of bed at this unconscionable hour. And so you're really off? We'll miss you horribly, Grandaddy and I." Then, as she came closer, she transferred Stevie's leash to her left hand, and gave the right to Stevenson. "But, anyway, we've had the very best of it, my — dearest dear!"

The last words were the merest breath, inaudible to anyone but Stevenson. They stood together for an instant longer, hand shut hard on hand. Then, still smiling with bright bravery, they let their hands drop apart and turned in silence, each to his appointed way.

But Cundie did not come to breakfast. She merely telephoned to her grandfather that she

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was sleepy and meant to rest; and she remained invisible till noon.

The days dragged heavily for Cundie, after Stevenson had gone. The worst of it was, she had to take them as they came, and make no sign. Not even to her grandfather could she speak of her talk with Stevenson, of his story told as simply and as bravely as he had lived it, as he meant to live it to the end. Not that such stories ever did end. They went on endlessly, till one was old and grey and toothless, and stiff with knobbled joints. At least, though, she had had her one great moment, far greater than any that had come to her serenely married friends. And perhaps, even now, after a good while —

In any case, she would only tell her grandfather, if he, or anybody else, should ever accuse Stevenson of philandering. So much she owed to Stevenson's defence.

She took long walks with Stevie in these days. She cherished the little dog as never before, keeping him with her constantly and, whenever it was possible, calling him by name a hundred times an hour. Stevie did his loyal little best to prove himself a faithful confidant. He detested laps; but he sat on the floor beside her by the half-hour at a time, his innocent brown eyes and solemn little mouth turned up to Cundie while she reminded him that

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he must be the best kind of a little dog and so do honour to the name he bore. And Stevie listened soberly, now and then offering a wee paw in confirmation of his silent vows. But, when the tears came to Cundie, as occasionally they would and did, he leaped up on her knee and, paws on her chin, licked away the drops with sympathetic relish. Without Stevie's devotion, without the name he carried, Cundie would have found herself bereft indeed.

Not that her days by any means were empty of all society but that of Stevie. As their stay in Quebec had lengthened and people had come flocking back to town, the doctor's old friends, with their children and grandchildren, had set about welcoming both him and Cundie. There were all sorts of little teas and dinners; there were more formal functions, and there were impromptu dances for the younger people. In return, there were long excursions in the Packard up and down the lovely hills and along the river, in the golden, tanging October air.

In all of these festivities, the Packard ones only excepted, Grahame was holding a more or less prominent place. Quebec is amazingly hospitable, given a proper chance, and the Davis introduction was a powerful one. Therefore Cundie was meeting Grahame

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everywhere. Moreover, she was becoming increasingly aware of his determination to monopolize her society. Two weeks earlier, she had been practically driven from the glais by his persistent dogging of her footsteps during her morning walk with Stevie. Now it was a question of dances, of partners at bridge, and of the chair beside hers at Mah Jongg.

The worst of it was, she could find no especial reason for her dislike of him. He was well-connected, well-educated, polite, an excellent card-player and a really exquisite dancer, notwithstanding his limp. He talked well, too, upon occasion; indeed, Cundie observed with some amusement that his ineptitudes were solely for herself. With her, he was ponderous, prolific, personal, harping eternally upon the war and upon that portion of his body corporate that he invariably termed "my leg."

"I really don't know what's the matter with him," Cundie said thoughtfully, one noon, after an active hour of dodging him in and out around old Saint Andrew's and the city hall. "I've simply taken a scunner against him."

"Cundie!" Her grandfather looked aghast.

"Exactly. I love the sound of the word, and it's in his own perfectly good Scotch. Anyway, it's what I've got, and it's incurable,

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and I begin to wonder how long it will be before he finds it out."

The finding came sooner than she expected.

That same afternoon, she took Stevie for what, considering the length of his legs, was an enormous walk: all out across the Cove Fields, past the rifle range where their combined story had begun, past the factory, and the beautiful jail, and the Wolfe monument sunning itself in all its exquisite simplicity, and so on to the park that marks the battle-fields. There Stevie balked, panting prodigiously and sitting down whenever Cundie stopped to revel in the view. At the second bastion of the drive, she had mercy on him and came to a definite halt.

"Tired out, old man? It's a long walk for little feet. But we don't dare sit here. We'll go down below the wall and sit on the grass and cuddle, where we're out of sight."

Once they were seated on the crisp, dry grass, and cuddling, she added, —

"Awful, Stevie, to feel as if you were pursued from morning till night! But, one good thing, nobody will ever look for us, down here."

She spoke too soon. Less than ten minutes later, Grahame's quiet and rather precise voice came down on her from above.

"Miss Barth! Are you really there?"

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Cundie's hand, in her exasperation, shut on Stevie's nearer ear with an unconscious strength that made him yelp.

"No," she replied composedly. "It is only my astral body out a-walking."

Grahame appeared to find this very witty. When his laugh was done, —

"Whatever sent you down there?" he queried.

"To be quite by myself, and rest," Cundie answered, with uncompromising frankness.

He nodded gravely.

"Yes. It is a good bit of distance from the Château. All right, I'm coming down; that is, if my leg will let me."

"Oh, I wouldn't," Cundie advised him dispassionately. "And Stevie and I are just thinking about moving on."

"Don't do that. Please. You see, I can't walk indefinitely, and I've followed you all the way from the corner of the drill hall. It's an awful walk out here. Just wait a minute, and I'll be down there in no time."

Cundie ground her teeth. Then, —

"Really, I don't believe you'll find it worth your while," she snapped.

But she was too late. Already the bastion was empty. Grahame had turned and was hurrying towards the path that leads down from the bastion.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MRS. Davis was entertaining at dinner, that night; and Cundie, much against her will, had promised to be there. Her acceptance was due to her very real regard for her hostess; even then, it had been won only after a good deal of argument from her grandfather. And then, at the very last minute, Cundie had telephoned her regrets, pleading illness.

"Headaches are out of date and a twisted ankle would knock me out of too many things," she told her grandfather. "I think, all in all, it would best be something nice and germy like a cold; something that," she added incisively; "would make me a menace to the man who took me out."

And the doctor had laughed, and agreed, and had offered to do her telephoning, for fear her voice might not match up to her excuse.

Dinner engagements are sacro-sanct, and woe be to her who upsets the table of her hostess! Nevertheless, both Cundie and her grandfather were sure that, in this case, the sin was quite forgivable. Cundie had had an exceedingly upsetting afternoon.

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Grahame had found her, seated under the bastion, one hand cuddling Stevie's enormous head, the other shading her face from the vivid sun. She looked up, as she heard his step beside her, nodded very casually, then went back to her detailed study of the wooded heights behind the Chaudière Basin.

"Rather a nice view," he observed condescendingly, as he let himself down beside her.

"Very."

"Reminds me something of France; that is, with the river left out of it."

"The river is the main thing, up here," Cundie reminded him contradictiously.

"Yes. But, you see, ever since I've been here, my mind has kept working back to France," he said vaguely.

"I don't see why."

"Association. Don't people ever make you think of things?"

"Not often."

His eyes narrowed slightly.

"Perhaps it's because you have a poor memory for faces," he suggested.

"I haven't," Cundie told him flatly, regardless of truth.

"Oh. But of course France wouldn't have made the same impression on you."

"I don't see why not." Cundie spoke tartly.

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"You didn't lose your leg over there," Grahame reminded her.

"Of course. I'm sorry," she said contritely. "I ought to have remembered that."

He nodded slowly.

"Yes. I wonder that you didn't." His voice sharpened. "Miss Barth, do you know how I lost my leg?"

"How should I?"

"The Major never told you?"

She shook her head.

"He wouldn't."

"I don't see why. It was rather a remarkable case. I was caught, very badly wounded and with a dead mule right across my leg — I beg your pardon?"

"Go on," Cundie said faintly. The Chaudière landscape was spinning round and round before her and, when she dropped her eyes to get away from that, she discovered that Stevie's head was as large and shapeless as a sofa pillow:

Grahame went on inexorably. He had come out there to tell her something, and he was Scotch.

"I was as good as dead; no chance at all that I'd come through it alive. And then, out of nowhere in particular, an ambulance appeared. The driver saw me, got down, took in the situation at a glance and — "

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She held up a shaking hand to ward off the hideous words, so unthinkable to her in peacetime. For the once, Grahame swerved from his determination. He modified his intended phrase.

"And did the only thing that was possible. It was wonderfully brave and resourceful, the more so because the driver was a wo —"

Stevie rolled, yelping, on the grass as Cundie, rallying her strength, sprang to her feet.

"Mr. Grahame! And you have known it, all along!"

"Since the first time I heard you speak. I have a rather unusual memory for voices."

She bit her lip. She was horribly shaken by the whole adventure. Somehow it never had occurred to her that they could meet again.

"I'm sorry," he was saying. "I never dreamed that you would be upset like this. You see, I really owe you my life, and it seemed fairer to you to tell you, all in all."

"All in all?" she echoed. Not that the words conveyed anything to her mind. She merely said them over automatically. Jarred as she already was, however, his next words jarred her even more.

"All in all. Because, Miss Barth, I followed you out here to say one thing to you, and

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it was best to get this other affair out of the way, first."

"I thought you came out here to tell me this — " Cundie's voice seemed to her to be acting quite apart from her will, just saying words and words and words in order to gain time.

"I came out here, Miss Barth, to ask you to marry me."

"Mr. Grahame! What do you mean?"

"The same thing I have meant for the last few weeks, every day and all day long. You must have known, Miss Barth; must have realized that it was bound to come."

"Oh, no!" Stooping, she gathered Stevie in her arms, hugging his little body to her, tight. It was as if she would offer him as emblem of the real reason that had blinded her to Grahame's preposterous hopes.

"I thought I had made it perfectly clear," Grahame told her. "How else could you account for — " He read a sudden mutiny in her face, and changed his question into an appeal. "But, Miss Barth, now you do know, now that I have spoken out directly, you will — "

Swiftly she interrupted.

"Oh, no; I couldn't possibly." And she was aware of a tremendous relief, once the definite words were spoken.

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"Why not?" he urged.

"Because I don't love you in the least." Then, as she saw the sudden vanishing of the eternal self-esteem that marred his good looks, her conscience smote her, and she tried to modify her words. "It's not that I don't like you," she said. "We've been good friends and had good talks together; but not in the way that makes one fall in love. Besides," she looked up at him with the whimsical fun that often quite involuntarily crossed her most earnest moods; "besides, you are the last person in the world I'd care to marry; the situation would be so horribly trite."

"The situation?"

Her glance flickered across his shoes. He reddened, as he believed he caught her meaning.

"I'm glad it seems trite to you," he said quite stiffly. "For my part, I find some damned novelty about its inconvenience, every day."

She blushed hotly. What would her crazy tongue say next? In her contrition, she lost her tact.

"I didn't mean that at all, Mr. Grahame. Don't you realize how I — how I must fairly writhe, every time I see you limping about?"

"I'm sorry. I had no idea I was as repulsive as all that," he answered still more stiffly,

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and, as he spoke, he rose.

Cundie snatched at his dangling fingers.

"No! Wait!" she besought him desperately. "It isn't that at all. You know you walk just about as well as anybody, and you dance adorably. It's only that I seem to be in a hideous nightmare that makes me say all the wrong things. I'd made myself put the whole awfulness out of my mind; and this sudden meeting — finding out who you are — has brought it all back again, all the sense of guilt and the worry, and the eternal wondering if I had rushed on ahead and sent help back to you, your leg might have been saved."

"If you had gone on ahead and left me, I should have been dead in no time at all," he assured her grimly. "You know, yourself, that there wasn't any help in reach. Not many women would have had the pluck to do as you did, to say nothing of the skill — " His voice broke slightly, and he pulled himself up short. "However, that's beside the point. What did you mean by its being very trite?"

Cundie laughed a little weakly.

"The meeting. The recognition. The inevitable happy end," she explained, ashamed of her triviality, yet more ashamed to deny the explanation.

Instantly his Scotch argumentativeness

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came back again.

"But, if you are so sure the end will be a happy one — "

She interrupted him with a gesture. Then, before he could speak, she stooped and once more gathered Stevie into her embrace, holding him fast, as shield and buckler.

"Mr. Grahame, we can't go on discussing this," she said and now, quite mistress of herself, her voice and face were full of womanly dignity, womanly regret for the hurt that she was bound to give. "I am so terribly sorry for the whole thing, for my stupidity and for my idiotic way of talking. You know I wouldn't have had it happen for the world; but I was so upset and ashamed and all." Under her steady gaze, she felt her courage failing. She made a fresh start, to prevent his coming in with argument or question or even reassurance. "I am glad you have told me who you are, and I think you're very splendid not to hate me. In time, we may get to be better friends than we are now; but, for the rest of it, there is no chance at all."

"No chance? Ever? How can you know?"

For a moment, she hesitated and her colour came. Then she faced him unflinchingly.

"Because I care too much for some one else," she said, and, as she spoke, unconsciously she pressed the little dog closer to her side.

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Grahame saw the trivial gesture, realized its unconsciousness, interpreted it and, all honour to him, went away without another word.

Cundie waked up, next morning, to find the world adrip with fog. The Citadel was invisible, and the Levis shore. From the unseen river came a chorus of warning and protesting whistles, and Stevie was whimpering disconsolately on top of her pillow. She dragged herself wearily through the routine of tub and clothes and Stevie's leash. She came to breakfast, chilly and disgusted.

"Louis says there's a ship gone aground on the Beauport flats, absolutely out of its course," she told her grandfather, when she joined him at the table. "And my doll is leaking sawdust at every seam."

Her grandfather lowered his paper.

"Do you want to go back to New York, Cundie?"

"No," she said briefly. "We are going to stay out our time." Then she forced her usual smile. "Don't mind me, Grandaddy. I am cross, this morning. My yesterday's adventure took it out of me, and I feel to-day as if the heavens were about to fall."

Smiling, he pointed down to the hills along the river. Across the opaque white blanket of the fog, there lay a narrow stripe of purest gold.

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"If they fall, it will be in sunshine," he predicted. "Buck up, dear. Let's hope the worst over. Yes, Lachance, the same thing." For it was in this confidential phrase that Lachance liked best to receive his breakfast order.

Breakfast tasted good; the fog lifted a little, and Selkirk, met in the hall, gave her a cheery greeting. All in all, Cundie was feeling better by the time that Stevie, his little stomach distended to the size and shape of a football and milky scraps of shredded wheat still clinging to his whiskers, was once more on his leash and capering to be off.

"Where away?" Selkirk asked her, in the lift.

"Up the glaxis."

"I thought you had forsaken the glaxis," he said..

She reddened at the memory.

"I had. I took a dislike to it; but now its old lure has come back to me. Stevie and I are going to play about on the grass and forget the fog." And, as they went their ways, neither one of them realized how important the bit of information, so casually given, would become.

The fog, blowing to and fro in long, stringy masses and threaded ever more and more with golden streamers, was worth the watching. Stevie, playing on the grass with a stray

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cocker, was increasingly loath to go home. Cundie paced to and fro, keeping an eye on the two little dogs and envying them their appetite for antics. It seemed to her that she could never really care to play again. She would play, of course. Society in general demanded it of her, and her friends, and her family. Only —

The clock on the Paraliament Buildings struck eleven. The fog had bunched itself in the Saint Charles valley. The hills beyond it were all golden, and the south channel was clear. Stevie, grinning from ear to ear and puffing heavily, came to her side and sat down on top of her right foot. She stooped to snap the leash on his collar. As she straightened up again, she saw Selkirk walking towards her very rapidly.

Twenty minutes earlier, Selkirk, passing through the office, had seen the door flung open and a man come striding in, a man whose leather coat and cap and gauntlets were dripping with the fog, whose weary face seemed only a white setting for two burning eyes. He walked masterfully, intent upon his errand, spoke masterfully to the clerk who faced him at the desk.

"Have you some one named Cundie staying here?"

The clerk turned to his index, section C.

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Then he shook his head.

"No, sir."

"Has some one of that name left here recently?"

"Not that I remember, sir."

"Please think for a moment. It is very urgent."

Selkirk, standing by, heard the questions, saw that the stranger was under a terrible strain.

"Pardon," he said, with his usual economy of phrase. "I heard you ask. Could Cundie be a nickname?"

"Possibly." The stranger turned to him quickly. "I've so little to go on. My best friend fell with his aeroplane, last night, and is at the point of death — delirious and keeps calling for Cundie and talking about the Château. The doctor sent me to get him, if I could, and bring him up there at once."

"Is your friend Mr. Stevenson by any chance?"

"Yes. You know him?"

"Well. And care for him. Your Cundie is probably Miss Barth. She is here with her grandfather."

"Where can I find her?" Neither man wasted words on personal sorrow.

"Perhaps I can find her for you. If she is not in her room — " He made a gesture to

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the clerk, sending him to the telephone. "No? Then she is up the glacis, with her little dog. If you will wait here, I'll go to find her and bring her to you."

The stranger dropped wearily into a chair.

"Thanks. It's most awfully decent of you. I'm rather done up: the shock, and up all night, and I had a beastly trip down, this morning. I had to fly high to keep clear of the fog, and of course there were no landmarks. Just as I began to think I must be getting somewhere near here, one little streak of sunshine caught the top of the tower. I finally came down all right, just this side of Beauport."

Selkirk looked startled.

"You flew?"

"Yes. The only way to get Miss Barth back — in time." His voice broke on the final words. Then he braced. "You'll find me in the grill," he said. "I must have coffee and something to eat. I've got to keep fit, you see, if I'm to hold out."

Selkirk nodded briefly and went away; but his heart was heavy with his bad news and with anxiety for Cundie. He felt sure that she would go, without an instant's hesitation and at any risk. But the risk was tremendous. And what about a companion? She could not set off alone in the aeroplane with a strange

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man, nor go alone to a woodsman's camp in the upper Saguenay, with only lumber jacks and a doctor and a flying man to bear her company.

But Cundie turned aside his objections with a finality that silenced him.

"I went into worse places than that in France," she told Selkirk simply; "and that was only other people's war, not my own very life."

"Then all the more you need a friend with you now, one you can trust."

She turned her face up to his, smiling through the tears that would not be driven back.

"Haven't you found out yet that, in a tremendous sorrow, everybody turns into a trusty friend?" she asked. And then, "Besides," she added; "who is there to go?"

"Your grandfather?"

"Impossible. He is not strong. He knows nothing about flying. The strain and the possibility of danger would be the worst thing in the world for him."

"Danger?"

"I've only been up once, myself. We were caught in a fog," she explained briefly. "Not that anything matters, so long as I can go. Did he tell —"

"Only the fact of the accident. There was

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no time. He wants to start back as soon as possible." Selkirk avoided any question of the reason; but Cundie knew. "I left him getting coffee and something to eat, and I came out for you."

She nodded.

"Just as you would. You never waste time nor make a fuss. Now," for they were hurrying under the arch and into the court; "will you please find him and tell him I'll be down in just ten minutes. I must see Granddaddy, and get warm things on, and," she tried to smile; "stick a toothbrush in my pocket. Then I'll come."

She kept her promise. Ten minutes later, coated and capped and with bulging pockets, she stepped out of the lift. Her grandfather was beside her, and Stevie was under her arm. Selkirk was waiting for her. With him was a vast, amorphous budget of coats and scarfs and close-knotted veils. At Selkirk's word of greeting, the budget turned about, to show at its peak the face of Mrs. Jenkins.

"My dear Miss Barth," she said quite breathlessly; "I'm so sorry about it all. And I'm going with you, to see you through. You see, the news is all over the house. Everybody loved — loves Mr. Stevenson, you know. And I said to Lottie, just as soon as I heard about it, that Miss Barth mustn't be let

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to go alone, with all those strange men and into the backwoods and everything. Besides, you know, I can help in the nursing, and cuddle you at odd times. So I telephoned down and the man came up and we arranged what I should wear and take and all."

"But, Mrs. Jenkins! You can't! You mustn't!" Cundie remonstrated, half way between nervous tears and still more nervous laughter.

But Mrs. Jenkins allowed her husband to untangle himself from her most embarrassingly fervid embrace and, the next minute, she was telling the hugest lie that ever rolled from a Baptist tongue.

"Nonsense!" she said very briskly. "And such a chance, you know! I've always felt that I'd admire to fly."

As they stepped into the waiting car, quite as a matter of course Selkirk held out his arms to Stevie. But Cundie shook her head.

"He'll be perfectly good with me," she said. "And — And I may need him terribly."

Selkirk's eyes assured her of his complete understanding. Then he shut the door.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

“**I**T was just like Stevie,” his friend told them, while the car went racing around the Battery and away towards the bridge and Beauport. “He had been up, all day, everything going splendidly. And then, just as he was ready to make a landing, one of the cook’s children saw him — they all adored Stevie, you see — and went running out across the field to meet him. He was straight in the line of the plane. Stevie swerved to get away from hitting him, and the boy dodged at the same time. Stevie tried again, missed the child, but crashed head on against a stone wall. The plane went completely over him, pinning him down.”

“And?” Cundie’s voice caught in her throat.

“We shall know now, before long. It was pretty bad, last night. He kept talking to you and trying to explain things to you. It worried him, and kept his temperature going up and down. The doctor told us, about three o’clock, that we’d better get you up there as soon as we could. We’d have been there now, if it hadn’t been for that damned fog.”

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"Have they a nurse?"

"Not up there. That's one reason Mrs. Jenkins is going to be such a bully help. Of course the doctor is on the job, every minute; but even he can't handle it alone. Here we are. Steady. In here, Mrs. Jenkins. Can you manage? Right, Miss Barth? Here goes." And the drumming of the motors drowned his friendly voice.

They flew low, safely and very, very swiftly. The fog had vanished. The hills were gay with sunshine, at first in all their belated autumn browns and yellows; as they went farther north, snow-capped and gleaming against the upper blue. Cundie was too busy with her thoughts, her agony of fear, to think about the method of their journey. Stevie, used to the Packard, had cuddled down into her lap and gone to sleep. A sidelong glance at Mrs. Jenkins showed that good lady gripping the seat with taut, strong fingers; her face was greeny-yellow behind its veil, but not a word betrayed her. If it meant dying, she would at least die game. Nevertheless, it was not entirely her sympathy for Cundie that dictated her silence. She had a vague notion that even the vibration of her own voice, coming unexpectedly, would go far to upset the balance of their tideless craft.

The doctor walked their last few yards be-

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side them. Stevenson was alive. He had been calling — This was Cundie? Oh, Miss Barth? A heroine to come! — calling and babbling so constantly that he had chanced it with a hypodermic, to give the patient a little rest. He had taken it well and had been asleep for two hours. He might wake up at almost any time now. If Miss Barth would come in and get tea and a bite to eat. And Mrs. Jenkins. She had been a nurse? Better and better! But all his reassuring patter washed over Cundie and left her spiritually dry. She only knew that Stevenson was still alive, that she must get some tea, and be ready for whatever came. With Stevie trotting at her heels, she went inside the shack.

The men were very kind. One of them brought her tea, and it refreshed her. Another came with a basin of water and a big, rough towel, and stood there awkwardly, watching while she scrubbed her face and hands. And another one came with bread-and-milk and a great bare bone for Stevie. And Mrs. Jenkins, pulling off her wrappings, showed herself in a plain dark gown and a white apron, with one of her husband's great handkerchiefs bound round her head by way of cap. And Stevie's teeth grated on the bone, and he growled happily. And then at last, the doctor came to the door and made a sign.

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Without the quiver of an eyelash, Cundie rose and followed him; but her knees were weak and shaky, and her heart was rocking like an ugly, unstable piece of lead.

No mark of the fall was on Stevenson's face and head, his fever was giving him the ruddy flush of perfect health. Except for missing his great round spectacles, Cundie, at a first glance, was surprised to see so little change. Then he moved his head, so that she could see his eyes. They told the story. She took herself into an iron grip, as she stepped softly forward, and put her hand on his.

The dull eyes came to a sort of focus. The lips moved slightly. Then a voice came to her, seemingly from far away.

"Cundie! You here? I was afraid I'd get away before I saw you."

Still holding his hand and chilled to the heart by its growing chilliness, she sank to her knees beside the bed and curved her other arm around his head and shoulders.

"You aren't going, Stevie. I've come to hold on to you and keep you here."

To her surprise, she felt a slight answering pressure from his fingers. Then, always more slowly, as if each word dragged on his waning strength, —

"I'll try my best to hang on, Cundie. But I'm slipping."

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She had to feel for his lips with hers, her eyes were so blinded with her tears; but her voice did not fail her. It was low and crooning, the voice of a mother talking to a sick little child — and something else besides, something ineffable.

"Don't waste your strength trying, Stevie. Just lie still and rest. I am here to hold you tight and keep you from slipping, and —" her breath caught — "and I promise you I won't let go."

There was a silence, endless, the sort of silence that crumples up one's courage and hope. Then Stevenson drew a long, long breath, turned his head slightly to one side and shut his warming fingers on Cundie's with a grip of steel.

A half-hour later, the doctor followed Cundie from the room, blowing his nose mightily, as he went.

"By the Lord Harry, you've done the trick, Miss Barth," he almost blubbered. "I wouldn't have believed it possible. It isn't medicine; it's psychiatry. Now and then there's a spiritual bond between two people that lets one of them call the other back from the dead. Stevenson was slipping fast, just as he said, and — Oh, I say, hold on there! Mrs. Jenkins!" For Cundie had collapsed into a forlorn little heap, and was sobbing as if her

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heart was broken, burst with its infinitude of joy.

The doctor, who was a devoted friend of Stevenson, was untiring, and Mrs. Jenkins was a marvel of strength and wisdom; but it was two full weeks before Stevenson was allowed to talk. Dr. Howard had come and gone again, beaming with rapture and only biding his time to give his blessing. There was no place for him in the half-dozen little shacks; but he was sensible enough to know that Cundie's place was there, and that Mrs. Jenkins was a dragon of protection and support. Therefore he went back to the Château to bide his time, to write to Cundie's parents, and to arrange for Stevenson's reception, directly the doctors allowed him to be moved. The two doctors, in careful consultation, had decided that he could most easily be brought to Quebec in an aeroplane. The little camp was so far off the lines of direct communication that it would be next to impossible to get Stevenson to the boat for a long, long time to come. On the other hand, he was so used to flying that the journey would not seem unusual, and his accident had not been caused by anything that would shake his confidence in his aeroplane. With the whole camp eager to do something to show their joy in his recovery, there was no question of the preparations

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being complete for a safe and comfortable journey back to town. The only question was the *when*.

That is, to all of them but Cundie. She had something to do before the start. She did it with her usual directness.

"Stevie," she said to him, the first day the doctor allowed them any real talk; "I suppose you'll be interested to hear I had a cable from Dad, yesterday, sending congratulations."

His face brightened.

"Awfully decent of him! Who told him about my spill? In fact, who told him anything about me, anyway?"

"Granddaddy, I suppose." Cundie spoke casually. "I wrote him, myself, a few days ago; but he hasn't had time to get my letter yet."

"Awfully decent of him to cable!" Stevenson repeated. "And, after all, you know, it isn't so uncommon for a flying man to get his."

Cundie clutched at his unconscious opening.

"Do they all get the same thing?"

"Generally. Not always in the same way, though."

"I'd no idea the marriage rate of aviators was so high."

She saw him flush, then whiten to his lips.

"Miss Barth!"

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"Mr. Stevenson!" Then she laughed. "No use, Stevie. You've got the *Cundie* habit, and you may as well keep it on."

He took a long breath, shut his teeth for a minute. Then, —

"The fact is, you'd better not have come."

"But why? The doctor still insists that, if I hadn't, you'd have — " Even now, she balked at the word.

"Died. Yes, I know that. I was just sliding down and out, when I felt your grip on me. But, Cundie," he looked up at her very pitiously; "was it the best thing, after all?"

"Why not?"

"Because — " He faltered. "Because now we've got it all to go through again."

Once more she put her hand on his fingers, holding them tight. As she did so, she had a sudden memory of the first time she had met him, and how, even then, the supple beauty of his hands had delighted her.

"Stevie," she told him very quietly; "you must just lie still and listen, and believe the things I say. You aren't strong enough yet for any argument. Besides, I've got it all planned out. You know I'm modern and very practical. We aren't going to do anything all over again. We are merely going to start out on a better line than ever; that's the thing Dad was sending his cable for. His congratu-

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lations were to me, not you. What's more, he is coming out, as soon as he can get a passage. Granddaddy wrote him everything about you, about us; and he is coming out to help us plan. No. Listen. The doctor says, and Granddaddy agrees, that you won't be flying for at least six months, and I'm planning to have our honeymoon in the meantime."

"Cundie! Dearest! Don't!"

"But why?" Her face was very near his own. "Don't you really want to marry me, Stevie?"

"Dearest! But it is impossible to —"

She saw the beads of sweat on his forehead, and she had the sense to hurry on. It was impossible to leave it here; to rush to her conclusion swiftly was her only way.

"Not impossible at all, Stevie. I've even figured out the accounts, ready to show you when you're strong enough. You've got to eat and sleep and buy clothes, in any case. So have I. I have a huge allowance. Daddy has always given me more than I can spend. He'll always keep it up, no matter whom I marry. He says a woman has got to have an independent income, if the marriage is to work out happily. So there we are. We can just pool our incomes, spend what we absolutely need, and use the rest of it wherever it will do the most good. You'll not tell me where your

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surplus goes, nor I you." And then, all at once, her bright practicality vanished, washed away by happy tears. "Stevie! Stevie dearest! If you'd known what I went through, after you came away and left me, you'd be sure I'd be happier in an almshouse with you than in a palace with — "

Frightened by her tears, he silently stroked her hair where it touched his pillow. Then, with a flicker of his former fun, he asked her, —

"Even with your Sandy, dearest?"

She lifted her head and smiled through her tears, for something told her that her fight was won. But Stevenson's evident weariness, as much as her own girlish sense of honour, kept her from telling him about the interview below the bastion.

Ten days later, one cold and sunny noon, two cars, the Packard and an ambulance, were drawn up on the lower road across the Beauport flats, their occupants eagerly scanning the northern sky. They heard the drumming whine of the motors long before they saw the aeroplane itself. Instantly they leaped to the ground and became very busy with rugs, and a stretcher, and blankets, and such like. Then they entered the cars again and started their engines, ready to rush for the landing-place; but the aeroplane saved them the trouble,

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landing beside them deftly. Cundie, with the doctor beside her, waved an arm in joyous beckoning, just as another plane drew down upon them, with a greenish-yellow Mrs. Jenkins clinging for dear life to her seat behind the aviator, and doing her brave best to smile and look content. A minute or two later, strong arms were picking up Stevenson, blankets and all, and settling him comfortably on the stretcher, ready for his ride back into town.

The entrance to the Château was an ovation. Selkirk and the doctor had warned the office that there must be no excitement; but Stevenson was as popular as Cundie, their romance had gripped the imagination, and staff and guests alike were out of hand. The ambulance, driving very slowly under the lower archway, came in upon a crowded court and drew up at the main door, where the manager stood waiting on the steps, with the uniformed porters and bellboys lined up behind him, standing at stiff salute while they waited for their chance to be of service. There was a thin little cheer as the ambulance door opened and Cundie, haggard, tired and very radiant, stepped out. Then, as the orderlies gently drew forward the stretcher, the cheer changed to something very like a sob. Not one of them had fully realized that the gay and

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sturdy Stevenson could have been brought so low.

In the end, though, the cheers had it. While Stevenson was being tucked into bed on the far side of the great hotel, he could hear the last of them ringing out in the November air. Tired as he was, his laugh had something of its old sound, as he held out his hand to Selkirk.

"They're a great old bunch, these Château boys," he said. "Fancy their turning out like this to meet us! As for you, old man —" And his grip finished his phrase.

Two days later, Stevenson was so far recovered from his journey that even Cundie was willing to leave him to the nurse.

"Only for an hour or two," she told him. "I'm going to The Good Sainte Anne to offer her my thanks."

"For?"

"You," she answered simply. "It was on my first trip to her Shrine that I met you first. And she has taken care of us ever since."

He smiled. Then his face lost its thoughtfulness, grew gay.

"Say a word or two to the good Saint on my account," he bade her. "While you are about it, you'd better include Selkirk, too."

"Why Mr. Selkirk?"

"He was telling me, yesterday. Your father

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sent him to a specialist of sorts in Toronto, and there's to be some sort of a minor operation that in all probability will turn him out as good as new."

"Not really! How — "

"Wait! That's not all. You see, there has been a girl mixed up with it from the start. There always is, like you and me, you know," Stevenson paused long enough to fling Cundie a fair copy of his old-time grin. "After his tooth-trouble, Selkirk naturally didn't seek her society, went off and ate husks in the wilderness and mourned alone. But now, on the strength of the Toronto news, he's been resuming diplomatic relations to beat the band. If I were you, I'd drag him down to Sainte Anne in your train."

However and in spite of his advice, Cundie went alone. She had things to say to the good Saint which needed solitude and confidence.

It was so late in the season that the place was quite deserted. The church was chill and empty; but the Lilies of Our Lord still bloomed upon the great high altar, and, up in the organ gallery, an unseen musician was softly fingering the keys. Just as softly, Cundie moved up the aisle till she was close to the gem-crowned statue. There she stepped into a pew, dropped to her knees and covered her

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face with her hands. There was so much to think over, to rejoice over, so much to hope. Nor was her mood only of thanksgiving. There was in it a prayer for courage and strength and, above all, for guidance. Cundie was too modern not to know that marriage is something else than going Maying, hand in hand. Knowing it, she faced it with fearless reverence.

She knelt there long, the faint scent of the lilies all around her, the murmur of the organ in her ears, the image of Stevenson a living presence in her heart. She laid that image down before the altar, and covered it with her thanksgiving and her prayers. Then she rose from her knees and went away very quietly, sure that her answer would come to her, according to her later needs in the new life ahead of her.

Once out on the steps, she paused a moment, looking up at the steep hill where her mother had so often trudged. It lay in dazzling sun, just as it had lain in the old days, and the river was just as sunny, too, going its endless way, down among the mountains, down to the Gulf and then, mingling with the Gulf Stream, away and away to wash the English shores.

"Miss Barth!"

She turned abruptly, Miss Lottie stood be-

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side her, her fur coat dragged up about her ears.

"Miss Jenkins! Where did you come from?"

"I was in the church just now, and saw you. It was so cold in there; I hope I haven't caught a cold, but I really felt I ought to come."

"For a favour?" Cundie smiled.

"No," Miss Lottie told her bluntly. "To say my thanks. I guess I can do that to a Popish saint, even if I am a Baptist. Atch-shoo! Oh, I do hope I haven't got a cold, just when he is coming up."

"He?" Cundie's eyes were lighting with the old mischief. "What has been going on, Miss Jenkins while your mother was away?"

Miss Lottie tried to blush. Failing, she simpered instead.

"Well, it was all your doing," she said defensively. "It was you who brought me down here in the first place, and told me to ask a favour and see what she would do. I didn't much believe it at the time; but when we picked up Mr. Selkirk on the way home," Miss Lottie made no bones of the nature of the favour she had asked; "I began to think there might be something in it after all. I came right back down here and gave her something. After a while, when Mr. Selkirk proved to be — unsuitable, I thought I'd bet-

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ter give her another chance." Miss Lottie showed that she was not her father's child for nothing after all. "And so I came back again and reminded her of my old promise. I'd had a bad misunderstanding with my gentleman friend, just before we left home. But I wrote to him, and he wrote back, and the end of it all is that he's just wired me he's getting here, this afternoon — Achht-schoo! Achhht-schoo! And now look at the fright I'll be when he sees me, if I have a cold in my head!"

Cundie sought to comfort her.

"But he'll be so happy to be with you that he won't think how you look."

Miss Lottie eyed her dubiously.

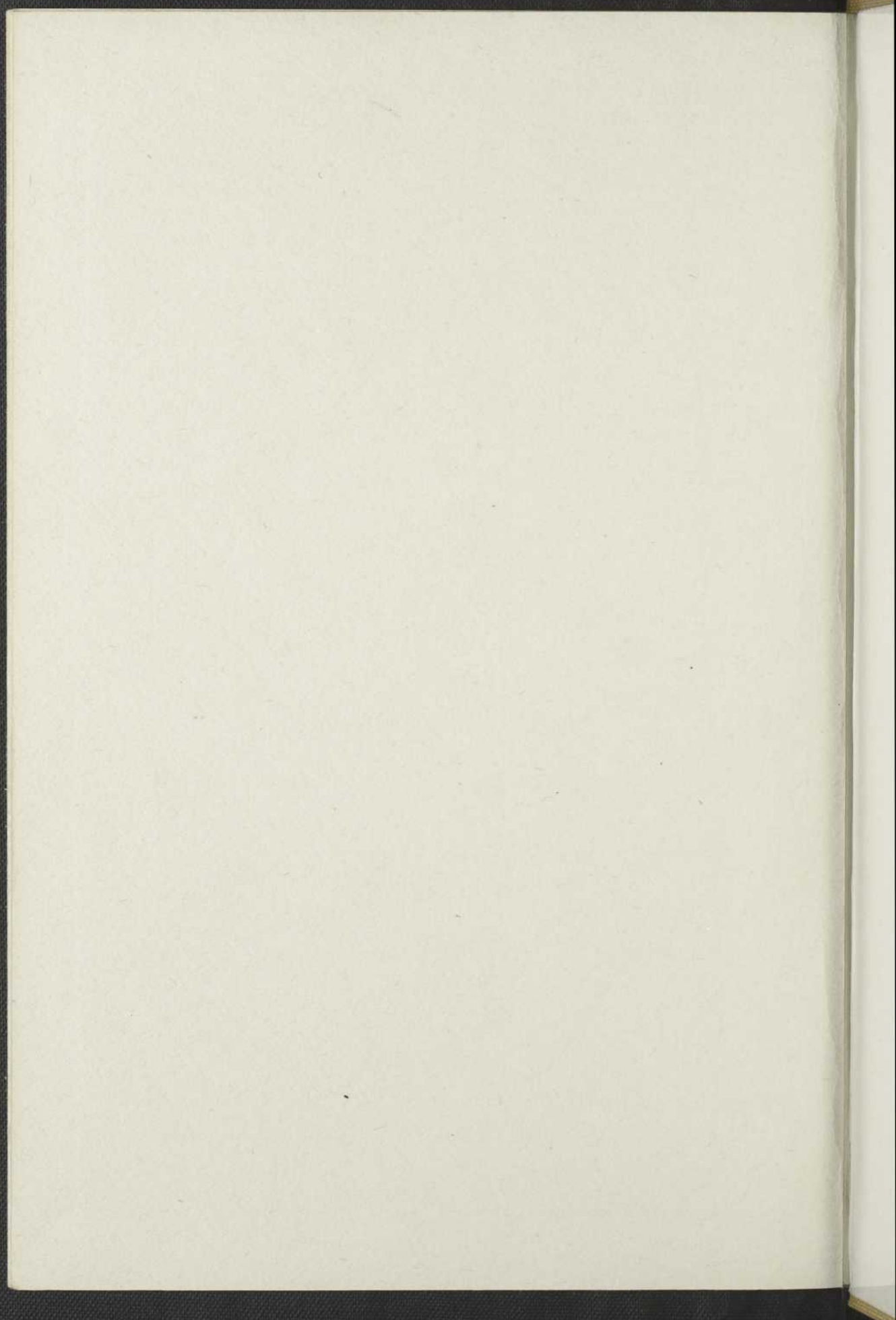
"Is that the way you've found it?" she inquired.

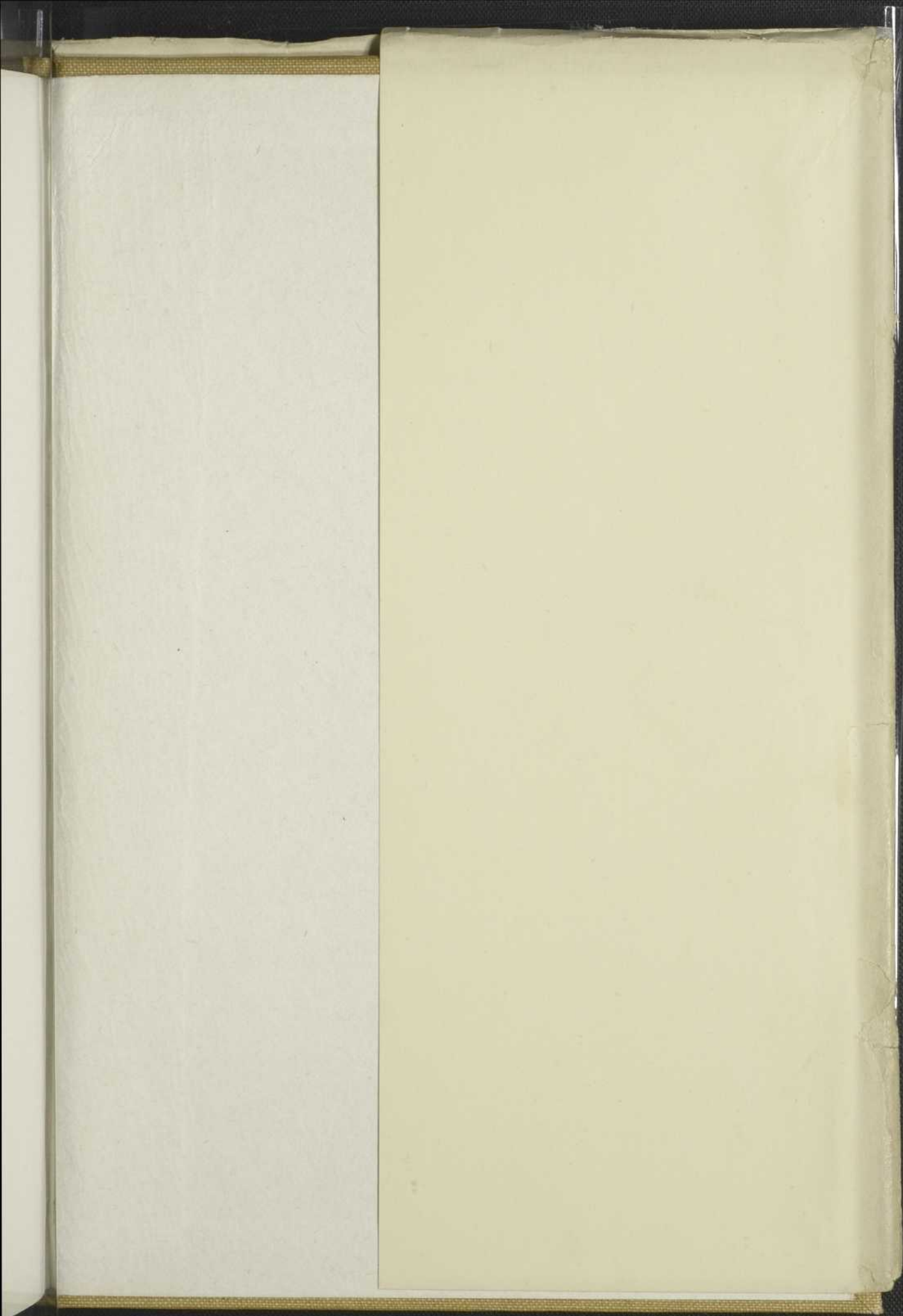
Cundie gave her a long, meditative glance, trying to find a basis of comparison between Miss Lottie's romance and her own.

Then,—

"Really, you know, I never stopped to think about it," she said vaguely "We just were."

THE END.





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