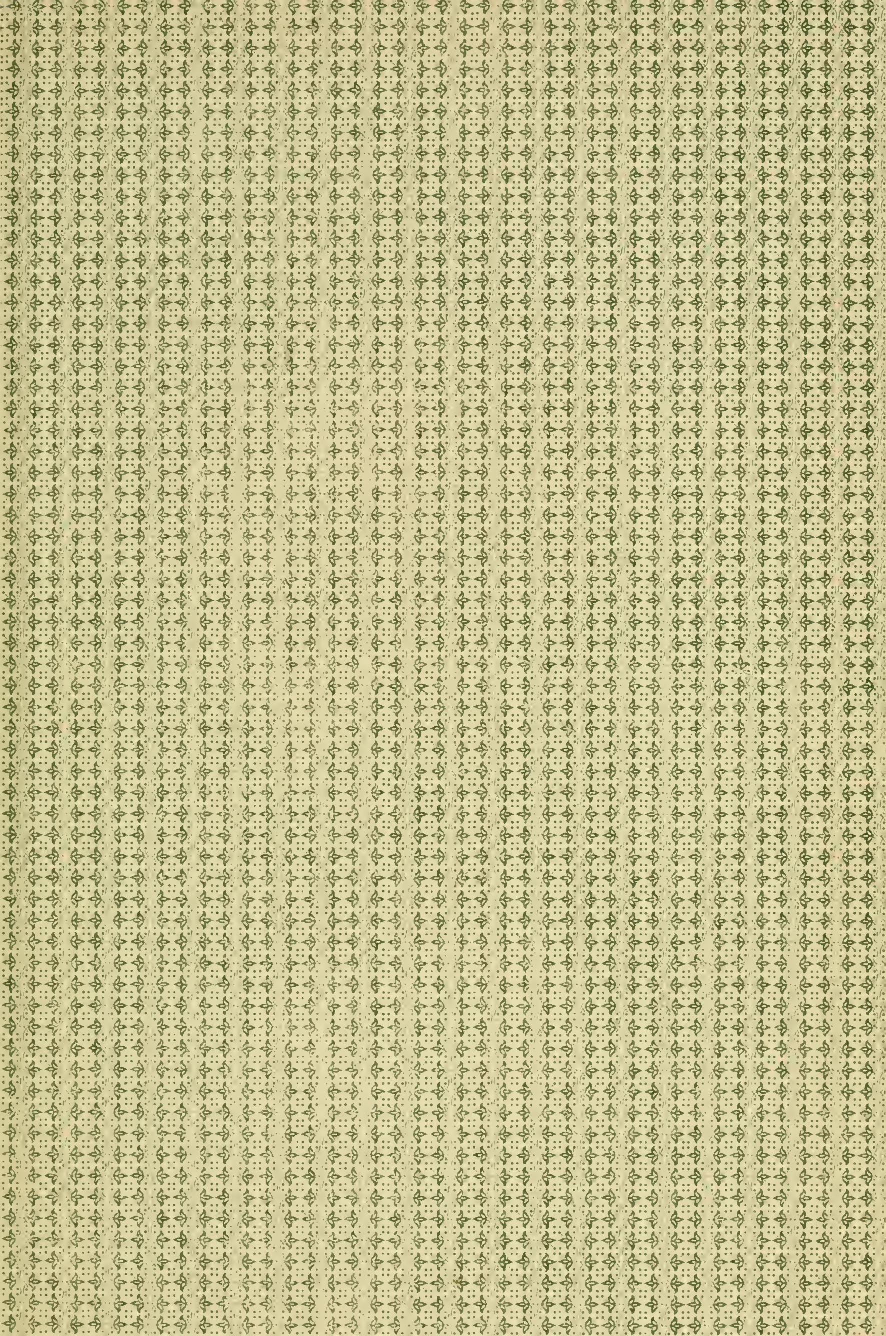
THE DINGBAT of ARCADY

BY
MARGUERITE
WILKINSON

Class PS3545
Book .I4 I5
Copyright Nº 1922
COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



THE
DINGBAT OF ARCADY

By

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

New Voices

Bluestone

THE DINGBAT *of* ARCADY

BY

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1922
All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

PS 3545
.I4D5
1922

Copyright, 1921
By CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Copyright, 1922
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and printed. Published, March, 1922

CONDÉ NAST PRESS GREENWICH, CONN.

MAR 22 1922

©Cl.A659243

THIS IS a book of memories. It tells how Jim and I traveled on singing rivers and blue bays in *The Dingbat of Arcady*, *The Royal Dingbat*, and *The Long Canoe* and on roads, brown, yellow, and white, in *Frankie Ford* and *Rover Chug-chug*. It is a most personal record of small, but sprightly, adventures. It is dedicated to my cousin, Poultney Bigelow, the only other vagabond in my family, and to his wife, Lilian Bigelow.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My most cordial thanks for permission to reprint this material in this book are due to The Editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, who first gave most of it to the public.

[I]

[I]

To LIVE thirty years without ever feeling the full energy of the sun, the rigor of wind, the sweet instancy of rain—that, you may say, would be a tragedy. Or perhaps you will say that it would be impossible. But it is not impossible. It was my tragedy. I did not know sun and wind and rain because I had always taken them for granted. My body had suffered and enjoyed them dully and half-consciously, being carefully protected from infancy to the years of indiscretion by a house, clothing, and the customs of good society. In a spiritual sense I had lived most of my life indoors. To be sure, I was acquainted with nature—spelled with a capital and put inside quotation marks. There is a great gulf, however, between acquaintance and friendship. I could look back to the days of my childhood when the sane delights of dust and puddles were well known to my small feet in spite of parental prohibitions. I enjoyed a beautiful view when it was not pointed out to me and I had sense enough to dislike people who came and

"quacked beside me" in the woods after the manner described by Rupert Brooke. In quiet fields I was often touched by beauty that I did not analyze. Times came when a great congregation of the clouds in the wild air currents high above me thrilled me with the marvel of a storm. But greater things than these I had not found in nature, and deeper things than these I had not known when I was thirty years of age. I knew people much better than I knew Nature, who has been the condition of their life from the beginning, who is the everlasting enemy and the everlasting friend.

Since I was thirty years old I have been intimate with the open world. I have felt the sun putting the scent of sunburn upon my body and the color of life into my mind. My shoulders have been thrust against the wind with a hardy and joyful will to overcome it; my skin has tingled with it; my lungs have been greatened with breezes. The rain has cooled my forehead and throat and made moist tendrils of my hair and softened my voice. I have not killed lions in the jungle as Roosevelt did, nor suffered in the polar seas as Shackleton did. But I have known the chimeras of darkness; I have borne the

rasping hardships of heat and cold and pain. I have been hungry for several days at a time and thirsty hour after hour. I have been in the open without even a tent for shelter week after week. I have learned to strive for that conquest of nature in myself which begins with realization and ends with the sublimation of all the forces of life for ends most wise and serene. Without that conquest Nature is the everlasting enemy; with it she becomes the everlasting friend. I have tried to let the sun strike fiery white through work and play, to let the wind blow clean and strong across stale ways, to let the fertile rain fall insistently upon life's barrenness.

I may have learned some of the secrets of the open world. They tell themselves again to all that know them in the eyes and voices and gestures of others that know them and in the ways of their minds. I wish that all mankind were of this free masonry. It is sorrowful to realize that when a person who is ruddy and athletic either in body or in spirit enters a subway train the sensitive must feel a shock of surprise. It is as if a sunflower had entered.

What if a great wind, smelling of salt seas,

or of pine woods, or of a sage mesa, were to go roaring through the car, stealing all hats away, whipping out hairpins, loosening collars, carrying us all with it to the shores of the ocean, or to unbounded forests, or to undulating prairies and casting us down upon the earth forspent with a passion of surprise? What if a great silver rain descended upon us from skies the color of gentians, washing us, caressing us, cooling our fevers, releasing us from all tension? What if the sun came out upon us afterward with such an inspiriting gladness that we all danced together over boundless open spaces, lifting our hands and arms toward heaven, forgetful of the world? Is it not true that beauty and happiness would come upon us? While the rapture lasted we should be transfigured and we should keep the memory of that transfiguration with us always. For the soul, that moves forever toward God as the summit of life and the goal of living, takes the first step best, perhaps, where life began and still begins, in nature; and passes on from storm to storm and from peace to peace, from swollen cloud to cloud and from rainbow to rainbow, from shadow to lovelier shadow and from light to everlasting light.

This may be why I am moved to tell of my adventures in the open world with my husband. I am not so devoid of humor that I can think of myself as a discoverer of the anguish and ardor of life out of doors. I know that I am not even a pioneer. This trail of the mind is worn smooth by thousands who made it. But nobody else has traveled on it with my body, my mind, my heart. As I see it, it is unique. The joy of the way comes back into my consciousness again and again and thrusts itself upward through many intellectual disciplines, asking for a chance to be spoken with my lips. I am like the proselyte of a new faith, eager to relate my experience. Those who dislike such confessions should lay down this book.

My first chance to go out into the open with my husband came after a long winter of discontent, after a sharp struggle with poverty, after a period of sorrow and anxiety. Jim is a teacher. He had no summer work that year. It was necessary to live, somehow, until school began again in the autumn. Poets, also, have to keep body and soul together in June, July and August. We had very little to live on. We longed for rest, change, adventure. We could think of nothing

that would cost less than two months out of doors. To be sure, I had never done any camping. I had never even lived on a farm. But Jim knew the whimsical windings of rivers and he understood boats. We decided to spend our vacation floating down a river. We were living in the West at the time, and, for some reason unknown to us even now, we chose the Willamette River in Oregon.

Anybody who looks on the map can find it, a short stream flowing through Oregon into the Columbia. But though I shock the geographers, I must tell them that for me no map can fix it in place. For me it is a mystic stream flowing past a certain saw-mill at Albany, Oregon, past the place where it slides into the Columbia, down the coast and into San Diego Bay, thence under the continent, emerging in the Saint John River in Canada, flowing through Lake Champlain, across the Hudson, under the Atlantic, mingling with the rivulets of Devon and joining the Esk in Scotland. More than that, if I live, I shall fancy that I find it flowing under the next river on which we travel. It has cut a channel in the deep places of my spirit.

Our trip down the Willamette lasted seven weeks by the clock, but by the tick of our

feelings it has never ended. Sometimes when I am at rest and retrospective I can close my eyes and see the sinuous curving of that little river, the mossy sides of the great firs and maples near it, the strips of singing shingle that made tunes for us under our boat as we slipped down the stream over the shallow ripples, the banks of clean sand where we made our fires at night and sat watching the thin strands of gray smoke unwinding themselves upward.

The trip began at Albany, Oregon, whither we had gone expecting to buy a flat-bottomed rowboat. We found none of the right sort for sale at a price which we could afford to pay, and were obliged to build our own craft, which was best, after all. For new ventures new vehicles.

The building of a boat would seem to be a difficult and complicated operation, but to the simple all things are simple. We made our task as easy as possible by working in the open air, in front of a lumber mill, on the bank of the river. Our lumber—pine flooring—was cut to dimension for us in the mill. Near us, while we worked, were piles of sweet yellow sawdust like grated cheese ready for the dinner of a giant, heaps of honey-

colored shavings, like the fragrant curls of a giant's daughter, and bundles of planks smooth as warm-hued ivory. The mill was owned by a noble old Titan who had gone out to Oregon in his youth and brought up a family of sons to match the land. In their company we worked happily for three days, listening to the whine and drone of the saws in the mill and to the good American voices of the workmen. On the third day we finished our boat.

The actual building of her was done in a day and a half. She was fourteen feet long and two and a half feet wide and the shape of a cigar box, save that there was an angle at the bow and another at the stern where the floor tilted upward to the top. Not a curved line in her whole structure! Her sides were fourteen-inch planks, fairly stout. Her floor was of cheap pine boards fitted together in the usual way with grooves and ridges. They were laid on at right angles to the sides. The two ends, where the floor sloped up, were covered with planks and one plank at each end could be lifted out and set back at will. Thus we had two cupboards in which to store clothing, food, blankets, tools, kitchen utensils, and the small typewriter that is to us what Mary's lamb was to Mary.

While the boat was building the big men in the mill showed much kindly interest. They would stand around at the lunch hour smoking malignant tobacco and giving us the most benevolent advice. I was a problem to them—a woman who could pound nails and was willing to go on a wild expedition of the kind that we were planning. They would watch me curiously as I filled the grooves in the rough boards with white lead and fitted them into place. They were almost as much interested as we were when, on the second day, at noon, our craft was structurally complete. It remained to make her water-tight and to paint her.

Some of the men advised us to fill the cracks with putty. Others suggested pitch and oakum. In order to be on the safe side and in order to accept all proffered suggestions with obliging courtesy, we used all three. When we thought that we had done all that was necessary we slapped on a coat of sky-blue paint, a rich, conspicuous shade (one might say "vulgar-rich" in this connection) and left her to dry over night. The next day we were to launch her and begin our cruise.

The friendly men asked us to let the launching be at noon so that they might see us off.

So Jim spent the morning putting the finishing touches on a pair of rough wooden oarlocks whittled out of two small blocks of pine, and arguing with me about an appropriate name for our floating palace. We wanted her name to be both romantic and humorous. It happened that Jim's favorite slang word at the time was "dingbat" of Sunday-comic-supplement origin. To him it expressed the final degree of insignificance. He remarked casually that we ought not to be disturbed about a name for such a poor little "dingbat" of a boat! Whereupon we suddenly agreed that she should be called "The Dingbat" and that her port was Arcady. Hence, "The Dingbat of Arcady."

This decided, the choice of a fluid suitable for her christening troubled us. Champagne, we knew, was the conventional thing. In those days it could be had for its proper price. But we could not afford to treat the eight or ten friendly men and to favor the inanimate *Dingbat* with such an expensive drink while permitting the animate palate to suffer thirst —that would have been insulting. Any cheap drink of the hard variety would have been vulgar for the christening of a boat hailing from Arcady. Finally we decided to christen

her with the juice of Oregon cherries, than which none are more delicious, and to add a huge bag of them to the dinner of our friends.

At twelve o'clock of the third day of our stay in Albany Jim nailed the wooden oar-locks into place, gave me the oars to carry, and then, with the assistance of the workmen, picked up *The Dingbat of Arcady* and carried her down the pebbly bank to the water. Everybody helped. Even the old Titan must lend a hand. Jim got in and took the oars. I climbed over the stern and sat down in my place on top of the pantry cupboard. The current caught us. We were off. We had begun a new life that is not yet ended. The men on the bank waved and cheered. As we looked back from midstream they seemed as beautiful as trees, standing there in their rough strength. They were John Masefield's

> "Oregon men of six-feet-seven
> With backs from Atlas and hearts from
> Heaven."

By this time all who are wise in the ways of boats will be wondering whether *The Dingbat* leaked. Of course she did. Slow drops oozed up through unsuspected interstices around knots in the planks. Small rillets

trickled in at the seams and ran across the floor. While Jim directed our course easily enough with the oars, I worked much harder, bailing with a small saucepan and great determination. In spite of all that I could do the water got ahead of me. I learned that I could not hope to keep my feet dry. I took off my shoes and stockings. Jim followed my example. It is more comfortable and wiser to sit all day with bare feet in a couple of inches of water than it is to get chilblains from enforced intimacy with wet leather. I might remark, parenthetically, that we kept our shoes and stockings in the pantry cupboard for most of the seven weeks of the cruise, wearing them only when we entered towns or visited farms or met our fellow man. The boat leaked for three weeks. By the time she was water-tight we had lost all interest in shoes and stockings for their own sakes. We respected them and wore them merely as a part of good manners.

The Dingbat leaked so badly on that first afternoon of our trip that I thought it would be necessary to call all hands to the pumps. It was. Jim pulled her to the shore while I bailed rapidly. We lifted her on her side and poured the water out. Then we put

pitch and oakum into the perceptible cracks —the putty proved to be a delusion and a snare—and pushed her out into the water and went on again. The process had to be repeated several times that day. But we were not annoyed. The novelty of the experience was captivating. The cruise had begun. That very night we were to sleep on the ground. I wondered what it would be like.

[II]

[II]

When I was a little girl I despised the princess in the fairy tale who could not rest easily on her seven quilts of silk and down because, underneath the last and lowest of them, a rose petal lay crumpled. Now I have compassion for her. For those who recline on sevenfold silk and down spread between themselves and rugged reality never rest at all. If there be no crumpled petal, the thought of one suffices to disturb them. Pillowed upon a softness that thwarts or denies reality we may have witless slumber and illusory dreams, but valid repose is for those who do not fear that which is hard. Our rest is in reality.

Our peace is in reality. This thought I have found growing near the gnarled roots of trees that have sheltered me when I have slept in the woods at night. I have found it, also, flourishing in the hard sand at the heavy ocean's edge. Whenever and wherever I have slept upon the ground at night I have caught glimpses of it by the light of the first stars. And I have looked at it again in the

morning as soon as a new dawn has made it possible to see thoughts growing. I have tried to transplant it into my mind.

Whenever and wherever I have found this thought growing I have found rest. The ground, the underlying reality for our bodies, that from which there is no falling away, is the best of all beds. It is the bed of heroes before they die in battle and find rest in it forever; it is the bed of hermits who keep vigil for the soul's sake; it is the bed of the quaint company of the poets who wander up and down the highways of the world forever, seeking the tunes that will echo longest in the minds of men and the images that men's tears will never wash away. The ground is the bed on which Christ slept in the wilderness. It is the clean refuge of the poor. Resting on it makes the body firm, the mind joyful.

To find this firmness and joy, to achieve this rest upon reality, nobody needs to endure more than all manhood and womanhood should be able to endure. Nobody needs to be miserably uncomfortable night after night. Times will come when no amount of foresight can prevent a certain amount of discomfort. But this humorous hardness merely sym-

bolizes that discipline of heart and mind without which we reach no intellectual or spiritual reality. As a rule, after the first two or three nights spent in the open, aching bones are either a myth or a stupidity. It seems strange to me now that I lived thirty years in a world of groves and wild skies before I ever spent a night on the ground under the stars.

Our first night on the ground was spent in a grove of mighty maples. We made *The Dingbat* fast to a sapling on the bank and, after a hot supper previously purchased in Albany and cooked over a fire near the water's edge, Jim set about the task of bed-making. First we carried our blankets and two long strips of heavy canvas up into the grove. Then we sought a good bit of ground. At length, quite near the edge of the grove, we found a huge maple with a stretch of level earth under it about eight feet square and sloping away from the foot of the tree. The branches above were in full leaf—a shelter not to be despised in time of rains and a grateful shade in hot weather.

I leaned against the trunk that we promptly christened "our tree" and watched while Jim loosened the earth of the level space with a hatchet. He made a hollow in the middle

of the stretch of loose earth. This is an essential of comfort in a bed on the ground, for in it the hips can rest. A perfectly flat surface, even when it is well covered with blankets, is the enemy of rest for most human beings. The spine is wearied when it is held at an angle all night. Jim and I had heard that cowboys in the desert dug such slight hollows for their beds at night. We did likewise and were glad.

This done, in about five minutes, Jim spread out one piece of heavy canvas on the open space. Then he laid half of another twelve-foot strip on top of it, leaving about six feet by six to be turned up over the top in case of rain. These strips of canvas prevented the ground-damp from coming up to our bodies rapidly. The new camper is frequently surprised to learn that the chill which goes through him to the bone comes oftenest from the ground under him, not from the air around him. On the canvas Jim laid woolen blankets. On these he put a double cotton blanket,—the "sleep-between" used instead of sheets. This could be washed with little difficulty and served as protection against the dust that always gathers in camping blankets. On top of this were more woolen coverings.

We had no tent, for we had been too poor to buy one. We had nothing between us and the heavens, nothing but the broad, deeply cleft leaves of our tree. On one side even these did not hide the sky. On that side there was not even a mist to mask the street lamps of the eternal cities above us as a light fog from the harbor sometimes veils the stars that are New York at night. Climbing through that aperture in the branches on rays of starlight, my vision rose into the everlasting blue.

There was nothing between us and the voice of the river to deaden the long sound of its chanting, nothing but the placid air through which that chanting came. My lips moved with a desire to shape words to the tune of it and I gathered vague syllables together into heaps in my mind as I listened, only to throw them all away again at last. It had to be a song without words.

There was nothing between us and the nervous life that plays sensuously upon the surface of the earth. The ground whispered when an insect moved over it or in it. The hush of night was broken, occasionally, by the passing of the little night-hunters of the wood scurrying across leaves and twigs to and from their hidden homes, talking with their quick

feet. Sometimes something fell. Then silence closed in again, deeper than before. The air, near the earth and near my face, was moist and cool and full of sober fragrances. I wanted to stay awake all night and get the uttermost joy out of the experience. But even as I resolved to keep watch over the earth with the stars I lost them.

In the woods, although I wake earlier than when I am at home, I usually wake more gradually and beautifully. If the grove be thick or the day cloudy, my first awareness of waking may be the half-conscious answer of the mind to the calling of birds near at hand that seem, in my dreamy state, to be very far away. At first I lie perfectly quiet with no desire to move a finger, opening my eyes for an instant from time to time to see the robust trunks of trees define themselves and emerge from vanishing mist or kindly shadow. Then I realize that the tip of my nose is cold. I lift a hand to my hair and feel that it is heavy with dew. I turn stiffly. I give conscious attention to the bird-song. One by one more trees add themselves to the number of those that I can see. A shaft of keen light falls through arching branches

upon the floor of the grove. The grass, if there be any, becomes visible, spangled and stiff. If there be flowers near my bed, I notice them. Then it is time to get up.

On this first morning of the trip it happened in this way, the waking and the rising. I walked slowly down to the river, getting used to my legs almost as if I were learning to walk. The stream was smooth from bank to bank as if the ripples still slept. It steamed with a light, white mist. An evanescent foam or scum clung to the small reeds near the shore and in quiet places bubbles floated. A fish jumped. The sun stared at me ruddy and imperturbable from his low house in the East. I saluted him. Then I plunged into the river and swam rapidly for a minute or two. After the swim I gathered bits of dry wood, barkless and bleached, like the bones of a tree, and made a fire and cooked breakfast. My mood that had moved to an expectant andante was now attuned to a happy allegro. The day had begun.

On the next night of the trip, and on several succeeding nights, although there was as much beauty, there was more hardship, for it rained. On our second night out we made our camp in another maple grove farther down

the river. When we had been asleep only a short time we were awakened by a restless, unfamiliar noise, the shy, slow, disturbed fluttering of the top branches of the maples shifting in an intermittent breeze and the first gentle pattering of rain upon their leaves. The thought of a shower roused us, for, as I have said, we had no tent. We put all of our clothing under the canvas folded on top of our blankets. Then we waited, wondering how soon the rain would fall upon our faces.

For quite a long time not a drop of water came through to fall upon us. The leaves held the first fallen drops until their surfaces were thoroughly wet. Then the shower became too heavy for them and they began to drip. It was like William H. Davies' lyric, "The Rain," exactly like it.

> "I hear leaves drinking rain;
> I hear rich leaves on top
> Giving the poor beneath
> Drop after drop;
> 'Tis a sweet noise to hear
> Those green leaves drinking near."

From layer to layer of leaves the water fell and then splashed on our canvas. The outside

of it became wet but it was an effectual protection for our blankets. We had to choose between keeping our faces out in the open and keeping them dry. We decided to let them get wet. In the morning I looked like pussy with wet fur. My hair was so drenched that I had to wring it out, but otherwise I was warm and dry. We put on sweaters and hunted for wood dry enough for a fire. We found it under fallen trunks or in the hollows of trees and boiled our matutinal coffee while occasional drops of rain sputtered against the hot sides of the pot.

Since those days we have learned to carry calcium carbide which, when dropped into water, makes a gas that burns well and will dry twigs for a fire in no time. In this way we can cook in the wettest weather. We have learned, also, to dig a V-shaped trench, inverted, at the head of the bed so that water running down the slope on a rainy night will drain off at the sides instead of flowing down one's neck. But we were novices in those far away days and had not learned how very comfortable it is possible to be out of doors even in rainy weather. Nevertheless we were quite cheerful. We were like children in our enjoyment of the thought that we had slept

out all night in the rain and cooked breakfast in the rain successfully.

When rainy day followed rainy day and rainy night followed rainy night for the better part of two weeks I must admit that we were not always cheerful. Once Jim and I agreed that we would keep a fire all night. I was to stay awake and guard it until twelve o'clock. He would have the second watch. He needed rest first for he had been rowing all day. And what woman is not a sentry? But when twelve o'clock came Jim slumbered as deeply as one of the logs he should have been chopping into lengths for the fire, and, although he is usually the best sport in the world, I simply could not rouse him. There was nothing for it but to turn in and let the fire die. Through all the rain we kept well. Not a twinge of rheumatism, not a hint of a cold, not a sign of a sore throat did either of us have though we traveled all day in the leaky *Dingbat* and slept at night in blankets that finally got somewhat damp since there was never any sun in which to sun them.

Then came a day when we saw the sun again, hot and glorious, a day of emeralds and diamonds. In the strong light of that surprising sun we saw that everything we

owned was muddy. We must have a washing day at once while the sun stayed out. But we needed to go on down the river, too, for we needed certain kinds of food that could be bought only in towns. How could we do our washing and travel at the same time? That was the question.

Jim answered it. He bored a hole in the cover plank at each end of *The Dingbat*. In these two holes he inserted sticks about five feet tall. From the top of one to the top of the other he tied a stout cord. That was to be the drying line. Then, while *The Dingbat* floated on down stream, carefully guided by Jim, I leaned over the stern with a cake of laundry soap in one hand and a dingy garment in the other, rubbing and scrubbing to my heart's content. We left a thin trail of suds in our wake. We flaunted personal banners in the sun.

For a time the breezes were the only ones to see them. But at noon, while a large part of the wash was still on the line, a canoe, with two men in it, passed us, going up stream. They took several long looks before they could quite believe what they saw,—a sky-blue *Dingbat*, two flushed travelers, a clothes-line like those that hang between tenements

in the city! Then they roared mirthful greetings and asked us whither we were going. It embarrassed us to remember that we did not exactly know. We had not bothered to decide on a destination.

"To Astoria?" they shouted.

"Don't know!" we answered.

"I guess not," they answered, decidedly; "it'd take you a year in that—boat!"

It was at that moment, I think, that I became aware of my deep and undying affection for *The Dingbat*. We never know how much we love our friends until they are subjected to the derision of the world. And it was only a few moments later, when we left the bright canoe behind and rounded a bend of the river, that we found a lovelier destination than Astoria, a place so beautiful that it seemed as if it might be *The Dingbat's* home port of Arcady.

It was merely a strip of shelving pebbly beach with a clump of birches white in the dazzle of sun and flutter of air. A current flowed past the sandy edge of the beach swiftly enough to keep it clean. A virginal freshness of atmosphere made the place seem delightful to us who had struggled so long with rain in the thick, dark groves. In all

directions was wild, untouched country, showing no signs of the presence of man. What a place for a rest and a change and a frolic! It was excessively hot. We decided to row on later in the day when sundown made the air cooler. Why not stop and wash blankets? We did. We put on bathing suits, went to work, and to play in that gracious water.

We had a happy afternoon. I stepped into the river and sat down comfortably where the current flowed past on a level with my shoulders, ducking from time to time to let it have the fun of tugging at my hair. It is inherent in living streams to desire to pull all flexible things. I washed the "sleep-between" and Jim hung it on the bushes to dry. Then I gave myself up to joy in the weather. I was wild with delight of sun and blue water and solitude. One swim was not enough. All afternoon I ran in and out of the rollicking current. Jim washed the boat and rested under the birches. At five o'clock we folded our clean, dry things, got into a clean, dry *Dingbat* and went on to finish our day's cruise and find a camp for the night. We were to travel until about eight o'clock to make up for the afternoon of leisure. We

did not know, then, that it would have been wiser to remain where we were.

But soon after we were launched and floating down with the current again I felt a strange, drowsy pain waking in my feet. I paid no attention to it at first. But it persisted. A sudden twinge when I moved one of them clamored for attention. I looked at my bare feet and saw that something quite unprecedented was happening to them. They were rosy purple in color and in form they resembled the chubby feet of Michelangelo's cherubs. I tried to stand and discovered that it had become an agony simply to bend them at the ankles. I sat down in limp distress. It was an exceedingly bad case of sunburn, the result of my immoderate reveling in sun and water.

It was perfectly evident that we could not pitch camp for the night anywhere where walking would be necessary and that we had better stop at the first flat beach. When we found a suitable place my feet had already swollen to about twice their normal size and it was impossible for me to walk. Jim had to lift me out of the boat and set me down on the shore like a bundle. I was suffering intensely. We had no curative lotion with us—

nothing but a little lard left over from our cooking. Jim made a bed on the beach and put me on it with my melancholy feet uplifted on a suitcase and the perennially useful typewriter. It was long before I could sleep and only toward morning did the pain ease somewhat and permit a few hours of rest.

I was awakened early by a shadow directly over my face and looked up into the countenance, humorous and pointed, the two beady eyes and sharp snout of a little pig. To show him that I was not good to eat and did not intend to be eaten I said "Hello!" Whereupon he replied with an exquisitely modulated "Oi, oi, oi," like the same Greek syllable without the rough breathing. After this polite salutation he trotted away. But for me he was symbolic. Never since then have I let intemperate delight lead to sunburned feet.

By the time they were well again we had succeeded in stopping all of the leaks in *The Dingbat* with pitch and oakum and we sometimes found it convenient to sleep on the floor of her while she rocked quietly all night on the lonely waters of that little river. When evening came we would tie her securely by her long rope to some sapling on shore and then let her float in a cove or shallow, or on

the port side of a log-boom. When we first thought of sleeping in her in this way we covered the floor with branches from firs, laying our blankets on top of them. They made a fairly good bed, though less comfortable than the ground in the forests. Then, one day, we met a farmer who told us that there might be woodticks in the fir branches and offered us hay for the bed instead. Woodticks are not desirable companions, so we threw the fir branches overboard and accepted the hay. We got large bundles of it from his little red barn. We offered to pay for it, but he would not take a cent. It was only hay, he said. We spread it out gratefully where the fir branches had been. We rested on it fragrantly while we watched the moon rise in an unveiled sky and light the water with a silver pathway for a spirit like Christ. . . .

By day we traveled slowly down stream with the current, shifting from one side of the stream to the other as the current shifted, crossing long strips of shingle where the water was only a few inches deep. Over this shingle *The Dingbat* passed pleasantly enough for she was perfectly flat underneath. As an Irishman said to us, "Sure, *she* would float in a

fall o' dew!" We could look down without anxiety at myriads of pebbles rolling over each other and grinding themselves smooth in the clear water just below. Enchanted, we could listen to the strange singing of these pebbles in the ripples, quite unlike the shouting of rapids or the buzzing noise of the open rip, not a loud warning nor a weird water-cry, but a thin, insistent chant like the remote murmuring of bees.

Nor were we nervous when *The Dingbat* shot down rapids suddenly, or bumped into rocks and big timber hidden just below the surface of the stream. *The Dingbat* proved to be well adapted to the kind of work we had given her to do, a steady, albeit comical, little craft. Where the river was narrow and deep and swift she bobbed and glided along as prettily as ever. But alas for our unconcern! One day while we were happy watching the beautiful curving banks we came suddenly upon a deep, narrow place in the river where the water gushed through the channel swiftly under low, bending willow branches. On top of the cupboard at the stern frying pans, knives, forks, plates, cups were lying. They were all swept away into the swirling flood! We could not see them nor reach them with

sticks. The current was far too swift for diving! We could only keep our place near the scene of their disappearance by clinging to the branches. Our kitchen equipment was gone, irrevocably lost! We had only a lard pail, two spoons, and a cup left as kitchen utensils! Perhaps that is why we learned to make lucky stew.

[III]

[III]

I WISH Lamb were alive to write about lucky stew. He could do it justice. But he may have forgotten even roast pig by this time. At any rate, since I am no spiritualist, I cannot expect his assistance. I must describe lucky stew myself, beginning with the recipe.

HOW TO MAKE LUCKY STEW

Put anything you like in a very deep pail
And pour on anything you please;
Stir it all up with anything you find
Under the anywhere trees.

If anybody comes, asking for dinner,
Serve it with anything you wish;
But never, never, never, never, never forget
To put a four-leaved clover in the dish.

That is a good recipe of the conventional kind, for it leaves out most of the important information. Good recipes never tell the whole story. If they did, cooking would lack romance. As it is, cooking is adventurous work.

Consider the demand for a four-leaved clover! Sometimes no four-leaved clover can be found. Jim and I find them only two or three times in a season, even when we camp all summer, but we have lucky stew nearly every night. Therefore I have cleverly learned to substitute three white petals from a newly opened daisy, or one long, friendly pine-needle. These have a magic of their own quite as good as the magic of clovers. When good recipes call for something which cannot be had, the wise cook simply substitutes something which can be had.

Having found the suitable substitute, the camper is free to look for "anything you please" and "anything you like." "Anything you like" usually means vegetables for us when we are traveling in farm country, game or fish in the wilds. In Oregon it meant carrots most of the time, large, vivid carrots, for they were plentiful. In the East it sometimes means scraggly rutabagas, bursting cabbages, pithy radishes, jaundiced cucumbers, bumptious kohl-rabis, ancient beets—the more the kinds the merrier. It may mean sweet corn, succulent tomatoes, delicate peas. We take chances, always, when we go abroad seeking adventures. But we try to combine the

raw materials of lucky stew in ways that show imagination, fine sensibility, and delicate intuition. That is the secret of the recipe.

The vegetables, of course, must be cut into pieces that will all be thoroughly cooked at the same moment. Hard and antique vegetables must be cut small. Young and tender ones should be added after the others have cooked awhile. The pail or pot in which they are to boil should be filled with water ("anything you please") to a point just below the top of the vegetables, just so that they do not float. When they have cooked thoroughly a small tin of evaporated milk can be added to the liquid in the pail and thickened. Butter may be used, or olive oil. Then you have a dish for the great of the earth, mingling many aromas, rich, warm, filling.

Lucky stew is best, of course, if a surprise can be added to it. A surprise, be it known, is something edible found when it is least expected. Once in Southern California when I was making lucky stew on the beach, I found a giant Pismo clam lying calmly near my foot. I am sure that it was not the fear of evil which gave him over to his fate. Even his big six-inch shell was a quite serene denial of error.

Yet I seized him and added him to my pail of onions and potatoes. Perhaps he was content to perish in a good cause.

At other times, and in other places, I have put in mussels fresh from the rocks washed by surf, delightful surprises. Or, when we have been floating down rivers like the Willamette, I have taken soft little fish, chubs, suckers, and the like, that would be insipid eaten alone, and, after parboiling them, skinning and boning them, added them to my stew, thus making a tolerably good chowder. One last, lonely frankfurter, one small scrap of ham, one lopsided strip of bacon cut into bits will give a surprisingly delightful flavor to any stew of mixed vegetables. And once, in Canada, I made lucky stew out of a porcupine. He was a bother to skin, but I did not do that. His hind legs were the best and biggest part of him, and tasted very good, like young spring lamb.

"Anything you wish," in the recipe, may mean toast in practice, if we have been traveling regions where bread can be bought. What toast can be made over embers of the fire that cooked lucky stew! It is crisp and tender and has a perfume that suggests the possible domesticity of the muses. The color of it is

a rich, evenly spread, friendly brown, like the brown of oak leaves in autumn. Be it said that whosoever has eaten lucky stew and toast in sufficient quantities has dined well. It was in this fashion that Jim and I dined when we made our trip in *The Dingbat*, and because we had only a pail and two spoons, we would remove lucky stew from the fire and eat it from the pail, competitively, as soon as it was cool enough. We bought our vegetables from farmers whenever we could; a burlap sack full of all kinds cost us about twenty-five cents. Sometimes we could buy bread from them too, and butter. Often we had only triscuit with our stew, or even nothing at all.

Lucky stew is, in its own right, a triumph of the imagination. But there is no law against dessert. And for dessert in the open wild berries are best, small, perfect lyrics made by the collaboration of sun and rain and sweet earth. No wild strawberries can be better than those of Maine and New Brunswick. They are borne in abundance on long, fair stems glistening with dew, wearing a flame color unquenched by it. I have slept where I could gather them for my *petit dejeuner* without rising. I remember an upland fallow

in New Hampshire where the blueberries, smoky, mild, uncloying, are cause enough for grace after meat. I have torn hands and hair without regret in thickets on steep and stony hillsides in order to get raspberries, red and black. On the banks of the Tobique I have picked and eaten the rare, winy, and beautiful sand-cherry or beach-plum. It is lovely to look at, growing on long, graceful sprays that spring out of the sand and lean to it again. The flavor is zestful and romantic. I have eaten the small wintergreen berry as one eats an after-dinner mint. But the happiest days of adventure have been associated with blackberries. When we were floating down the Willamette in *The Dingbat of Arcady* they kept us fed for several days, once, when we could get no other food.

We had left the town of Salem behind us without buying much food, for we had found out that it was cheaper to make our purchases at farms near the river. But for one reason or another, after leaving Salem, we found few farmers with food to sell. Also we were held up by bad weather and forced to travel slowly. Therefore, for a stretch of the river before we reached Newberg, we lived on strictly limited

rations. There came a day when we had only tea for breakfast with sugar and no milk, flanked (if I may use that elaborate expression) with one small piece of triscuit each. We broke fast thus lightly at dawn, for we were eager to be off toward Newberg and good food.

At about two o'clock that afternoon, after fasting all day, we saw a farm near the water's edge. I scrambled up the bank, cutting and scratching arms and legs on stones and thistles. I ran across a small meadow to the house. I was met at the door by a hearty old lady who seemed to be of Scandinavian origin. I asked her if she had any vegetables to sell to two hungry campers.

"I haf a onion," she said, "but I want him for my dinner."

"Have you any fruit?"

"I haf a apple."

She wanted "him" also for her dinner. She explained, as well as she could, that her farm was managed for her by her brothers who owned a neighboring farm farther inland and grew all the fruit and vegetables needed for both households, bringing her a supply of necessaries whenever they drove over to the river. There must have been a hungry glitter in my eyes, for she looked at me steadily a

moment, thinking. Then, with a wrinkly smile, she said,

"You eat blackberry?"

I was almost ready to eat hay, or grass like Nebuchadnezzar. I assented eagerly. She pointed across the pasture to a patch of heavy vines hanging in a great clump in full sunlight, twinkling with beady black fruit.

"Eat all you want and take all you want. Too many here," she said.

I thanked her with an enthusiasm which must have puzzled her. Then I ran down the bank and hallooed to Jim, bidding him bring something up in which to carry berries. In a minute he was beside me, and he brought a big piece of newspaper in which some of our clothing had been wrapped. Together we hurried over to the clump of berry vines. We set the paper down and began to eat.

For about fifteen minutes we picked and swallowed without conversation. I had never liked blackberries much before, but these were the best I had ever eaten, in prime condition, large, plump with juices from the rains recently fallen, warm and sugary as a result of several days of hot sunshine. They melted away in our mouths by tens and dozens.

When we had eaten very nearly as many

as was possible, quite as many as was wise, we picked a plentiful provision to carry with us. We must have put nearly a peck into that newspaper. Then, with our treasure, we went back to *The Dingbat.*

The berries agreed with us well, which was fortunate, for we got little else to eat for several days. Late that afternoon we did come upon a dairy farm, and bought a quart of rich cream. But the farmer would sell us nothing else. For dinner, therefore, we had blackberries swimming in that cream, with plenty of sugar. More elaborate meals might taste worse.

While we were eating thus, poetically, on a stretch of sand in a wild and wonderful curve of the river, with great firs rising on hills well away from the shore, it began to rain. It was late. We did not want to travel in the rain and get wet just at sundown. Nor were we sure that we could find a better place to camp even if we went on. So we pulled *The Dingbat* up onto the beach and tied her. Then, since we had no tent, since the friendly firs were far away, we were hard put to it for protection. However, we took the ever useful strip of canvas which had served as a cover for our blankets, strung

it over a rope tied between two saplings about two feet above the earth, and pegged out the corners, thereby improvising a small, low tent. It was almost satisfactory. I say "almost" advisedly. For if our feet were far enough under cover to be dry, our faces had to be out in the night getting wet. If our faces were dry, our feet suffered. This was simply the driest of several wet ways of spending the night. We took half a dozen sticks of dry wood under cover with us, that we might be sure of a fire in the morning. We took the remainder of our cream under cover too, that it might not be diluted and spoiled. Then, although sand is a test of the camper when used as a bed, we slept reasonably well.

In the morning we built our fire, made tea, and ate the rest of our cream and some more berries. At noon we lunched on berries again, having found no place where we could make purchases. Toward sundown of another day, wearily and hungrily, Jim pulled *The Dingbat* into a little cove near a point where the river widens and where we could see two or three small cottages on the bank. He left me in the boat to watch our belongings while he went ashore to forage.

Perhaps the saints are right about the value of fasting. Perhaps the ethereal diet of the week just past had fed my spirit. I do not know. But I know that while I sat in *The Dingbat* and watched the moon rise above dark firs on the other side of the river, while the sky was still blue with day, a mood of wonder and worship came upon me. The lapping of water against my boat, a long, seductive, fascinating rhythm, lulled to rest all bodily longing, all desire for any food but beauty. It was one of the fine moments of realization that come to all of us, when speech is impossible unless it is the speech of poetry already made and stored in the mind against the time of need.

It was the fir grove, or the moon, I think, that made my mood vocal for me, for I remembered "The Song of Conn the Fool" by Fannie Stearns Davis and the words came to my lips inevitably.

> "I will go up the mountain after the moon,
> She is caught in a dead fir-tree,
> Like a great pale apple of silver and pearl,
> Like a great pale apple is she."

While I was murmuring to myself after the happy manner of poets and lunatics, I looked

away from the moon a minute and across the glossy top of the river. There, mysterious as if guided by an invisible Charon, a huge, flat-bottomed rowboat was coming toward me, propelled by a pair of oars longer than those Jim used in *The Dingbat*. When it drew nearer I saw that the Charon in charge was a little girl about ten years old. She was attended by several small brothers and sisters. She pulled alongside and stared at me solemnly for a minute or two. I stared solemnly at her. Then, realizing that her appearance had not spoiled my happy mood, I resolved to share it with her. I found that I could speak to these shy little strangers without losing the sense of wonder that had been large in my mind when they appeared. They had become a part of it.

I asked them if they liked poetry and they admitted that they did, vaguely, perhaps with misgivings, but politely nevertheless. The idea seemed to be that they were willing to like it, though not perfectly sure that they had ever heard any. Then, because I was afraid that they would not ask me to say any poetry for them, I offered to do it. With grave courtesy they permitted me to begin.

I repeated "The Song of Conn the Fool."

Not a sound broke the music of the lines unless it was the lapping of ripples against the boats. Five small faces looked at me intently, as I pointed to the white moon above the fir-trees. When I had finished the little girl drew a long breath. Her small brother piped,

"Say another!"

They had liked it! There was no stopping me then. I said "Souls" by Fannie Stearns Davis, after explaining carefully that they are a part of the mental anatomy usually discussed in church and Sunday School, but that they have an independent existence outside of these excellent institutions. Then I repeated "The Cloud" by Sara Teasdale and many another lyric. My audience remained soberly interested, hardly loquacious in the intervals between poems.

Time passed and Jim returned with food at last—eggs, bread, butter, vegetables. We crossed the river to camp where there were no houses, cooked our dinner, ate it, and slept deeply. We had promised the children to see them in the morning when we went back to the little settlement for more food.

After breakfast back we went, eager to secure supplies to carry with us on our way.

At the end of the path leading to the cove we met the little girl who had been in charge of the rowboat the night before. She had seen us coming. She had picked a pail of loganberries for us. She offered them in appealing silence. Then and there I put my hand into the pail and drew it out full of the rosy fruit, pungent, refreshing and fragrant as only loganberries can be.

Together we went up the path to meet her small brothers and sisters, and to greet her mother who lived in one of the cottages. It was low and weary-looking, that cottage, almost ready to bend its vertical lines together and slump upon the earth. In the door stood the mother of the children who had been my audience, a tired, kind-seeming woman. She came out to meet us.

"Are you the lady who recited for the children?"

I admitted that I was and wondered whether I was to be scolded.

"They didn't go to sleep till midnight for talking about it," she said. "I couldn't make 'em stop."

"I am afraid you don't like me very much if I have kept your children awake," said I, apologetically, with vivid memories of my

own mother's feelings when any of her six would not slumber. But this mother reassured me.

"Would you say the poetry for me?" she asked wistfully.

What a chance! Of course I would. She sat down on the sloping steps of her porch and gathered her brood around her. I stood in broad sunlight in the path below. My hair was done in a tight, ugly knot. My face and hands were stained with the juice of loganberries. I wore a khaki skirt dingy with smoke from many fires and an old shirt of my husband's with the collar loose at the throat and the sleeves chopped off informally at the elbows. A city audience would have stopped and looked at me, but would not have listened with any degree of respect. My audience by the riverside listened with pleasure. And never have I found greater pleasure in speaking the lines of a poem. I said everything that I could remember.

When my programme came to an end the mother went into the house and brought me a thank-offering, a dozen cucumbers, a loaf of fresh bread, a small pat of butter, carrots and lettuce. She would take no money for them. So, with peace in our hearts, we thanked

one another for such gifts as we had been able to give. Then Jim and I got into *The Dingbat* once more and pushed slowly out into the current. Five little figures stood at the top of the bank to see us off. We waved to them as long as we could. Then the river bent and we passed away from them, probably forever. I have earned my bread, and also my loganberries, in many ways; but never have they tasted sweeter than then, when I earned them by sharing poetry.

Sometimes when I look back on sane, delightful meals eaten by the waterways and on the open road I am amused by Walter de la Mare's little rhyme—

> "It's a very odd thing—
> As odd as can be—
> That whatever Miss T. eats
> Turns into Miss T."

That is the strange thing about food, the metamorphosis. Shakespeare was made of flour and green herbs and the flesh of beasts. The greatest living American may be made of buckwheat pancakes for all that we know to the contrary. Ambrosia eaten by swine would become swine. Though we dine on

roses we are not necessarily sweet. The jack-in-the-pulpit for supper would not make preachers of us. And yet—

We are changed by our food. Tiresome, conventional kinds of food do not freshen us as does the clean, wild, simple food of field and forest. Of course, in every community nowadays are dietetic dogmatists who would eat old automobiles if they supposed that the essential calories would be in them in soluble form. There are cultists who despise food because it is matter. If it were not for the stubborn fact of hunger, they would not eat. Finally, there are mentally dyspeptic individuals who devour Freud without being able to digest him, when they should be eating apples.

I never have enjoyed camping trips with large numbers of people, but when I think of all these poor souls I am filled with a womanly desire to snatch them up and spirit them away into the woods or into farm country, on such a trip as Jim and I have taken together. I would take them where calories, cults, and psychoanalysis are forgotten and where every animal and every person, in all honesty and dignity, is interested in food. After making them all exceedingly hungry,

after fasting and discipline, I should like to build the world's finest camp fire for them and make lucky stew.

On such fare we have lived, Jim and I, when we have left the towns behind us and gone out on the roads and rivers adventuring. On such food we have thriven. And nothing could induce us, I think, to go camping with the usual luggage train of tin cans accompanied by many people who think that camping means beans. It is not in that way that we desire to be fed by the open road. But to live clean and hard, to get the sharp savor of wild food in sufficient quantities when we can, or, where there are homes, to be social and neighborly in the breaking of bread, is to have food and drink most exquisite and satisfying. By such food we are changed. . . .

Fed and changed in this manner, we floated on down the widening and deepening stream until we reached a point just a few miles above Oregon City. A great fall spans the river at that point and to pass it and go on down one must go through the locks. We knew this, and when we were near enough to reach the dam by eight hours or so of hard rowing, we made inquiries and were told that if we could get to the locks before five o'clock

we could go through that day. Jim did his best, pulling hard on the oars all that morning and afternoon. We did not stop to buy food, but ate the last of our bread for luncheon and relied on being able to cook some potatoes —all we had in our sack—when dinner time came. All day we hurried down stream.

After the long hours in the vivid sun we heard the roaring of the falls below us. Riffles sing soprano and rapids chant in alto and tenor, but great falls boom in *basso profundo.* The current quickened perceptibly as we bore to the left, hugging the shore as we had been advised to do. Faster and faster we moved. We got into the swift guard-locks stream. Jim stopped pulling and perspiring, his only care now to keep the boat to the left and close to land. Ahead of us we saw the gates of the locks. At the right, between the dam and the locks, was a paper mill, evidently running on a night shift. At the left of the locks was a perpendicular bluff about ten feet high. We went on and soon brought up hard against the gates of the locks. They were closed. What to do next we did not know. We hallooed.

At first nothing happened. Then a man, coming out of the mill at the right, saw us.

He said that the gates would not be opened until eight o'clock next morning when a large boat would go through. We could not pass until then. At once we realized our plight. Bluff to the left of us, gates in front of us, falls to the right of us volleying and thundering! Behind us was a current up which only motor power could have pulled *The Dingbat.* We could sleep in her, perhaps, in the shadow of the mill, but that would mean going without dinner for our potatoes were still as raw as when they were dug. The thought was disconcerting. The kind man who had discovered us realized our distress.

"You'll have to spend the night here if you want to stay by your boat and your goods," he said. "But wait a minute. I'll speak to the boss."

The boss came out and looked us over.

"You have your wife along," he said to Jim, meditatively.

Jim admitted what was obvious.

"Well," said the boss, with a hospitable wave of the hand, as if he were welcoming us to the dear old Waldorf-Astoria, "well, if you can get up to it, you can spend the night in my pile of junk!"

We followed the gesture with our eyes and

noticed what we had not seen before, several heaps of shavings on top of the bluff at the left and three sections of huge iron pipe. Each section must have been about seven feet long and six feet in diameter. They might have been sewer pipes for a large city. Jim looked at me with a gleam of intelligence in his eyes and I answered with an understand ing gleam. It could be done.

"We'll have pipe dreams to-night," said Jim.

Thereupon we thanked the boss and accepted his offer. He grinned and told the kind man who had discovered us to help us up the bluff. This friendly soul turned out to be the night watchman for the mill, just come on duty. He crossed a high bridge from the mill to the bluff and told us to pull over to the left. This we did and Jim threw our long rope to him. He pulled us up stream a little way and into a niche where the current was not felt. Then he tied the rope to a tree on the bank above us. Jim managed to get our blankets and other necessaries hoisted up to him by the use of oars and another rope. Then, with some assistance, he scrambled up himself. Finally, the two men together hauled me up, bumping and scraping like a clumsy bundle. We were landed.

After that all went well. We took armfuls of shavings from the heaps near at hand—refuse from the pulp mill—and we spread them thickly on the bottom of the interior of one of the sections of pipe. On the shavings we spread our blankets, all but one which hung over the back of our strange house. The canvas covered the front opening in a similar fashion. Our shelter was ready for us.

In front of the front door we sat down and built a fine little fire of shavings and small blocks of wood. We cooked our raw potatoes, a plentiful if somewhat plain dinner. While we were eating the night watchman came over to smoke a social pipe and chat with Jim. He told us, as men often do in the open world, the story of his adventures. They made ours seem rather tame. Once he had rolled down a mountain-side on the back of his horse, breaking so many bones that he could not count them all. He had been unable to work for a year after that. But now he was fairly well mended and glad to have his quiet job. He was a zestful man, quick to get the sweet of life, and therefore good company. He told us that we would be perfectly safe in our queer house, that the men who worked in the mill were a decent lot and would not

bother us. He bade us call him, however, if we were in need of any kind of assistance. The shift of workers would change once in the night, he said, and we would hear men coming and going, but all would be well. He shook the dead ashes from his pipe and left us.

Then we crept into one of the strangest shelters ever inhabited by a teacher and a poet. We rested well. If you should ever be troubled with insomnia, I suggest that you find a large, clean, iron pipe on a bank above a river, put shavings in it, spread your blankets out thereon, eat a dinner of plain boiled potatoes, turn in early, and find your cure!

Early the next morning *The Dingbat* followed the large boat through the locks and was left below the dam, floating securely on that portion of the Willamette River which is said to be "bottomless." Every lake and stream we know has an alleged "bottomless" place. At some spot known to small boys and ancient romancers every pond and river pours its floods through the earth to the Antipodes or draws them thence! Having listened to such tales alongshore, I used to tremble when we went gliding over these dark abysses. I did not care to sink through this

perforated sphere, only to emerge damp and bedraggled in some foreign land where I should be unable to speak the language! Now I have learned to float upon such fabled deeps without a tremor. There must be fairy tales!

We crossed the "bottomless" part of our stream and made for the mouth of the little Clackamas River which pours into the Willamette at a sharp angle to it just below the dam. We had planned to go up the Clackamas in search of fish.

The stream was brisk and beautiful though not very deep at the mouth. We got out of *The Dingbat* and walked, pushing and pulling her up to the first sharp bend. On the inside of that bend was a grove and on the outside, on which side we stayed, was a bit of flat country with a few scrubby trees and bushes in which to hide our camp. We spent several days there, resting, writing, and reading, but we found no fish,—none except the poor, dead eels that floated about in places where the current was not swift and near the edges of it. Why there should have been so many dead eels I do not know, unless it is that they die a natural death in the summer season. Within walking distance were several

farms and Jim made a daily trip to one or another of them to get fresh drinking water and provisions.

One day after he had gone on this errand, I rambled aimlessly away from our camp and down the bank of the stream. Perhaps I was meditating a poem. Perhaps I was merely rapt in the delight of being fallow-minded for a while. At any rate, I totally forgot that it was my duty to remain on guard over our belongings. When I came to myself, like the Prodigal Son, I turned back toward camp and saw a sight that filled me with terror. Between me and the clump of bushes where our food and clothing were spread on the ground were five or six large cows.

In spite of all that I had lived through recently I was a city woman again, through and through. Everything in me cried out suddenly for asphalt and policemen. Here was a primitive mystery. Bovine psychology was something that I did not understand in the least. Cows had no business in the woods anyway.

I walked toward them anxiously, cautiously. They lowered their horny heads and mooed. Then they paused and gazed at me with a vulgar curiosity all their own. One came

toward me at a slow trot. It was enough. I had a Smith and Wesson at my belt, but I am an incorrigible pacifist. I fled. I forgot that it was my bounden duty as a good sport to protect the Lares and Penates of our sylvan household. I climbed into the tallest of the low willows on the bank. I remembered with pride that I had never been afraid of mice, but I realized with shame that I was afraid of cows. It was another proof that it is the unknown which terrifies. Mice I knew. Even if a mouse ran across my foot I should not be afraid. But if a cow—cows were strangers. I climbed ignominiously.

For some time I sat on my perch and trembled and caught my breath, not because I continued to be afraid, but because I was heavy and the branch slender. If I shifted my weight even for a moment, I was obliged to clutch the trunk of the tree firmly, for I did not care to precipitate myself abruptly into the ranks of the enemy. I disturbed the gods with heathen petitions that the branch would remain attached to the trunk until my husband returned to rescue me. How admirable are husbands, I thought! What large, strong, valiant, noble creatures! How I wished that mine would return to me!

The time for his return came, but he did not come promptly. Never before had he remained away so long. The cows were walking placidly across our neatly folded blankets and snuffing at our piled-up clothing. I roared at them. In vain. They knew me for the coward that I was. It would be stretching a point to say that they grinned, but I suspected them of humor. I broke a branch from my willow tree and threw it at them, doing my worst in the way of a roar at the same moment. One cow looked up at me imperturbably and set her right forefoot down in a package of shredded wheat biscuit. Another set her left hind foot down with a crash upon our one small mirror.

A woman's faith in man, or in any man, is tested by the nature of her outcry in time of trouble. I began to houhoo and halloo emphatically in the hope that my own Achilles, my own Arthur, my own Jim of the strong arm and ready wit would be on his homeward way and hear. He was returning and he did come to the rescue. He strode rapidly into camp, carrying a great water jug in one hand and bearing two large, well filled burlap sacks on his shoulder. The cows gave one look at his red, perspiring, but determined counte-

nance and moved off with deliberate haste. Jim set down the sacks, picked up a stick, chased the cows into the open pasture whence they had come, helped his silly lady down out of the tremulous willow tree, scolded her roundly for the havoc wrought, and then sat down to rest.

When I had done what I could, in a truly penitential state of mind, to set our disordered camp to rights, Jim remembered his burlap sacks and he opened them with pride and pleasure. One was filled with excellent vegetables for lucky stew. The other jingled and rattled. Out of it Jim took an egg-beater, a large carving knife, a big iron frying-pan, a measuring cup, and other long-needed cooking utensils, all pretty well worn, but still in usable condition. They had been given him by the wife of the farmer of whom he bought the vegetables. She had just bought a new set. We had not bought any new things to take the place of those brushed off the rear pantry cupboard soon after our trip began. What fun it would be to have these convenient trifles! An iron frying-pan! Now once more, we could have fried eggs for breakfast. As Friday said to Robinson Crusoe, "Oh, happy, oh, glad!"

It was only the next day that another farmer gave Jim as many red plums as he would pick from a heavily laden tree and Jim brought them home to me in a burlap sack. Not a cent would that farmer take for them. Life had given him more than he could use or sell. He would share with the poor.

The sense of life's fruitfulness is one of the joys of sojourning among farmers. It makes receiving seem as blessed as giving, or rather it transmutes both giving and receiving into one thing—sharing. A good farmer can give away a dozen cucumbers with a shy off-handedness that minimizes the importance of the gift and yet does not minimize the pleasure of it. He does not expect that the bread which he scatters upon the waters will return to him carefully spread with the exquisite jam of worldly favors. He does not tell us that he hopes his gift will improve us. He gives no advice with it. He gives simply, as nature gives, as the best poets give, or he does not give at all.

After we left the Clackamas we received no more gifts and had no more quaint experiences for a number of days. We had come to the most difficult and least agreeable part

of our trip. We had to pass Portland and her suburbs before we could go on into the Columbia and find wild country again. The river was busy and industrial. Large boats cut through the waters leaving big waves in their wake. No good camper is happy under such conditions. We made all the speed we could to get past.

We arrived at St. Johns one evening after dark, very weary. We found a long beach, none too clean, near a pier at which a Standard Oil steamer was docked. In the darkness we stopped, went ashore, made a small fire out of rubbish and bits of broken boxes in a place as secluded as possible, and cooked and ate a light supper. Then the question before us was where to sleep. We asked ourselves whether we had better go on down stream that night or wait until daybreak. If we had not been tired we should have preferred to go on. But we had been traveling since early morning and needed rest.

Slowly and with great skill Jim worked *The Dingbat* in among the big piles that supported the pier. We got well under it. Then we moved out on the port side of the big steamer so that she stood between us and any waves that might roll in from the wake of

passing boats. It was not pleasant to be awakened in the night with *The Dingbat* rocking madly under us and spray flying over her sides. When we were safely hidden under the pier, but near the steamer, we lay down on the floor of *The Dingbat*, pulled our canvas over us, and slept.

So eager were we to be off and find green country again that we awoke very early next morning before the stars had left the sky. As stealthily as if we were criminals trying to escape a dire fate, Jim worked *The Dingbat* out between the piles again and into the open stream. At dawn we found a place where we could cook breakfast and after that we went on much refreshed. Since that night I have had a new feeling of friendliness for big, ugly, hard-working boats. I had traveled in them before. But intimacy was reserved for the night when I rested in the protection of a big, strong, dark hulk.

[IV]

[IV]

IT WAS not long after that that we turned into the Willamette Slough, a poor relation of the Willamette River, a sluggish and dirty stream that crawls by inches into the superb Columbia. The soul of the river was the soul of a strong man, free and able to do brave work in the world. The soul of the slough was a spirit in prison. It was burdened with all that the river cast into it and held back by the power of the Columbia below it and by the very slight bending of the ground under it. Here was no laughter, no triumphing. The surface was dull and under it was mud. The people who lived on the banks differed in sad and subtle ways from the people who lived on the shores of the river above. But I must not forget that it was here that we met a man who helped us to believe in something that we call "salvation by mirth."

When I speak of "salvation by mirth" I do not mean the solemnly persistent cheerfulness of Polyanna. I mean the clean, deep, social happiness that begins out of doors, of which John Masefield says,

> "The days that make us happy make us wise."

Salvation by faith and salvation by deeds are as old as the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, but salvation by mirth, which has been needed as long, may be new to owlish philosophers. Perhaps only poets understand it. Jim and I have met a few people on our wanderings who seemed to be untouched by salvation by faith and deeds, who might have accepted salvation by mirth. One of them was the fisherman we met on the bank of the slough.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, or thereabouts, while we were looking for a place to camp, we saw a small, dilapidated house-boat moored beside a stretch of level land on which were trees. At first we did not see the owner, but, when we landed, we found him behind his abode.

Like a wizard of old he stood near a wide, high fire, a weird black figure seen through the crimson of the climbing flames. Two big tins (like Standard Oil tins) stood beside the fire. From a third, in the middle of it, steam came as from the caldron of a Merlin. The wizard was a bearded man of middle age and somewhat the worse for wear. He lacked the sinister impressiveness usually attributed to wizards by those who know them best. As we drew nearer we saw that he was cutting

up bits of orange-peel and tossing them into his caldron. He threw in, also, a handful of what looked like pickling spice—and was.

"May we camp here near your place overnight?" asked Jim.

"Sure," he said, "anything you like."

We stood watching his alchemy. Curiosity overcame me.

"What is it in the tin?"

"Water boilin' fer crayfish. I'm a crayfisherman."

He lifted the cover from one of the tins at his side and showed us hundreds of "crawdads" creeping about in it.

"To-day's catch," he said, "First you catch 'em. Then you clean 'em. Then you boil 'em in salted water with peel and spices. Then you cool 'em. Then sell 'em to restaurants in Portland. Fifty cents a half dozen. Swells eat 'em. Ever try 'em?"

We admitted that we had not had that pleasure. Then he sat down on an old stool, picked a crayfish out of the tin full of them, found the right flipper in its tail, gave it a twist and a jerk, and dropped the little beast limp and wilted into the steaming tin where it reddened just as lobsters do. He worked as fast as a woman hulling berries.

"Clean 'em and kill 'em same time," he explained.

We retired as gracefully as possible from the neighborhood of his fire and built one of our own within sight and earshot. I put on a pail of water to boil for we were to dine on a dozen ears of green corn. While they cooked Jim did the work of camp-making. Once he called out to the crayfisherman. They exchanged mild pleasantries. I began to realize that the wizard had an unsatisfied social streak in him. After watching us for a while he picked out a dozen good crayfish from his tin full of boiling ones and brought them over to us.

"For your dinner," he said. "Let 'em cool first."

Then, for fear of being intrusive, perhaps, he withdrew rapidly.

When our corn was cooked Jim took four big, golden ears of it over to him with our compliments and a bit of butter. He accepted them all with an awkward pleasure that made us feel sure that he was unaccustomed to receiving gifts. He sat down beside his fire to eat corn and crayfish. We sat down beside ours to eat crayfish and corn. And while we were still eating the dusk deepened and

we gradually lost sight of the wizard in a light river mist. It was as if he had taken the smoke of his fire and the steam from his caldron and woven a gray, magic wall of them around our camp in the trees.

We were up early the next morning and the crayfisherman was up early too. He was puttering around in a shabby old rowboat, when Jim built our fire for breakfast. While I was cooking he joined Jim and took him over to show him the house-boat. Later I learned how the conversation ran. Jerking his thumb over his shoulder in my direction, the crayfisherman said:

"I had a piece of calico myself once."

"What happened to her?" asked Jim.

With more than a touch of melodrama in his manner the crayfisherman threw open the door of his floating palace and pointed to an old jacket, evidently a woman's, hanging on the back of it.

"Hern," he said. "She run away with another man."

In the clear, hard light of the morning our wizard was only a lonely man! We felt vaguely sorry for him when we climbed into *The Dingbat* and pulled slowly away from the dilapidated house-boat across the murky ooze

of the slough. Were we destined to hear more of him later on?

Steadily we rowed down the slough toward St. Helens where it empties into the Columbia. Saturday came and we were eager to get to the post office before it closed for the week-end. We expected important mail. So we struggled with an indifferent current until about four o'clock in the afternoon. Then we stopped and made inquiries. We learned that St. Helens was not far from that point as a cross-country walk, a matter of only two or three miles, but that it was much farther by boat because it was necessary to go around a point of land jutting out into the river. Also, walking was quicker than pulling *The Dingbat* over the dead waters of the slough. Therefore we took counsel together and decided that I had better walk to St. Helens for the mail. We could meet at the town dock whither I could go after purchasing food for supper.

I put on my slouch hat, my high, square-toed boots, my belt and the holster that held my Smith and Wesson. I set off at a good pace through wooded country, seeking St. Helens. The earth was springy under the trees and grateful to the feet. I had been

sitting still so many hours in *The Dingbat* that just to be moving was a delight. I strode along rapidly, walking as you can walk only when you have been living in the open for some time with clear skies over the top of your mind. Presently I entered St. Helens from the rear and saw the quaint little town sloping down hill toward the river. I was ruddy with health, exercise, pleasure, and sunburn. I did not stop to consider how I looked. Nor did I change my stride. I hurried on to what seemed to be an important street of the town.

The first person I saw was a nice-looking woman in an afternoon frock, white and speckless. She was carrying a letter as if she intended to mail it. I caught up with her.

"Pardon me, madam, but where is the post office?"

She was about to answer pleasantly, I think, but before she could frame the words she took one look at me. The smile stiffened on her face.

"That way," she gasped, and ran in the opposite direction as if for her life. No doubt, after looking at my Smith and Wesson, she wondered who this strange Boadicea could be. I stood still long enough to blush for my appearance and behavior. But it was thrilling

too. I, who had been born and bred to the dullness of bridge whist and the mild delights of pink teas, was taking a Western village by storm and putting the feminine population to flight with one glance of my fiery eyes! I knew the exultation of conquest and, for the first time in my life, sympathized with Alexander and Caesar. But I straightened my hat, moderated my stride, subdued my expression into something more nearly approaching the lady-like, and went to the post office for my letters. My adventures were over for that day. In due season I met Jim at the town dock, we wandered off and found a camping site, making plans together to cross the Columbia and pull into the little Lewis River next morning. We had been told that we might find salmon-trout in it. But, as it happened, we went back and forth across the Columbia several times before we finally settled in a camp on the Lewis. And one of our crossings nearly made an end of the cruise of *The Dingbat* sooner than we anticipated.

The Columbia is broad and deep near St. Helens, a marvelous and mighty river. Over it the winds blow from the ocean and the waves on it are like the waves on the Great Lakes. Sometimes waves and current together make

the crossing difficult for little boats like ours. But *The Dingbat* had behaved so well hitherto that we did not realize the difficulties of passing those ridges and hollows of heavy water. We set out confidently enough.

We found that it was very slow going. The oars moved clumsily in the wooden oarlocks and we learned, almost at once, that *The Dingbat*, with no curved line in her anatomy, was not suited to this new environment. Jim got her into the middle of the stream and then discovered that he was getting tired and making poor progress. Just at that moment a boat under motor power came up with us and, seeing that we were having a hard pull, offered us a tow. Gratefully we flung our rope. We thought we had solved the problem of getting across. Their engine started and we felt ourselves moving swiftly after them over the rough river.

For a few minutes all went well and then, owing to some slight change of direction, the larger boat pulled the bow of *The Dingbat* straight through a wave. It covered our floor with water and put us in great danger of overturning at any moment. I screamed, which was fortunate, for the man holding our rope looked, saw what had happened

dropped our rope at once, and had the engine stopped that they might stand by and see us through. Jim never lost his head for a moment, but scrambled to the oars and pulled *The Dingbat* about until she was head on with the waves. He yelled to me to bail like mad, but I did not need to be told. As the water sloshed about from side to side, one edge or the other would tip. Balancing against the water with the weight of my body as well as I could, I dipped out the water as fast as possible with a pan fortunately found on the floor. Every panful out made us that much safer, but we were deep in the water and any unusually heavy wave might have overturned us. Slowly and steadily, however, we pulled through the worst of the waves and finally, dripping with the perspiration of nervous excitement and with the water that had nearly swallowed us, we reached the shallows near the mouth of the Lewis and stepped out, exhausted, on the shore. The men in the motor boat who had tried to help us and who had remained to see that we were safe cheered for us and waved their hats before they started their engine and went on up the stream.

It may have been the next day, or the next,

that we left St. Helens and went up the Columbia with some salmon fishermen to a gravel bank where Indians used to fight long ago, and where arrow-heads are still to be found. We had luncheon together and then we all hunted for arrow-heads. The fishermen would not keep the ones they found, for they said that they lived near enough to find others at any time. They gave all they could find to us, even though they believed that the bits of shaped flint were worth good money. While we were looking for arrow-heads they told us a tale of a crayfisherman and his bride. We wondered if it could possibly be the friendly crayfisherman who had been kind to us. But we could not tell for we had never known his name.

They told us that he had been married, this crayfisherman, to a sweet young girl from up the river, and that he had always treated her well when he was sober. He would drink with other men for the sociability of the thing, however, and then go home roaring and beat his little wife until she was in terror of her life. Finally she fled to an old friend of her father, who took her up the river to her mother in his boat. Poor child, she did not want another man.

Was this our crayfisherman, who might

have accepted salvation by mirth if Fate had offered it, who was doomed to a lonely life in an old house-boat with crayfish for comrades and a woman's jacket hanging on the door? Had he talked with us freely because the need of his soul was for speech, covering the real reason for his loneliness because he was sober at the time and could not bear to look it in the face? Did he hold to his own version of the story because it supported his pride? Did he let the old jacket satisfy his need of sentiment because he must have that much tenderness in his life? We had no way of knowing. There were many crayfishermen. They talked as they felt.

It was not strange that he talked with us freely. The hunger of the spirit for sympathy, we have learned, is as common and as constant as the hunger of the body for food. But whereas people will seek the body's food in their own home gardens, many of them have given up hope of finding the spirit's food in their own home towns. Lacking an efficient and sustaining religion, the neediest are to be found on any wayside. They are wistful mendicants. Although they carry no begging bowls, you will not need to be told who they are if you wish to give an alms for

your soul's sake. And a Croesus of spiritual riches, I believe, could travel the wide world over and be received in palace and hovel alike without money or price for the giving of this one good gift of sympathy. It would have to be real sympathy, however, austere and strong and full of faith. It could not be a mawkish sentimentality. It could not be a mask worn for a purpose. It would have to be akin to the sympathy of Christ who first told this need of our kind and taught this way of giving.

People sometimes talk more freely with strangers than with their neighbors. The cherished confession is for those who will carry it far away. Our crayfisherman was exceptional only in that, being a man, his confession was tragic. Men usually regale us with tales of fights, floods, fires, and other adventures. Women tell us of their sorrows—why the wee baby died of the croup and how it feels to have your man out of a job. Children tell everything. And we who listen find our own hearts quickened, our own lives deepened and strengthened by the sharing of simple, universally known experiences.

We are changed by beauty, too. Never did

I know what beauty could mean to me until I stood one day in a field of blowing thistle-down. I had been beating about in the brush by the riverside, looking for berries, when I came upon a clearing, a circular patch like a fairy's ring. Upon the earth stood many thistle plants, thorny Puritans, stiff in prickly rectitude. Above them in a mild sky floated millions of the lovely souls of them, light and exquisitely white where purple blooms had died, millions of Ariels climbing up shafts of sunlight into Heaven, and then gently sliding down again. They rested on my eyelids, they caught in my hair, they glistened silverly on the gray wool of my sweater. I did not touch one of them myself, and yet I have kept them all. If I could have prayed then, I should have besought Apollo to make me like the seed of the thistle. For, although I had known them all my life, it was as if I had never seen thistles before.

The reason for this new joy in old beauty was not far to seek. We had acquired some small measure of that hardness of body and clarity of mind that belong to the life we were living. We had cut ourselves loose from the multifarious cares of our ordinary lives and had given ourselves up to learning the ways

of sun and wind and rain. Our senses had been quickened and made keen. Only a few things seemed important—food, rest, beauty, and worship. For the first time in my life since my childhood, I was able to receive the gift of the world's loveliness in the spirit in which it is given, to let beauty be a growth and a discipline.

It is something merely to perceive beauty. It is enough to balk vulgar irrelevance. Once upon a time I went for a drive with a woman who could not see it as it actually existed before her eyes because her mind was full of stereotyped images of it as she had read of it in books. We were driving around the top of a high hill, looking across a valley to mountains that were a perfectly honest rosy pink in the distance.

"Pink mountains!" I exclaimed.

"Mountains are purple and hills are blue," she said solemnly, as if she were rebuking me for a minor lapse in morals, "and who ever heard of pink mountains, you funnv woman?"

For her the lights and shadows had fallen in vain. The sunset had wasted time in being original. It might as well have copied yesterday's. Looking up at the aurora borealis

from a chilly New England valley, looking down on the apocalypse of the Grand Canyon, she would have thought only the conventional thing, and she would have *said* it. True lovers keep silence. For devout worship she would have substituted a counterfeit politeness, the cant, the affectation, the lush nonsense that men all too often bring to the discussion of sacred things.

Yet it might have been otherwise if she could have lived out of doors for a month or two, sharing William Watson's "overflowing sun." She might have learned to pray for a soul as beautiful as a far hill under rosy light. For the love of beauty, normally, begins out of doors. The race has been born into that growing and blowing beauty, and out of it; whereas the beauty of cities, of man's intellect, of spiritual prowess, changes from generation to generation. These are still new things in our ancient world.

Living in the open, moreover, makes us gloriously jealous, after a while, of the lovely individualities of all things, makes us eager for communion with them, makes us long to wear upon our souls the images of such things as we have loved. To the people of the town all rivers are alike. The camper

knows that no two rivers are alike. I have seen the utter blueness of the St. Lawrence under a sunny sky. I have seen the Brule rushing headlong through Wisconsin, yellow-brown in the spring. I have seen the placid "Isis" near "Folly Bridge" in Oxford, and the dark, menacing grandeur of the Columbia. But the little Lewis River which we entered when we had crossed the Columbia, has as much character of its own as any greater stream that I know. The cloudy sage-green of its waters I have seen nowhere else.

[V]

[V]

WE FISHED all day without any luck when we first entered the Lewis. We pulled up stream as far as the fork where the salmon-trout were said to be. But we caught none. At sundown we dropped down to the mouth again, rather disgruntled. We saw a house-boat of the scow type securely chained to piles in the bank and asked the fisherman who lived in it for permission to camp on shore, but near his residence, for the night. He seemed surprised by the request for he did not own the land, but he said that it would probably be all right. He was glad to have neighbors. He and his wife and partner, he said, would be at hand if we should need anything.

In a grove at a short distance we built our fire and made lucky stew with plain potatoes. In about half an hour they were ready and we began to eat. Then we saw our fisherman friend coming toward us, balancing something in each uplifted hand, like a waiter in a cheap restaurant. When he arrived it was evident that he held a pan of hot bis-

cuits in one hand and a hot apple pie in the other.

"The wife thought you'd like 'em for supper," he said.

Did we like them? For weeks we had lived chiefly on lucky stew and triscuit. Those biscuits and that pie vanished quickly. After eating them we went over to the house-boat to thank Mrs. Fisherman. She and her husband and his fishing partner all welcomed us cordially and bade us sit down on their pier and talk a bit. We did.

The two men owned and operated a motor fishing-boat on the Columbia, where they caught the big salmon for the market. They asked what luck we had had with salmon-trout up the Lewis. We admitted that we had had no luck at all.

"What bait did you use?" they asked.

"Worms," we replied innocently.

They laughed heartily.

"You won't get 'em that way. Gotta use salmon eggs."

Then we learned the complexities of fishing for salmon-trout. They feed on the eggs of the big salmon. First the fisherman takes a mass of these eggs and pickles them in granulated sugar. When they have stood in

sugar until they are firm and will not spoil easily he puts a mass of them in a small sack with some stones. He throws this sack overboard into the middle of the river just above the place where he expects to fish. Then he baits a long line with two or three salmon eggs, puts on a heavy sinker, throws it in on the down-stream side of the sack, rows back to shore with his reel, and waits.

That is what we did and it was not long before we were rewarded for our pains. We pulled in a lovely, leaping, silver fish that flashed in and out of the water as we reeled, flickering like money in the sun. He was clear pink, like salmon, under his silver surface, and sweeter than any other trout I ever ate. After that the day that brought us one or two—a good meal—was a red-letter day for us.

Mr. Fisherman and his wife and partner proved to be friendly, enjoyable human beings and got up a jolly fishing party for us. They came to breakfast with us first, under our tree, where we made pancakes for them and camp coffee. It was a feast. Then we all piled into their fishing-boat and in it crossed the Columbia and went back again into the Willamette Slough. Our friends took

us to a muddy backwater where catfish were plentiful, the kind called bullheads in the East. In about an hour the five of us had caught sixty-five good fish and we thought that would be enough for one day. We ate the luncheon we had carried with us, rested and talked religion while the men smoked pipes, and, in the afternoon, went home in triumph with our catch. Twenty-eight fish were given us as our share and our friends taught Jim how to skin them. The bullhead, to be good, must be skinned.

We pulled *The Dingbat* up the stream to a camping place near a farm where we hoped to get milk, water, and vegetables to eat with our fish. I went up to the house and secured these necessaries from the young farmer's wife. When I returned with my purchases the young man who owned the farm was standing on the bank above Jim, looking down at our catch hungrily.

"Do you like bullheads?" I asked.

"You bet!"

"Have some for your dinner," said Jim, quickly.

The young farmer demurred politely. He hadn't meant anything like that, he said. But we urged him to take some fish, for so

many people had given us food that we were eager to do a little giving ourselves. Finally he agreed to take a few bullheads up to the house for his wife. A little later she appeared on the bank, bringing us a few ears of green corn, a handful of tender cucumbers, lettuce and vinegar to go with it, and a small pitcher of sweet cream. She suggested, also, that I go with her to the berry patch in the pasture and get fruit for dessert. I did, and we had the first real two-course dinner of our trip. After dinner we went up to their cottage and spent the evening in their tiny living-room, admiring a fine Oregon baby and talking of nothing in particular, which is one of the best things to talk about when one's feelings are social.

Making friends with a small family—father, mother, and baby, is a simple matter. Making friends with a large family and the pets of a large family is a more ambitious undertaking. We discovered that a few days later when we went up the Lewis to the fork again for salmon-trout. We spent the day fishing and swimming and then, when we were floating down again to our camping place, we came suddenly upon ten children,

three dogs, two cows, and several pigs all in the water together near the shallow edge of the stream. (Just below that point people drank the river water and thought it was quite pure!) The boys were wearing old overalls cut to knee length and loose, but hitched to them with most discreet "gallusses." The girls had on old dresses. The youngest children wore shreds of underwear. It was sweltering hot and they were all blissfully happy to be sloshing about in the cool water. The cows stood knee-deep. The dogs swam after sticks. The pigs wallowed with the babies. A boy about twelve years of age, called Harry, seemed to be in charge of them all.

Jim and I had on bathing suits, for we had been swimming earlier in the day. Moved by a queer impulse, Jim cried,

"My wife will race you, Harry!"

Ten pairs of human eyes, the eyes of three dogs, two cows, and several pigs all seemed to be looking at me, as if to ask who I was that would dare to compete with the redoubtable Harry. I wondered myself, for I am a poor swimmer. But since Jim had made the rash challenge there was nothing for it but to tumble overboard and do my best for

the honor of our house. Needless to say, Harry won the race. The children seemed to like us the better for having established him the more firmly in their esteem.

We had stopped to swim. We remained to chat. We learned that there is still hope for the old English stock in Washington. The ten children were all sisters and brothers, all sturdy and happy. We wanted a picture of them, but had no films left for use in our little camera. However, they were all so pleased with the idea of having their photographs taken that we promised to go back next day as photographers. We did.

We took pa with his hair slicked and his jaw locked and ma in her best dress. We took the eldest daughter of the house, married already at eighteen, with her small son, about the age of her mother's youngest. We took Harry and Johnny and Tommy with their dogs. We took the youngest boy feeding the latest offspring of the pigs with a nursing bottle. We took the little girls, types of conventional pulchritude, with roses in their hands. Later we sent the finished pictures to the family, but probably we did not make them look beautiful enough for their own satisfaction, for never a word did we hear.

At the time, however, they all seemed to be well pleased. We had a pow-wow over how fine everybody had looked, over the incipient personalities of the baby pigs and the fascinating idiosyncrasies of the dogs and cows. Then we went up to the house for a visit. Pa gave us corn and cucumbers. Ma gave us butter and fresh white bread.

And so the time passed, day after deeply satisfying day, until we knew in our hearts that it was time to go back again to the cares of this world and the life that we had almost forgotten in the contemplation of white waters, woodsmoke, and the Spirit that broods in wild skies and deep silences. We were strong in body and firm in mind again when we sold the dear old *Dingbat of Arcady* for twelve jars of canned salmon, and gave her over into the hands of our friend the salmon fisherman.

When Jim and I went out on that first trip we had wanted to forget people. Because we were poor we were failures in our small world. We had known conflicts and sorrows. It was as if we had wrestled in vain with the Hercules of the worldly mind. We were children of Antaeus, worsted in our first

encounter, going back to Mother Earth for strength.

And in the woods we found strength. Trees did not condescend when they looked down upon us. Sometimes they let us feel that we were as tall as they. The maple did not trouble us by despising the fir for having another way of life, nor did the fir demand a dreary conformity of the maple. Trees, we learned, are too proud for vanity and give no time to wondering what others may think of their leaves. Nor does the tallest tree claim to be richer than a clump of clover. What is true of trees is as true, in appropriate ways, of sun and moon and stars, of earth and air and water, of all animals save only man.

Yet, after all that is said, the people by the riverside with their tragedies and romances, their avid need of sympathy, their blessed overflowing kindliness, gave us as much as Mother Earth ever gave. They gave us back our faith, our joy in our kind. To all with whom we broke bread and sang songs and told wild tales, to all who befriended us for a day or any hour, our salutations and our thanks! Amen.

The cruise of *The Dingbat of Arcady* was,

as I have already hinted, only the first of many adventurous excursions, the beginning of a new life not yet ended. To live near singing rivers is to remember them. To know the savor and tang of woodsmoke is to desire it always.

A townsman gets little joy from the scent of woodsmoke, for he does not know how many varieties of smoke there are. But woodsmen know that there are many fragrances in the burning of wood. Dead wood is not like green, and pine is not like maple to our noses. Smoke in frosty air smells sweeter than smoke in summer. But whether it be the spicy perfume of chaparral, crackling sage and mesquite twigs from a Southern mesa, the rich odor of kindled pine, or the milder fragrance of oak logs, it is a symbol of all honorable things to the camper. Watching it rise in strands or puffs of blue and gray is like watching the whole history of the race. In the fading tissue of color I have seen altars and forges and hearths and pyres for the dead. I have seen Prometheus, dearest of Titans, and his children of this later age, still busy stealing for us holier flames than any that can be wedded with wood.

Yet sometimes, even as a camper, I have

hated smoke because I have loved trees. Into what may small boys climb when there are no trees? Into what may small souls climb? Progress is with trees. Who will say what China might have been if she had not cut down the trees beside the Yangtse as we Americans are now cutting down too many of the trees of America? Beauty is with trees. It was not an ugly superstition that permitted the poets of Greece to make lovely maidens into branching arbors. The camper who builds his fire where it can harm a single tree is a glutton of life and a murderer of loveliness. May the long, strong roots of my friends trouble his carcase when it is buried, and may he wait long for a beacon on the banks of the Styx! I think that man has little culture who has no intimate among the trees.

My own best friend is the eucalyptus that came from Australia to California where I knew it. I have loved liveoaks with their mystic garlands of moss and their stubborn, stocky bodies, a veiled soldiery; I have loved the maples when I have tasted their honey and when I have slept at their feet. I have loved pines for their columnar power, birches for their refinement, and apple-trees because they have received me into their arms. I

have listened mute with wonder to the grim and ghastly rustling of palms in a sea breeze at night, and I have watched their dark, pointed fans outspread against a sapphire sky. These, for my imagination, are all beautiful. The eucalyptus is supremely beautiful. How good to strip off old moods like old bark; to stand before the world a spirit in white, uncovered truth like that; to lift one's self far away from the crowd and near to the sky, waving the newest buds of self to and fro worshipfully in wide, open spaces; to keep the green leaves of life alive through all the days of the year; to have dignity that is not forbidding and austerity that is not ungracious; to be remembered fragrantly! If I were a eucalyptus tree, I should ask for no companions. I should ask Fate to let me stand alone and lift my hands toward Heaven with untrammeled gestures. Let me have much space to move in when I am near enough to know the many thoughts of the sky!

It was in California, with many a tall "blue-gum" and "red-gum" near at hand, that we built the successor to *The Dingbat of Arcady*. There was a strong family resemblance between the two boats. In fact they

were as much alike as twin sisters. But the new craft was a little larger. Therefore we called her *The Royal Dingbat.* In her we spent long peaceful hours on the sun-dazzled waters of San Diego Harbor, traveling from the Silver Strand and Glorietta Bay out to the entrance where the Pacific pours in between Point Loma and North Island.

One afternoon we took our blankets and canvas and cooking utensils and left Coronado, hoping to make the extreme end of North Island, where the open ocean washes one side of a sharp angle and the harbor waters the other side, before night-fall. We expected to camp there and fish early in the morning when we knew that the tide would be turning toward land, bringing the fish in with it. But *The Royal Dingbat,* like her sister ship, was not made to move quickly over roughened water. We stopped, also, at intervals, to fish for mackerel, of which there were many in the bay. Therefore it was late and dark when we reached our destination. The moon was not up.

Jim cleaned the mackerel that we had caught and I cooked them over a fire of driftwood flaming green and golden at the water's edge. Then we decided to get to rest at once that we might be up early. We took the long

rope fastened to the stern of *The Royal Dingbat* and carried it up the beach to the line where vegetation begins. There we tied it to a stake firmly pounded into the sand so that our boat would not float away with the rising tide. Then we carried our blankets up above the tide line, also, and spread them out where the beach was lightly covered with growing things.

Sand is said to be the least comfortable of all beds, but it was too delightful there under the open sky to remember that. In California the days are topazes, the nights sapphires. Lofty and serene the sky bent above us, showing sharp frost-points of the stars, like the diamond-tipped spears of gods fallen on a sapphire floor. The Milky Way was the record of some gorgeous rout and pursuit through Heaven. When a fog comes in, this light of sapphires and diamonds is magically beclouded. The blue becomes opaque, as if milk had been poured into an azure goblet. But on this night I remember that there was no fog. I remember the blue and white miracle above me and the chanting of the ocean with its voice of Titanic motherhood and fatherhood. As I looked and listened, I lost consciousness.

The next morning we were awakened as Homer must have been awakened very often, even in his blindness, by the rays of the untroubled sun shining on us and on the "wine-dark" sea, touching our cheeks delicately with a warmth unknown to night, caressing sensitive eyelids, waking the sleeping flowers and waking us.

Then I saw that my bed had been made in Paradise. Around the edge of the old, brown camping blankets the wild beach primroses blossomed in golden health. And growing among them were pale purple beach verbenas, each fragile flower head borne upon a sticky stem and exhaling an intense and seductive perfume. Beside these blossoms the friendly garden verbena might seem blowsy and crude. Pale purple and clear yellow side by side in the dawn, blessing the bed that I lay on as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would have blessed it, surrounding me, head and hand and foot, drooping over my face as I looked up to greet the sun! When the bed was made the night before I had not known.

Jim got up at once and baited his line. Then, brown and bare-footed and glad in the early morning, he climbed over a ridge of slippery black rocks that jutted out into the

rising water. He was fishing for the bass that wear sleek gray and for sculpin with heads as admirably grotesque as the gargoyles of Notre Dame. He sat on the cold, wet rocks with his bare feet curled up under him, watching the tide come in, dreaming of the fish it ought to bring. I sat on the beach and watched him, liking the wistful boyishness that could forget the world for fish, the fugitive child that is in him and in all good men. I hoped Father Neptune would send hosts of the finny people to nibble at his bait.

The prospects seemed to be good. Jim soon caught a good bass, held him up for me to see, strung him, and hung him in the water in a crack between the rocks to keep him cool and fresh. A little later he caught a sculpin and pulled up his string to put the newcomer on it. The bass had disappeared. Jim merely supposed that he had not tied it securely, so he put the sculpin in its place, more carefully tied, and went on fishing. Presently he caught another bass. He lifted the string to put him with the sculpin. The sculpin was gone! How to explain it he did not know. He attached the second bass firmly to the string and was about to drop it into the water at his feet when, out of that water rose a

great yellow head, yawning hungrily and showing rows of teeth, and a slimy, writhing, yellow body. It was a great sea eel, father of all the mythical sea serpents, reaching for the bass that Jim still held. It waved its lemon-colored head about threateningly within a few inches of Jim's bare feet. Jim tumbled back from the edge of the rock very fast indeed. We were content with the one bass for breakfast. But I was disappointed in Father Neptune.

It was on this same beach, on another day, that we first made friends with the gulls that keep the beaches clean. They are so common that it is easy to forget the thrilling passion of their flight, the rapturous poise, the circling power, the whirl and sudden dip, beak first into blue water. It is easy to forget the wild and watchful eyes they have, the sleekness of their pointed heads, the strange pathos of their call.

It was while we were eating our luncheon on the beach in the hot sunshine that one or two gulls halted in the sky overhead, tirelessly vigilant. One of them, seeing our food, swooped low, and flew over us, crying. Jim threw a small bit of bread on the beach about

twenty feet away. The gull saw it, swooped, caught it and ascended again. Jim threw another piece a little nearer. Again the sharp eyes saw, the white body plunged toward the earth. Another piece we threw, still nearer. This time two gulls saw it and flew low to get our gift. We threw several crumbs. Several gulls appeared from nowhere in particular to accept our offering. More and more crumbs we threw, sitting quietly there in the sun. More and more gulls came flying across the blue fields of Heaven to see what was happening. In fine loops and circles they moved around us, swift and sudden and strong, five or six, a dozen, two dozen, then forty by actual count, then perhaps more. Their lusty wings beat the air about our ears. White and gray and cream-color, markings of straw and tan and slate-color, the sharper shades of feet and beaks, the preening and fluttering delighted us. Even as we had been hungry they were hungry. Even as we who were poor had to dare much to get our bread, they had to be daring too. The flap and clatter of their passing was the epic noise of their struggle for existence. The whirring rise of them was their victory. Their outcry was their poetic and social sharing of the feast.

All this we could feel with them. All this we could understand. Evolutionists tell us that there may have been a time when bird life was near to our own. However that may be, life is one life still through all creation, differing only in the degree of the fullness of its manifestation.

The gulls dared to come very near us, yet with all their gallantry they would not suffer us to touch them, they would not even suffer themselves to touch us, although they flew so near that once a long wing-feather brushed my throat. I knew a child's longing to fold my two hands around one of those small, swift white bodies, to hold it and look straight into those wild, cold, courageous eyes. And on a later day this experience came to me, but then I was sorry and not glad of it after all.

We had been trolling in the bay with a shiny tin minnow for bait. It flashed cannily in the translucent water. But the tide was going out and the fishing was poor. I caught nothing. So, while Jim pulled *The Royal Dingbat* slowly out of the harbor toward the open sea, I tied the trolling line and leaned back in my seat negligently, occupying myself with my own profuse meditations. Jim saw a big gull swoop and cried, "Look out!"

But it was too late. The bird had dipped for the tin minnow and our hook held him fast.

It was a moment of agony. This fair white creature of the sky had to be pulled across the water that we might loose him, his pride of flight hurt and humbled as his body was wounded. We got the line in as fast as possible and, when he fluttered and struggled and beat his wings against the edge of the boat, I caught him and held him firmly, but as gently as I could, with my two hands about his throbbing body.

We found that, fortunately, he had not swallowed the hook. It had caught firmly in the side of his neck when the tin minnow sank and bobbed under his unerring stroke. For a moment we did not know what to do. Jim got his knife and tried to get the hook loose, but it could not be done without tearing the gull's flesh badly. It was a small hook. We severed it from the minnow and from our line, thinking that so small a wound might heal, even without the removal of the hook, and leave the bird little the worse off. I unclosed my hands and he went free again with a great gladness.

Our adventures were numerous in San

Diego Bay. One of them was the oddest adventure I ever had with a fish. It will be believed only by those who have faith in my veracity. We were out one day in *The Royal Dingbat* looking for mackerel and small fry, fishing lazily. We caught little or nothing and grew tired of pulling the boat around. We decided to tie her to one of the big piles that marked the channel. Jim threw our rope around it loosely and then we lolled in the bow and stern, doing nothing, saying little, and absorbing the beauty of the sunset, crimson with delight in the distance beyond the channel's end.

The mackerel line with which we had been trolling was baited with a fairly large hook and carried a heavy sinker. The sinker had behaved very well while we were moving, but when we stopped it carried bait and line straight to the bottom. However, our minds were not occupied with the thought of fish. We were too lazy to care. One end of the line was slack in my hand. It mattered little to me that the other end had gone to the realm of Davy Jones. Then suddenly I felt it rip through my hand, tearing the skin of my palm as my grip tightened and making a hot line across, like an electric current.

"A big fish! I can't hold him!" I yelled. Jim took the reel. The line sang over it madly down to the last dry inch. Then Jim had to hold on. The fish held on too. The rope of *The Royal Dingbat*, loosely coiled around the channel pile, slipped, pulled free, slapped the water. We began to move away from the pile, towed toward the open sea and the sunset by some unseen power at the end of our slender mackerel line. It was incredible and ridiculous, but it was thrilling and there was no doubt about it. For a few moments our sense of wonder sharpened and deepened. We learned how strong a slender thing can be. A mere thread was drawing us toward that Paradisal glory in the West. Then, suddenly, the water broke ahead of us, a shark with a sallow belly and an ugly head leaped clear of the water for an instant, broke the little mackerel line, and disappeared!

The electricity of such surprises darts through life in the open, making day and night golden, showing us the vivid interplay of hardship and adventure in the life of the spirit. Hardship in the world of wood and stream is the first restraint man ever knew, the most ancient form of discipline, the beginning of that knowledge of the law which

will be made into good morals at last. Adventure, in the world of wood and stream is the beginning of that joy in the power of body and mind which brings culture; it is the nobly defiant impulse to live freely and take chances under the law; it is the desire for overwhelming beauty. If life had meant only hardship for the race, it would have been unbearable, and long ago the generations would have perished of heartache. If life had meant only adventure, the beginnings of order never would have come out of chaos. The fortunate ones of the earth maintain an equilibrium between hardship and adventure in the making of days and years, knowing that to lose this balance is to fall away into death and that to keep it brings the fullness of life.

[VI]

[VI]

SOMETIMES the day's adventure may be minute and fragile, a chance meeting with a flower. Flowers, like the abstract idea of beauty, are much abused in custom and conversation. Our affection for them is lasting and sincere, but rather vulgar. No doubt I seem crude when I handle bloodroot or trillium or creamcups, if there be gods or fairies watching or finer mortals with gentler hands. Our way of touching flowers is a revelation or a betrayal.

Nor can we know them by possessing them, by having them in our houses. We might as well try to understand normal humanity by seeing it in prisons and hospitals. If we would know flowers, especially wildflowers, we must live near them. The flowers that do most for us are those that we never pick. We never see them fade.

To walk in golden mustard eight feet tall by a California roadside while the petals and pollen shower bright gold on our heads and shoulders is good. To kneel on the mesa beside the tiny pink gilia that covers the earth

with bright patches after the rains, lifting its plucky blossoms, the size of a nickel, on little thread-like stems about two inches long —that also is good. Better still it is to wander into some remote canyon and find the deep oracular phacelia that has pinkish, hirsute stems and leaves and a solemn face the size of a violet. People who have broken their bread in the sight of such flowers and taken their rest beside them are less likely to pick them. They have exchanged the lust of possession for the desire of beauty.

So have I passed a mariposa lily, an orchid stranger, simply crying out to Apollo to give them my blessing as a salutation to their loveliness, since I myself cannot speak their language. It makes me regretful to think that the poems made in their honor can never be translated for them. Yet, if I were to choose, I should rather have poems understood by people than by flowers. For flowers are beauty, nearly always, in their own persons, but people, who are rarely beautiful, must have beauty given to them.

It would be difficult to tell of all my adventures with flowers either in California or in those Eastern lands whither we have been carried by the mystic stream on which *The*

Dingbat first bore us. But because of these adventures my mind is full of colored gardens. My memory does not need the fields of mythological asphodel, but reaches to quiet earthy places where, in bright tufts of spore-bearing moss, I see shy, thin-stemmed bluets with petals pointing to the four winds and golden hearts like suns in the midst of skies. In the spring, while I am still working at my desk in the city, my spirit wanders at will through the uplands of New York where the cool arbutus creeps from under moist leaves, or through the fallows of New Jersey, while wild azaleas bloom. In summer, no matter where I may be, I can call to mind the heavy odor of the milkweed's queer, reddish blossoms near level, dusty roadways, or the ecstatic perfume of the wild grape clambering over rocks. The sleepy look of red poppies in Devon is with me, the pungent whiff of the little, rusty, button-chrysanthemum, blossoming its best in forsaken gardens of our Eastern states.

It is not merely that I remember these colors and fragrances, but that I remember them as they were in the morning, at noon, at night, redolent of joy in the new sight of the world, strong with the pride of lusty life,

or faint and strangely mingled with the scent of the moist, dark earth.

Sometimes the day's adventure may be chance meeting with a bird. Jim and I had a most happy experience with birds in a pine wood in New Hampshire one summer. We were sitting under a pine in the silence that belongs to good comrades. We had tramped far that day and at sundown we were resting under the trees and dreaming dreams together. When two people can dream dreams together, they do not need to talk. Perhaps because we were silent we heard from behind one of the trees a purely silver song. Jim, who knows birds better than I do, laid a hand on mine and a finger on his mouth to enjoin silence, but the gesture was superfluous. I had no desire to speak. This song was to me, also, the punctuation of our dreaming, for as commas and periods set intervals between words, bird-song sets intervals between dreams.

In a minute or two more we heard a similar song from another tree, a small flute out of Paradise. The first singer answered. A third called from in front of us. And then the first singer appeared where oblique rays of

the sun falling on him showed a speckled breast and rufous tail. It was the hermit-thrush, himself and no other. Singing he walked among the pine needles, his comrades answering him. The other two joined him, presently, and perhaps a fourth was with him, but of that we could not be certain. They moved about before us and made their music without a thought of us, giving us their loveliest and most limpid singing. We hardly dared to breathe for fear of interrupting the recital. For ten or fifteen minutes we sat and listened with white awe upon us, and then their wings rustled and they were gone. The place where the rays of the sun had fallen on them was dark and empty. The song was sung. Our dreams were dreamed too.

One other small memoir of an adventure with a bird I must share. When it came to us we were living in the town of Superior, Wisconsin. It was cold there in winter. The snow sometimes lay four or five feet deep for weeks at a time on wild land near the town. The thermometer would fall low and chilly days as bright as diamonds would follow one another, clear and still. Sometimes we would borrow snow-shoes from our friends and go out of the town into the country to find the

lavender and rose-colored shadows on the unbounded fields of snow. We would take a coffee-pot and coffee, a pound of bacon, a loaf of bread, and a pan to cook with.

One day, when we had run or walked on snow-shoes all morning until we were ruddy with health and hot under our heavy clothing, we found a place to rest on a crust of hard snow in a hollow where winds did not bother us. We were surrounded by the protruding tops of bushes that must have seemed quite tall when the ground was bare. They bore tufts of snow upon them like white blossoms, the fair, false flowering of the winter. We broke some of these small twigs and made a fire with them. Jim found a dead branch of a tree that provided enough wood for cooking. I filled the coffee-pot with snow—as clean as air or water could be there in the wild out-of-doors—and when enough was melted I put in the coffee. We cut huge slices of bread and put slices of bacon, with dripping, between them. Never did food taste more delicious than this crude banquet. Then, warmed by exercise and fire and food, we sat still for a while, resting. The fire burned itself away into the drift which the heat had melted. And then—

"Chickadee-dee-dee!"

Small brother chickadee, perched on one of the snowy bushes, wanted dinner. We fed him crumbs of our bread. A small and impudent beggar he was, hungry and jolly. His energetic throat said many a quaint grace.

"Chickadee-dee-chickadee!"

Such a dark, fluttering little fellow seemed out of place and out of proportion in that wild, white, motionless winter world. But there he was, busy and very much alive. I can not look at the blanched beauty of snow in such a stretch of country without remembering his queer, dear, merry little song when he first cocked his head and looked at us.

Sometimes the day's adventure may mean simply facing rough weather. My experience in the open has made me feel sure enough to dogmatize; there is no such thing as "bad" weather. Who are we that we should fasten that malevolent little adjective "bad" upon weather that merely fails to serve our utilitarian purposes and our self-indulgent ideas of comfort? Indeed, if beauty is to be judged by its rarity, a great storm may be the greatest weather and the most beautiful. By paraphrase the devout and daring person may

well say, "Though it slay me, yet will I love it!" To like only weather that is blue and white and golden and placid is to be limited in the love of beauty.

This may be the secret of the scorn, usually veiled, that men who have known Nature in all weathers, suffered her and dominated her, feel for the pale-eyed and pale-skinned creature of comfort. However this may be, this I know, that they who can outface a storm and exult in it have a clew to the meaning of life which can help them to triumph, also, in the vicissitudes of the intellectual and spiritual experience.

Considered quite apart from the damage it may do, a storm is supremely beautiful. Somebody told me this when I was a little girl and the thought came to me with a thrill of surprise, for it was a new gospel. Most of the people in my small world disliked storms. That one person made life richer for me by telling me the truth. I have two memories of storms that have remained with me long.

One was a great wind storm on the prairie in the Middle West. It came after a long, still, sultry summer day, in the late afternoon. I felt the stillness deepen and strengthen around me like the self-restraint that hushes

anger. Then huge clouds bunched themselves together in the West. I stood and watched. I saw a line of trees, a windbreak, far away, so far that I could not tell their kind. One moment they were perfectly still. The next made them toss their branches madly as if they were wild with grief or pain. In front of them a field of corn yielded to shadows and swayed as if some terrible hand had stroked each corn-stalk, bending it, crushing it to the very earth. The great wind was coming toward me, nearer and nearer. But I did not stir. I told myself that when it came I would lie down. It caught the near fields of grass and rang over them, and sang over them while the air around me was still and sultry. I was fascinated. A group of willows quite near me jerked their tops forward suddenly with the impact of that rushing gust upon them. Then they tumbled and tossed their branches about uproariously in the rushing air that took and tore them. The wind crossed the short stretch of grass between those trees and me and then beat against my face, my throat, my breast, my limbs, with cold and savage fury. My breath was blown back into my nostrils. My hair was ripped loose from around my forehead. My throat and body

felt sudden cold like the water of a trout brook in April. The invisible legions of the air pushed me back, back, back, step by step. I gave way before the pressure of their chilly, unseen, powerful hands. I fell upon my face and waited. Sticks and leaves from far away were blown down upon me. Even upon the earth, flat and humble, I could not evade that magnificent rage. It went bellowing over my head into the East. And then, as suddenly as it had come, it stopped. Rain fell quietly on a cool world and tears came into my eyes.

The other storm that I remember was a thunder-storm at night by a riverside in Canada. Jim and I were lying in our tent, unable, for one reason or another, to get much sleep. Perhaps it was because Nature herself could not rest. The air was disturbed and yet stagnant. Then there came a heavy groaning and sudden shocks of distant sound like the heavy breathing of Vulcan and the falling of hammers on his anvil. We saw far lightning like the flying of sparks. The noise increased. Mars and Thor had been awakened over Scandinavia and Hellas and were hurling loud words at each other. They threw the lances of Heaven about and the lightning became frequent and livid. As each spear of light

fell and broke in pieces upon the floor of Heaven we saw the jagged lines of fall and fracture. The earth under us seemed solid, but that floor of Heaven, on which those terrible figures trod, shook under them and, when they came to grips and wrestled, rocked with their power. Perhaps that is why we on earth saw a glory of dark trees suddenly illumined by lightning, with leaves that had been like black masses in the darkness suddenly etched sharply upon a clear background, then blackened into vagueness again. Such a glory of splashing rain upon the vexed black surface of the river! Such a smell of sweetness in air that had been stale as fever! And then one great bolt flying, one barbaric splendid burst of crashing sound, as if the floor of Heaven had given way under terrible feet, as if one great god had hurled the other through the gap! After that, silence. Later we heard the booming of the forge of Vulcan and saw the sparks flying from it again. At last even that noise faded into silence, and we slept.

Sometimes our adventures have been excursions into the hearts and minds of our kind. One such adventure came to us when we were camping on the banks of the Tobique,

a swift, bright tributary of the St. John, flowing through New Brunswick. The fishermen and guides who lived on the banks were kind souls. When they saw that we went in swimming every day they warned us against the water, saying that we would get "water poisoning" if we kept on.

The river was fed by sweet springs and rivulets. Salmon and trout that will not live in foul streams were plentiful in it. Yet these men would not go in swimming for fear of being poisoned. We talked over their advice, and considered it, but the weather was hot and we decided to disregard it. Day after day we took our swim. We were not poisoned. Then came a very hot day. The men all took a chance, went in, and came out with fairer faces. Nobody, so far as we know, was ever poisoned. I hope we broke the wicked fairy's spell.

One of these fishermen, an old man wise in the lore of the woods, who had brought down many a moose and bear in his time, was as exquisitely tactful, in his own way, as the hero of "A Hundred Collars" by Robert Frost. Tact is supposed to be a sophisticated virtue—or vice—but this man proved that it might also inhere in the unlettered.

He knew that Jim had been longing to

take a salmon and that he had had no luck, although the river was full of them. They could not be seen from the banks because of the swirling lights in the ripples. But when we climbed up into trees and looked down we could see long streaks of silver-gray against the light sand-color of the stream's bed.

Came a morning when the old man took his old boat and his old rod and Jim's fine new reel and pulled out into a quiet part of the river where he sat, rod in hand, for several hours. Then a strike! He began to play his fish. He knew that Jim had been watching from the bank. He feigned difficulty. He beckoned as if he were calling for help. And so, while he played the fish back and forth and round about, Jim, in answer to the signal, put out from shore in our canoe, paddled up above the old man's boat, shipped his paddle, and let the canoe slide softly down. He got into the boat with the old man and pushed the canoe hard away to the right where he knew it would catch on a log boom. Then he pulled the old man's boat toward shore. When they stepped out into water thigh-deep, the salmon was still active, lashing and threshing his way through the "poisoned" waters of the river.

"Can you gaff him?" said the old man to Jim when he began to reel in. He must have taken hundreds of salmon in his time, but he pretended to be needing help.

"I'll try," said Jim, excitedly, "but I never have."

"Mebbe you'd better take the line, then," said the old man, putting the reel into Jim's hands and surrendering his catch. "I'll gaff him."

He took the gaff-hook and waited while Jim reeled. At last, suddenly, when the salmon shot forward desperately between his very legs, he gaffed it. And in some inexplicable way Jim was made to feel that the catch was really his and could not have been made without his assistance.

This same old man told us how to catch the trout and where. In tributaries of the Tobique, Jim caught a hundred and thirty-two in one afternoon. We shared them with all of our neighbors so that none were wasted. They were not large, but they were delicious aristocrats.

Every camper has his own favorite way of cooking trout. We fry ours in olive oil. Bacon fat, generally used, is good, but overcomes the delicate flavor of the trout, so that

what the camper tastes is bacon. The sweetness of the trout can be savored perfectly when they are fried in olive oil. First we take each freshly caught fish and clean it and wash it in clear water. Then we lift it up to let the sunlight bless it. Then, with sincere affection we dip it in a mixture of flour, cornmeal, pepper, and salt, and lay it in a pan in which the oil is already hot. We fry to a mild brown and serve with coffee and, if there be any at hand, with cress or sour-grass. Wild chives, also, cut up between slices of bread and butter, are very good with trout.

Sometimes, as everybody knows, trout will not bite. Then the hungry camper is wise if he will fish for eels. Our kind old friend taught us that art. He bade us build a fire of driftwood near the water's edge, in the evening. Then we baited our lines with stale meat and fish scraps and threw them in. The eels, attracted to the shore by the light of our fire, took our bait almost at once. We hauled them out, each one a writhing, wriggling, twisting, squirming body, marvelously muscular and energetic, tying itself into slippery, oozy knots and loops. It was difficult to get the hooks out of them. Many had to be decapitated. Even then they kept on wriggling.

After we had caught enough the woodsmen showed Jim how to skin them. The skin is worked loose at the neck in just the right way and then pulled off backward, like a glove. Even while this is going on the dead eel writhes and twists. Then we cut them into pieces three or four inches long and dropped them into a pail of salted water to stand over night.

When frying time came we learned to use plenty of hot fat over a slow fire, to drop in the sections properly floured and to fry them until we were sure that they had been cooked too long. Then we cooked them even longer. Eels, to be good eating, must have patient, thorough cooking. When they have been well cooked they wriggle no more, but are firm, and sweet, and rich.

But the joy of joys for the palate is Canadian maple sugar. It has the flavor of a whole forest in it and sings upon the tongue like many birds. To eat it at the end of a scanty meal is to swallow fairyland!

[VII]

[VII]

DAYS and months passed and the mystic ripples of our lives carried us home into our own country and into the State of New York. There we learned what it is like to camp out of doors in the early spring when snow still blotches the dark earth of shadowed places with a waning and ghostly white. It was early in April, the Easter vacation, when we made our first spring trip for which all of our friends prophesied disaster.

We were traveling in funny little Frankie Ford, this time, and were exceedingly proud of him as our first car although life had dealt hardly with him and his personal appearance showed the effects of stress and strain. We could truly say that he was far from his end. His radiator was puckered and wrinkled and he wore his top rakishly, but what a soul—what an engine—he had! We went on and on and he enjoyed it.

When Jim and I go out on the open road it pleases us not to know exactly where we are going or when we shall get there. A destination is more troublesome than much

luggage. If we have one folded up with our blankets, we find it necessary to forego many a pleasant chat by the wayside. Therefore we usually leave our destination at home with our best clothes. They belong together. But, as it happens, we began this trip by traveling up the east shore of the Hudson toward Troy.

For several days the weather had been mild and balmy. The willows were yellowing and the brush in the swamps reddening with the spring. The birds were returning for their season of mirth. But as we drove on past awakening fields and dreaming fallows it turned colder and began to rain. We crossed the river and turned south on the west side after purchasing a pound of steak in one of the villages so that we could be sure of something for supper no matter where we might camp. The thermometer dropped and the rain changed to sleet. This was food for thought. Our good tent would bear any amount of water without leaking, but what about ice? We could not afford to let it be cut.

We drove on, wondering what to do, following perfect country roads through a dear, gray, chilly drizzle until we saw a tall, roomy, old-fashioned farm-house ahead of us, with a

big barn near at hand. The place looked hospitable and wholesome. Some houses wear the auras of their owners. And by that time we were wet and chilled through. It was beginning to be windy. Jim went to the door of the house and asked permission to sleep in the barn.

The lady of the house looked us over keenly. Then she invited us to spend the night in her guest-room. It was against our principles to accept that invitation, for we hold that camping is not merely for pleasure, but also for discipline. The camper who takes the soft way too easily will miss the hard joys of the road. Our camping consciences troubled us even in the thought of the comfort of a barn, but we satisfied them with the thought that we could not afford to spoil our tent. All this we explained to the kind woman in the doorway. She allowed us to spend the night in her barn.

But she would not let us use our primus lamp for cooking. She took us into a lean-to where she had been ironing all afternoon and where a good fire still burned. There she bade us get warm and cook our supper. It was luxurious. We fried our pound of steak with some onions and made cocoa. While

we were feasting on this already plentiful fare our hostess brought in a jar of her best preserved cherries and offered them to us for dessert. They were carefully pitted, rich, winy, delicious. She also provided a dozen big apples that had come safely through the winter in her cool cellar. We ate our bountiful repast with glee and, after tidying up the room, went out to the barn.

It was clean and airy. We took a few forkfuls of hay over into one corner, spread our blankets thereon, and, as we drifted off to sleep, listened to what Hamlin Garland astutely calls the "comfortable sound" of "hosses chawin' hay." Never was I more intimately friendly with horses!

A few days later I learned how strong the friendship between man and horse can be. We had stopped and asked permission to put up our tent in the brookside meadow of a fine, clean-looking farm. The farmer was a big, wholesome, child-like man who gave permission rather than be surly. But he had misgivings. While he was doing his evening chores in the barn-yard, he would walk over to the fence that separated it from the meadow and take an occasional uneasy look at us.

Would we steal his chickens? Would we set the woodlot ablaze? He was probably wondering. I made a haphazard effort to be agreeable.

"You have a fine horse!"

The trouble left his face and he grinned broadly. Perhaps we were all right, after all, if I knew a good horse. It was more than a good horse to him. It was his treasure.

"Guess how old he is!" said he.

I did not know how old a horse ought to be to be right, so I was politely evasive.

"Fifteen years. Born on the place, he was. I raised him from a colt. He's a wonder. Come here, Peter."

Much to my surprise the horse walked across the barn-yard to his master as a dog would have done.

"Kiss me, Peter."

Peter promptly covered the farmer's face with the wettest of wet kisses. Inwardly, invisibly, and inaudibly, I shuddered. Just how much will mankind endure for affection's sake?

"He'll follow my wife around, asking for sugar. He'll go to the back door for it. He don't know anything but kindness. Nobody else ever had him. I ain't ever let him work out. He's one of the family, he is. He's human"!

I could not help wondering how many human beings in the world are like that horse in that they know nothing but kindness! But as Blake says,

> "The beggar's dog and the widow's cat,
> Feed them and thou shalt grow fat."

I did not grudge the intelligent beast his happiness. I could not help praising him. That established us in the regard of the farmer, his wife and his children. Cool milk from the milk-room was offered to us and sweet apples from the bin.

We drove through New Jersey and turned toward Delaware Water Gap. A day came slightly overcast with clouds. We looked for an early twilight. But it was already upon us when we began to look for a place to spend the night and it was dark before we rolled along to a curve where a narrow, rutty dirt road turned off from the main road into a strip of light woodland and fallow beside a swift and narrow stream. We stopped, cooked our supper, and pitched camp in a hollow near it.

In the morning, when I opened my eyes, I saw that we had rested in a bed of dog-tooth

violets. Looking out across the earth with my eyes on a level with it made them seem like an army of yellow elves coming to storm the citadel of my mind. I capitulated at once. When we arose that morning there was a blessing on us and we knew it. We made coffee, fried bacon, and toasted bread joyfully. Then, before we went on, we covered the remains of our fire with water, earth, and moss that no black ashes might make an ugly spot in that perfect place.

We went on toward Delaware Water Gap, driving rapidly and living frugally with our bodies, but for our spirits it was to be a day of miracles. At noon we stopped on a country road that crossed a brown-shadowed stream which looked as if it might be a happy home for trout. We had only tea and bread and butter for luncheon, so, while I prepared it, I told Jim to try a cast or two. At the first cast he pulled out a fine trout which we promptly fried and shared. Again we were blessed. We went on happily.

Early that afternoon we found the trout-stream for which we were looking and, as a light haze descended on the land near it, between the little hills that guided the flowing of it, we pitched camp in a meadow still clad

with last year's grass, now being lifted by the spring's new green blades. The trout-brook made promises to us all night long of what it would do for us next day. The mild air gave us slow, deep breathing. Again we were blessed.

Morning came warm and sparkling. We took our tackle and trudged up-stream, fishing as we went. Above the meadow where we had camped the stream ran through wilder and more troublesome country, over mighty boulders, between rough and jagged banks covered with dense undergrowth and brooded over by stalwart trees. We found a clear, delicious spring and drank deeply.

After a long walk we were hot and came upon a pool where it would be just possible to swim a few strokes. Below it were two great rocks and a plunging gush of waters between them. We went in swimming. Cold, cold as ice recently melted, but stinging sweet to the spirit that loves hardship, was that clean water. Shuddering for a moment when the water first clashed upon us, then rising to feel the kindly warmth of the sun, we were blessed once more. If death should be like that. . . .

I sat enthroned between two gaunt rocks

with water rushing headlong across my shoulders. It seemed as if such cool, clear energy must wash away not only the fevers and foibles of this world, but even faults and flaws. In that chilly dazzle of flying sunlight and leaping water I could not think ill of any one, not even of myself. When I changed my wet clothing for dry I was clean of heart. And on the way back I picked long streamers of ground moss and little vines newly budded out, a few sprigs of arbutus, and one bloodroot, the wonder-star of April. We caught few fish that day, but we were content.

At supper-time it was cool and a light wind blew up. The wind grew bolder and colder. By ten o'clock as much of a gale as the little valley could well hold was blowing over us. For once the tent would not stay in place over the top of our car, or anywhere else. It was made of light material and we were afraid it would be torn to ribbons if we left it up. We took it down and tucked it over us flat on the ground. The wind ripped and tore at it even there and sometimes it slithered across our faces. The night grew colder and colder. Jim let the water out of Frankie Ford's radiator for fear it might freeze. A film of ice showed on the water in our drinking pail.

The ground under us stiffened and then froze hard. Yet under the blankets and the tent, wrapped in our warmest clothing, we were not cold.

Rising in the morning was another matter. When I went out to make a fire the gale blew this way and that. We were obliged to set our small primus stove inside the car in order to cook on it. I washed hands and face in the stream in which I had been swimming happily the day before, and the cold of wind and water now made my fingers stiff and numb so that I fumbled badly with the frying-pan and the coffee-pot. But when I was once warmed through by a good breakfast I got joy of that gusty morning, such joy in hardship as I had never known before. Truly, I had been blessed.

These things, frost and wind, realities of the physical life to which we had gone back for a time, were they not fit symbols of the stresses of the life that we had left? These things, frost and wind, had been conquered by man, the indomitable, long ages before my birth. By claiming our share in that heritage of conquest might we not conquer, also, in the end, that world of stone and steel realities wherein men and women of

to-day face dangers and difficulties more subtle than any that their forefathers knew? Perhaps it is here that the first lesson begins. So it has been for me. So may it be for others. For it is an inexpensive blessedness that I have found to save my soul alive in me when I have taken to the highways and waterways that lead to the shrine of the first faith. At this shrine I have found bravery for my fear, and wisdom for my doubt, and life to do battle with life again.

Never do I return from these adventures in the open with Jim without longing to go out on another. I shall dream of going again and again until the last time—then, at last, to remain. As my flesh grows frail with the growing strength of my spirit, I should like to rise slowly in the long, blue brilliance of night, and seize the horns of the crescent moon and jump over it, between them, as a child jumps over a rope. Once over it, and in the Milky Way, I should like to fling all my sins and sorrows into the Great Dipper, and listen until I hear them clink upon the bottom of it. Then I should like to find all the time that I have lost. I should like to float out among the stars, seeking a new beauty.

One great joy of the road is not knowing what acquaintances we shall make or how we shall make them. Getting acquainted with people is a dullard's adventure if you know all about them ahead of time. But if you must learn the meaning of a human being from the poise of the head, the flash of the eye, the locking of the jaws, the behavior of the fingers, and from the individual life, communicable and yet inexplicable, which animates all of these, then a meeting is an inviting hazard. With letters of introduction we may meet Mr. and Mrs. John Brown Jones Smith. Without them we may find Socrates in a general store at the cross-roads, Le Penseur on a lonely hill, and Saint Francis and Thersites tramping side by side along a dusty road; we may even have the good fortune to hear Confucius talking to his disciples of "poetry, history, and the up-keep of courtesy."

We enjoy the complex simplicities of pioneering in the hearts and minds of our kind. People who seem quite commonplace to themselves and to their neighbors shine for us with a light well known before there were candles, the ancient light of romance. For us they wear the plumes of knights, the caps of goblins, the haloes of saints, the garlands

of delectable sinners, without ever knowing that they are clad in more than serge or gingham. And sometimes the light is reflected upon us, who seem quite commonplace to ourselves save in moments of elation. What could be more delightful to a couple well-advanced toward middle age?

Once, when we were driving through New Jersey in Frankie Ford, the ramshackle and rakish, we were allowed to feel the radiance of this glamour upon us. It was late summer and the road was dusty. Great wreaths of dust whirled past us through sultry air, dimming our eyes and making our hair gritty. As for Frankie, the gray of the dust was so thick on him that only clairvoyance could have told his true color. Jim subdued him to about ten miles an hour and we rolled slowly through a small town, looking for a place where it would be possible to stop and prepare supper. Ahead of us, as far as we could see, dust was thick over the road and gray as death. By all the laws of hygiene and aesthetics it would be wrong to stop where we were for the purpose of eating. I looked about me anxiously.

Then I saw, at one side of the road, a rusty-colored, benevolent, old-fashioned house. A

stubby hedge enclosed a lawn on which a hose was playing. On a veranda, in a chair tilted back against the wall, sat an old gentleman in rusty black. His feet hung limp without touching the floor. His head was sunk on his breast. I gave little thought to him then, however, for I was looking at the lawn (how good it would be to sit on!) and at the hose (how good it would be to get under the spray!). I stepped out of Frankie. Said I to Jim:

"I'll ask that old gentleman to let us eat supper on his lawn."

Never before had we asked such a privilege. We had cooked our meals in meadows and orchards, but never on a lawn near a home. I went quickly for fear of losing courage.

"Pardon me, sir, but we have been traveling all day and are tired. The road is dusty. May we eat our supper on your lawn?"

The chair tilted forward and the old gentleman sat up. His spirit came back from that mazy region unexplored by youth to which old people go when they are alone. He took a good look at me and kindly amusement flickered in his eyes. He got up.

"Why, yes," he said; "come along in, come along in."

He beckoned to Jim, who whirled Frankie about and brought him to a stop beside the stubby hedge. The old gentleman hurried over to get acquainted with him. He was alert now, and twinkled with activity and talk.

"Campin', eh? Well, now that's certainly fine. Nothin' better 'n campin'. Got supper all ready, have you?"

"We have bread and butter," said I, "but if you would let us light our small gasoline stove—it won't hurt the grass—we could cook beefsteak and onions. . . ."

"Steak and onions! Just the thing! Nothin' better 'n steak and onions. If I hadn't had my own supper, I'd just ask you folks to let me in on it."

He was as excited as if he were giving a party.

"Mama," he called to one of the windows at the back of the house, "Mama, let these folks in and give 'em a chance to wash at the pump on the stoop."

We came out with clean faces and clear eyes. We sat down on the cool lawn. We lighted our stove and I filled a pan with steak and onions. The old gentleman walked around us, smoking a pipe, talking volubly between

puffs, and apparently delighted with his queer, uninvited guests. He told us how he used to go camping when he was a young man. But he had come home, now, home to what David Morton calls "the rooted certainties."

"If my wife had liked it, we might have kept it up," he would say. That is what many men tell us when they talk with us of our adventures. And the house-bound women say wistfully, "If it wasn't for the children . . ."

While we were still eating, one of our host's old cronies stopped beside the stubby hedge.

"Havin' a picnic, Joe?"

With something of the air of a Barnum, it must be admitted, the old gentleman hurried over to explain. He made a good story.

"These folks have traveled all over the world like this," he said, "and they're great campers."

When the time came to pack our things and put them in Frankie he did not want us to go.

"I have a grove the other side of the house," he said, "pine-trees. Nothin' better 'n pine-trees. I wouldn't ever let anybody cut 'em down. You could camp there as well as not. Just come and take a look at 'em."

Our vacation was over and we were needed at home. Otherwise we might have stayed. But although we could not do that we went and admired his "grove," half a dozen brave old trees, strong symbols of the joy of his youth, reminding him of crisp dawns and clear evenings near the earth. I wondered how many of his neighbors knew what those pines meant to him. Perhaps not a one. He had let us know because we could understand. He all but begged us to stay overnight. When we had climbed into Frankie again, we left him standing beside the stubby hedge, waving his hat. Said he to Jim:

"Come again if you're passing by this way and stay as long as you like. *I like to meet a character like you!*"

And so we pass mankind in review on the open road and are reviewed ourselves. Each newcomer is a sentry who cries out to us to halt that he may learn our untold braveries, our hidden renunciations, our latent graciousness from a personal radiance evident to him, unsuspected by ourselves. That he can find these things in us is a cause for great good cheer. That we can find them, also, in him, is a reason for the glad laughter that rises out of faith.

[VIII]

[VIII]

WHEN we told people in Oregon and California that we were going back to New York and that we expected to camp out in the East, they said:

"You won't find the farmers there like the ones here."

But we did. And when we told New Yorkers that we were going to tour and camp in England, they said:

"You won't find the farmers there like the ones here."

But they were wrong. My opinion is that if we sought camping sites in the blue fields of heaven, the farmers there would welcome us as they have everywhere on earth. Perhaps they would offer us ethereal butter and honey from "the angels' pale tables" of which Vachel Lindsay tells. However that may be, I can vouch for the fact that the English farmer is as friendly as his kinsman in our own country, and that is saying a good deal.

It was in early summer that we began to explore the English countryside in a motorcycle combination called *Rover Chug-chug*.

Rover was a veteran. He went into the war in 1914 and did more to win it than any profiteer ever did. As a result he was old, and often very tired. But not all of the moral force had gone out of his engine. He was plucky and would die hard. If he sometimes behaved with all the flirtatious uncertainty of a Don Juan, that only made him the more attractive. We bought him in London for more good American money than we could get for Frankie Ford at home. All motor vehicles brought enormous prices in England after the war. We removed the upholstered seat from the sidecar, which looked like a bathtub for a giant's canary bird, and we folded our good brown tent and put it where the upholstered seat had been in the place which I was to occupy. We made our blankets into a neat, compact brown bundle and strapped them on behind. Between the sidecar and the cycle we swung a big aluminum pail which held our small primus stove and a few cooking utensils. Behind Jim's seat on the cycle was a package of clean clothing. This load and our two substantially healthy selves we asked poor *Rover Chug-chug* to pull. In spite of the fact that he had only one cylinder to his name, he usually did it.

With this equipment and in this manner we set out, going down into the southwestern counties. Of course we saw the great cathedrals and reverenced their grandeur and their grace. Of course we saw Bath and Exeter and Salisbury and Winchester. But of these great piles of sternly worshipping stone let other and wiser tourists tell. We spent most of our time with the simple folk whose forefathers had built these mighty churches to be a memorial of their kind while their civilization endures. The first farmer with whom we made friends was a man of Somerset, who allowed us to pitch our tent in his field for two days and nights while Jim overhauled the weary engine of *Rover Chug-chug*.

This farmer had a voice as smooth and rich as heavy cream. He had hair like sunlight on waves of ripe grain. He and his wife belonged to the Salvation Army and saw little of the comforming villagers who lived near. They were as pious as Father Aeneas. And they were very kind to us through the two long rainy days that we spent with them. After we had made camp and while I was getting supper the first evening, they came over to see us.

The farmer was a man of few words, which

was too bad, for his voice should have made him a bard. A good lyric would have been ravishing in his mouth. But all he said was, "Oh-ay." He made it mean several things. By a subtle variation of sound he could ask a question with it or give an answer or make an exclamation. He could explain his universe with it. He hardly needed gesture.

His wife, who called me "Dearie" at once, was a devoted mother of half a dozen children. They all lived in a tiny cottage like four low walls hugging a big chimney. It was set in a tiny yard walled away from the meadow. Inside the wall hollyhocks and roses crowded close upon peas and cabbages. Outside, where we camped, was the free pasture of the big, clean, silky cow and of her small, absurd, spotted calf. A pool in the meadow sheltered salamanders—"hevets" the children called them. At least, that is as near as I can come to spelling out their pronunciation. They thought that these salamanders were poisonous and were amazed to see Jim, who knows something of biology, take them up in his hands.

When they learned that we loved wild things they took us for a walk in their emerald meadow and showed us the sweetest and

happiest thing they knew, their treasure of treasures for the time. On a grassy slope the farmer knelt down and thrust his arm into a hole which we should never have noticed. With a look of shy pleasure he pulled out a wild baby rabbit, then another and another, till each child was holding one little furry, frightened, cuddling creature. We passed them around, gently stroking their brown, downy ears. Then the Somerset man carefully tucked them back into their nest in the earth. They would not be there long, he said. Poachers would get them.

His wife gathered a handful of homely meadow flowers for us and a bunch of delicate knot-grass which, she said, would be pretty in the house all winter. And on our way back to the tent, she stepped into the tiny cottage and brought us out a roll of glistening butter on a broad green leaf. When we sat down to supper on the turf that evening and saw that butter beside our stout English loaf, we felt that the only proper grace was the desire to deserve it. We slept one more night in that meadow in Somerset and in the morning said farewell. The good mother cried out to us:

"Let us know if you come by again and h'I'll put you h'up."

Her husband, standing at the gate and smiling, said,

"Oh-ay."

It was good to know that we had been welcome guests. We were glad, too, that we had freed the family from the fear of salamanders. Every fear lost is a faith found, one step upward on the rungs of the golden ladder that climbs into joy and peace. Perhaps there was a spirit in that pool with the "hevets" crying out, even before our arrival, in words like those given to the river god by Beaumont and Fletcher:

> "Do not fear to put thy feet
> Naked in the river sweet;
> Think not leech, or newt, or toad
> Will bite thy foot when thou has trod:
>
> "Nor let the water, rising high,
> As thou wadest, make thee cry
> And sob; but ever live with me
> And not a wave shall trouble thee."

Leaving Somerest behind us after two rainy days, we set out to see Devon of the red earth and the lovable sea, Devon of the narrow immaculate lanes and old churches, Devon of the brown thatches and yellow plaster, Devon of the wild red poppies and the creamy

sheep. And we saw her in all her dear, domestic beauty, ate her rich cream and her ruddy strawberries, and, in the course of time, arrived at the foot of Porlock Hill where, in so far as I was concerned, the driving trip ended and a walking trip began.

Unlike *Rover Chug-chug*, Porlock Hill had a reputation. It was said to be one of the steepest hills in England. We had been advised to take a long, roundabout road because the short and direct way up would be impossible for *Rover*. Even the longer and easier grade, we were told, would be difficult. It would be necessary to lighten the load for *Rover*. He could carry the luggage or he could carry me. Alas, the luggage could not walk!

"I'll have to go up Porlock Hill alone," said Jim. I'll wait for you at the top where the road begins to go down again."

He started the engine and away he went with *Rover*. I plodded along uphill on a perfect road which rose steadily, winding around the shapely hill, past hundreds of fine old trees. As I walked Christina Rossetti's lyric of the hill and the road came into my mind.

> "Does the road wind uphill all the way?
> Yes, to the very end."

The proud old symbols pleased me more than ever before. I liked the idea of ascending to some far summit of the spirit. It seemed a wiser and a truer symbolism than that in Burns' lovable "John Anderson, My Jo, John."

On I went. Alone I reached a height that looks down on the sea that England loves. So steep was that hill that the sea, far below, seemed high at the horizon, as if it were tipping itself toward the land. It was calm. The color of it wavered between jade and slate, a gray-green mystery. I moved away from the ledge where I had been standing and nearer to my friends the trees. I think I learned why the ancient Israelites were forbidden to worship in groves and high places. Perhaps they make the spirit proud—or dizzy.

Then I wondered why a glimpse of the ocean from a hill meant something new to me in England. I had often looked down on the superb Pacific from the mountains that form the crescent-shaped coast line of Santa Barbara. The majesty of those mountains would have humbled Porlock Hill. I had looked down from them with joy, but not with this strange, new stirring of the heart. Why was it?

I think that while I was living out of doors in England I may have been unconsciously homesick, sometimes, for the wild beauty of my homeland. In England man has reigned over nature for generations and reigned nobly. The land has been used and loved and subdued to a quiet loveliness. But America, wherever there is no "Main Street" (our conquest over nature?), goes hand in hand with grandeur from zone to zone and parallel to parallel. We have scenery whose elemental beauty is amazing enough to be perilous if we were not somewhat insensitive and deeply interested in soap, tobacco, and pickles. Just as an Englishman might be stirred by the sight of English flowers in an American garden, so, I think, I was stirred by the elemental beauty seen from Porlock Hill. It meant home.

After a little more walking and thinking I reached the top of the hill and found Jim and *Rover* in good spirits and willing to go on. We drove on to Lynmouth where we saw the things all tourists see and took a good look at the river flowing out into the calm ocean of jade and slate. After that we were obliged to separate again.

Lynmouth is built at the foot of a high

and perpendicular cliff. On top of the cliff is the town of Lynton. Jim and I could have gone up into Lynton together in a lift which operates between the two towns, but the lift could not have taken *Rover Chug-chug*. It is always despicable to desert a good friend, and on this occasion it would have been unthrifty also. Jim set out on a meandering road through the hills with *Rover*. I rose into Lynton on the lift and awaited them there.

In due season Jim and *Rover* and I all met again. One of us had a long drink of gasoline and the other two had luncheon in a queer little boarding house in a side street because we were not courageous enough to cook or eat our own on the streets of a town, nor presentable enough to go to a good inn. After luncheon all three of us went on our way, chugging out of Lynton on the road to Ilfracombe. For a short time *Rover* behaved admirably. Then we came to another stretch of uphill going. He wheezed and stopped.

"You'll have to walk," said Jim to me. "I'll drive on toward Parracombe until I come to a place where the road is level or slopes down. Then we'll go on to Ilfracombe together."

Jim and *Rover* left me and disappeared around the bend. Afoot and light-hearted,

but a little weary, I trudged along in the general direction of Ilfracombe with Parracombe as my first goal.

> "Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
> Of labor you shall find the sum."

The words of Christina Rossetti went with me. I walked and walked. Although I had memorized that lyric in my youth for sheer love of it, I found out that day what it means to learn a poem "by heart." The thought and music of it haunted me. No matter how fast I walked I could not walk away from its analogies and suggestions.

> "Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?"

I wondered what I should do if night came and found me alone on that strange road as I must ultimately be alone at night on the road of Christina Rossetti. Numerous cars and wagons passed me there in the afternoon, but I did not meet my fellow wayfarers. Nobody was presumptuous enough to scrape an acquaintance and give me a lift. The English are exceedingly well bred.

The road, like most roads in England, was beautiful. It rose from a deeply cleft, wooded valley into the skyey regions of what Cali-

fornians would call a mesa. I had not gone far before I heard a rumbling noise rolling through the valley. A brooding greyness covered the edge of the upland. A thunderstorm was coming. Nevertheless, I was not alarmed, for I felt sure to the very marrow of my American bones that it would not be the peer of thunderstorms that I had lived through and rejoiced in at home. English weather grumbled along from day to day (when it was not smiling genially), but it rarely did anything rough.

The rain began to fall slowly and heavily in big drops like the discouraged tears of gentlemanly angels. I had no raincoat. I was wearing a short woolen skirt, a cotton jumper, and a heavy, gray, sleeveless sweater. My arms got wet. My shoes felt the slippery mud of the road take on a new slipperiness. I walked and walked and still that road behaved like the road of Christina Rossetti and went uphill all the way. No Jim could I see. I wondered whether a leprechaun had stolen him. There was nothing in the world to do but keep on walking.

The slow shower became a vigorous rain. Mobs of plebeian angels must have been weeping the plentiful tears of some heavenly

sorrow. My sleeves stuck to me. My feet slipped and slithered in the mud. My cheap round felt hat was like a filled sponge on top of my head. On I went.

After a while I heard the slow pad-pad of a horse behind me. I looked back and saw a farmer's high cart pulled by a sensible old nag and coming along at a decent jog-trot. The farmer and his wife were sitting on a broad, high seat up in front under a mighty umbrella. There was room under it and beside them for a third person. I looked up appealingly as they passed. They looked like kind people. Surely they would invite me to take the empty place. But evidently it was not the thing to do and nobody English ever does anything that is not "the thing." They passed me by.

Then I was desperate. We are bidden to ask that we may receive. We are also told that the biggest price we can pay for anything is to ask for it. Both are wise counsels. I realized that I must ask for a lift. I ran uphill after that cart. I overtook the old horse on a steep part of the up-grade. Then I offered to pay the farmer to take me as far as he was going in the direction of Parracombe.

As it happened, he was bound for that village. He and his wife kindly helped me up into the empty place beside them. As soon as I recovered the breath lost in running after their horse, I explained my eccentric behavior. I put all of the blame on *Rover*, who had refused to carry me. I told them that there had been no stage to take at that time and that it was necessary for us to get to Ilfracombe as soon as possible and that Jim would be waiting somewhere on the road.

We jogged and we jogged. I was more comfortable on the high seat under the mighty umbrella than I had been on the muddy road. We went on silently for a time. Then an idea entered into the mind of that farmer and fell from his lips in innocent speech.

"Your husband wouldn't be running away from you, would he?"

With humor and devotion I rallied to the defense of my good man.

"It seems a bit queer," said the farmer. "Does he often leave you like this?"

"Only when *Rover* can't carry me and we have to get ahead," said I. "The bundles can't walk and I can. At home in my own country my husband and I camp

together often and I always try to be a good sport."

He probably thought that I had chosen a strange way of being a good sport, but like the other English, he was polite about it. Probably the thought that I was American and therefore peculiar just by nature and without being able to help it was a comfort to him. I suppose that if he is ever asked to describe Americans, something of the wife-deserter will enter into his description of the American man and something of the queer lady pedestrian into his description of the American woman.

Having imposed myself upon them, I did my best to be agreeable. I told them how much I liked Devon, how beautiful England seemed, and what New York was like. But never could I divert their minds enough to prevent them from wondering where my lost husband might be. The English mind seems to be immobile.

"You're sure he was going to Parracombe?" they would ask.

And I would assent, although I was beginning to wonder whether I should ever find him again. Much to my relief I did spy him at last, just before the hill sloped down

to Parracombe. Under a big tree at the opening of a lane the old brown tent was spread loosely over Jim and *Rover*. They seemed to be keeping a weather eye out for me. I squealed with delight and was about to dismount, but Jim astonished my kind acquaintances by shouting to me to remain where I was.

"I've had trouble with the brakes," he said, "and I've just fixed them. They say that the grade into Parracombe is dangerous. I'll go through the town with Rover and meet you on the other side."

The farmer and his wife seemed glad to ascertain that I had a real husband, albeit a queer one, and they agreed to take me through the town. I asked what I owed them. They said that it was against the law for them to accept anything for driving people. It could not be done without a license. I thought earnestly for a moment and then asked if they had children. They had.

"Would it be against the law for me to give them a present?"

That would be quite legal.

"Well, then, I must ask your help about it," said I. "I do not know your children

and can not guess what they would like. Please buy them something in Parracombe and give it to them from me."

All alone again at the first fork of the road beyond Parracombe I waited for Jim. There would be no more hills. I looked down on the quaint, friendly little town which I had left behind and thought of all that must be left behind before reaching the inn at the top of the hill of Christina Rossetti,—towns, homes, gardens, friends, and Jim. I listened to the dry whispering of a scythe in a field near by where a sturdy Englishman was cutting grass. It was an eternal music. It would go on when I had entered the inn that nobody can miss. I was glad of that. . . . The storm had gone and the sky was opalescent with the fires of sunset. The coming of night was in the coolness of the air, but the day was not yet over. When Jim and *Rover* found me I was dreaming of a day and a hill and a road beyond time and space. But I had farther to go here.

> "Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
> From morn to night, my friend."

We spent many a beautiful night camping on the English commons, treated always with

courtesy and kindness by all classes of people with whom we came in contact. Nor did we find anywhere a dirty, unsightly, or unpleasant bit of country. Every inch of rural England that we saw had been loved so well that it had been kept undefiled. May travelers say as much for our country in the future. They could not say it now.

One of the happiest of our camping places was on Sevenoaks Common on the Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury. It was there that I made friends with an old beech tree. It was in this manner.

In England summer days were opalescent, softly clouded and shot through with light fire. Life burned and glowed. The holly-bushes had put out their new leaves, delicately thorny, shiny, almost translucent, and quite unlike the thick, opaque leaves we know at Christmas time. The wild berry vines were blossoming. The ivy had sent out an apostolic succession of new and sensitive shoots along the climbing ways and over the ground. The bracken was uncurling. The trees were in new leaf. Many of them were not perpendicular, but ran at sudden angles one with another and bent in several ways. In the midst was the great beech. In front of it, at

a short distance, so that we might look at it, we put up our tent, while the soft sunlight of an English afternoon fell away to ghostly yellow among all the mingled greens and made a silent symphony of the colors of rest. We ate our supper and sat idly watching day change to night.

The night was a fairy corridor cut in moss-agate, misty and magical, through which we moved haunted by whims and strange wisps of thought born with our bodies and souls of the experience of our race. I watched the shadows deepen around the old beech, thinking how the young Shakespeare might have slept out in this same country, under such trees, or how Chaucer might have walked on this very common many a time, picking the daisies that he loved. The tree became a stalwart Shakespeare, a portly Chaucer, a symbol of the mellow greatness of the English mind at its best. If the leaves of it had changed suddenly to the crimped white ruff worn by him of Avon, and if he had spoken to me of the "darling buds of May," I should not have been greatly surprised. If the branches of the beech had suffered metamorphosis and become the smock that Chaucer wears in his portrait in the National Gallery, I should

have taken it, I think, as a matter of course. I should have waited to hear him say,

> "O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she
> In which that love upgroweth with your age,
> Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
> And of your herte up-casteth the visage
> To thilke god that after his image
> Yow made, and thinketh all nis but a fayre
> This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre."

A little later we decided to make a trip to Edinburgh and left London for the North in *Rover Chug-chug*. We spent the first night of this trip on " 'Am Common" (Ham preferred) near Richmond, by advice of a kind Bobbie, only to discover next day that it had been against the law for us to put up our tent there, or to run our little motorcycle combination into a space between clumps of bushes. Nobody knew that we had done it, however, and we were not molested. Nor should I have known that it was against the law if I had not seen a sign next day denying the privilege of camping to all gypsies and to other peculiar people like teachers and poets.

The bushes around us were furze—what the friendly policeman had called "fuzz-bushes." They were merry with golden bloom. And never, even in California hills,

have I heard such a full chorus of bird song as woke on Ham Common that morning. Cuckoos called out loudly, as they rarely do with us, that summer was "icumen in." The larks and other English birds that we did not know tossed carols into the air as fast as a fountain tosses spray. It was a jubilant festival.

Leaving Ham Common behind we went straight North toward Doncaster, driving fast over the long and level roads. It was late in the next afternoon when we saw a modern bungalow of our own American kind at the edge of a quiet meadow and near a small grassy grove. Jim left me with *Rover* and went and asked permission to put up our tent in that grove for the night. It was most courteously granted. More than that, while we were pitching camp the owner of the bungalow came over to see us, bringing four fresh eggs which he offered us for breakfast and for which he would not be paid. He lingered a moment, chatting diffidently, but with interest, and then he said,

"Pardon me—I hope you won't think me indelicate—but you have been driving all day—wouldn't you like a bath?"

It was too good to be true! The English are often accused of stand-offishness. Here

was an Englishman offering the kindest hospitality of his home, his "castle," to two strangers, foreigners at that, who had come to camp upon his property straight from the open road, with no introduction but the smiles upon their faces!

We went on northward through Yorkshire and prepared to cross the moor and enter Scotland by way of Carlisle. The rain fell on us day after day and all the way, but we were reconciled to that when we saw the most wonderful sky that we had ever seen from the high moorland between Bowes and Brough. On the day when we made this trip it was still raining, or, let us say euphemistically that there was a Scotch mist. We had eaten luncheon at Greta Bridge, at The Morritt Arms. It was good, but cold, and came to an end with some Wensleydale cheese as deliciously flavorous as one of Edwin Arlington Robinson's lyrics. From Greta Bridge we drove on in the rain to Bowes where the road began to wind slowly uphill for six miles, and then down again for another six miles to Brough.

As we moved upward with all the slow speed our heavily laden *Rover Chug-chug* would make we looked at that sky. It was

full of brooding life. Valhalla might have been just behind it. Around us was the moor, rolling and dipping in long, undulating lines away to the right, covered with scrub and weeds of kinds new to us. Across the road and on the edge of the moor the sheep, omnipresent in England, were grazing, their creamy wool heavy with moisture. Strange, crested moor birds stood near the road, hunched up meditatively on one leg. As we passed they rose deliberately into the air, crying plaintively. In the valley to the left grim stone walls, not unlike those in New England, but with a smoother masonry, cut the green land into sections. Here and there great wisps of mist had fallen upon them and blotted them out. Cool air everywhere, moist air everywhere, disturbed air blowing this way and that all around us! Over all this the sky!

The sky was purple as heather and gray as age and streaked with amber and rose like an apple and troubled with wildness like the light in the eyes of a cat. It changed from moment to moment, hue sliding into hue, tone falling upon tone, form melting into form. Great columns of white cloud fell down and broke upon the floor of the earth, or were hidden by rising walls of amethyst,

built by invisible fingers. Dusky castles with blue battlements reared themselves before our eyes and stood a moment in evanescent grandeur, then disappearing in long, vertical lines of swiftly falling silver, upon which the sun, from some secret place, tried in vain to look out. Movement upon movement, glory upon glory!

I have said that we were wet and cold and tired. That may have been one reason why we kept silence at first as we drove up the winding road. But he is no lover of beauty who can not forget his body momentarily when his soul is feasting. We had also another reason for silence—we were enjoying what was too thrilling for speech. We drove on to the top of the grade. Then, when the road tipped down again, a miracle happened.

We had forgotten cold and weariness and the unending rain that beat upon our unsheltered faces and ran down our necks. We had forgotten words. We had forgotten thought. Without words or thought or any tune that I can remember we began to sing. And as we went swiftly and smoothly down into the valley toward Brough we were singing exultantly, with none to hear but the creamy sheep and the vari-colored moor birds

and that wild sky and the unknown gods who traveled those hills invisibly.

This, I think, was taking a step forward in the knowledge of the absolute and eternal beauty which we can never know fully in one finite life, though it is that for which our best selves hunger and thirst. To the believer it is one phase of God's existence, this beauty, and one way of his manifestation. It is at once a celestial dream and a deep certainty. It is that which we may approach and touch though we may not encompass it.

What is given us is the privilege of looking on small gems split from that perfect jewel of unnumbered facets, of cherishing these small particles of beauty in our lives and of telling others about them. This blessed holding and sharing is one fulfillment of destiny. It is what great poets, great artists, great seers have always done. It is what little poets, little artists, little helpers of mankind should hope to do. It is a high and honorable task.

The chilly rain went with us all the way into Scotland. We kept fairly dry at night in our tent. But in the daytime we rolled over wet roads with the heavens open above us. Our most intimate garments were thor-

oughly wet most of the time. We were in this condition one afternoon soon after crossing the border when we came upon a small cottage near the road. A grove near it looked like a good place for a camp. Jim got off *Rover* and asked the people who lived in the cottage whether we might have permission to put up a tent there over night. The little woman who came to the door could not give the permission herself, but sent Jim on to a larger house to ask, with assurances that our request would probably be granted.

For one reason or another I was left standing in the middle of the muddy road, dripping at every crease and angle of my apparel, waiting for Jim to return. I had not been near a fire for three days and nights. While I was thinking about this sordid fact a young girl came to the door and called to me.

"Mother wants you to come in and get warm by our fire."

I went in gratefully and set my stiff feet on the fender. My clothes began to steam. White vapor arose from my coat. I told the pretty, dark-eyed woman that we had come from far away New York. She thought it was in Canada, near Vancouver. Her knowledge of the United States of America was

limited, but her knowledge of human needs and longings was full and rich. Quietly and charmingly she set the table for tea, talking with me pleasantly all the time. I thought that, since it was tea time, it might be polite for me to suggest departure, but as I was framing a proper speech, my hostess said:

"Does your husband take an egg to his tea?"

They had been getting tea especially for us! They had had their own earlier. Cold and wet as I was the very thought of tea came like a shock of swift delight. The thought of such kindliness, too, made it difficult to say "Thank you" gracefully enough. They were purely and beautifully hospitable and had no intention of being paid. And such a tea!

I had had tea in London drawing-rooms with Lady This and Lady That, and I had enjoyed meeting clever and charming people. It had been very good tea, too, with the daintiest of thin bread and butter. But my Scotch friends, who belonged to one of the oldest and most romantic of the clans, had several kinds of bread and butter, scones, several kinds of cake, and a wonderful rhubarb tart. We might drink as many cups of tea as we wanted, and we did. Then also

there was the friendliest talk in the world, talk of monuments and sights to be seen in the neighborhood.

By the time tea was over the rain had stopped—or the mist had cleared. We took leave feeling warm and jolly and pitched our tent in the grove. In the evening our Scotch friends came to see us in camp. They admired our tent, our bedding, our primus lamp for cooking, and funny little *Rover Chug-chug.* Then they sat down under the trees for a talk.

The man of the house, who had not been present at tea-time, had come with his wife to see us. They had brought the two youngest children, a boy about ten years of age and a girl somewhat younger; lovely, healthy children, shy as young deer. It occurred to me that the man of the family might have a good voice in his big, broad chest. I asked if he could sing and he admitted that he could a bit. Jim thereupon agreed to sing an American song for every Scotch song our host would give us. They took it turn about most of the evening. Jim sang "Dixie," "Old Kentucky Home" and "The Star-Spangled Banner" which they had never heard. The braw Scot sang plaintive, sentimental bal-

lads, many of them quite new to us and quite delightful. One was about a coy lassie who said to her eager lover,

"I canna, winna, mauna buckle to!"

I told our Scotch friends that the vulgar American equivalent for "buckle to" was "hitch up," which amused them mightily.

When he noticed that we understood the words of his songs, our friends asked us how it happened that we could understand their songs since we did not speak just as they did and came from far away. I told him that educated Americans all read Bobbie Burns. He was amazed and delighted.

When he had sung everything he could think of himself he turned to his son and heir and bade him sing for us. At first young Robbie said, "I winna." Then he said, "I canna." But after much coaxing from his pretty mother and a firm command from his sire, Robbie sang, at first shyly, then delightfully, with all the unimpassioned clarity and grace of a boy's soprano.

When the little family went home down the quiet road, and we withdrew into the old brown tent I felt that there was still much blessedness to be told of mankind to

mankind. Such kindness has often been shown to us on the open road. I hope we have not abused it. I hope other campers will not.

As a mere poet certain things would be permitted to me that are considered unbecoming in the wife of a teacher. For instance, I seldom curse. But if I were to make up a curse for campers who return evil for such good things given to them, it would sound something like this. May fire fail them in need and may springs be tainted in the lands where they travel, and may poison ivy cling to their ankles, and may burrs catch in their hair, and may thorns tear their cheeks, and may snakes sleep in their beds, and may the woodtick bury itself in their flesh, and may the mosquito and the black-fly buzz near them even unto the end of eternity!

Or, if I were in a better mood, if iniquity were far from me, I might make, instead, a blessing for all good campers who give joy for joy on the highways and waterways. It would be like this. May sweet fountains quench their thirst and may scented fires warm them; may clovers kiss their feet and daisies crown their heads; may the rustle of the brown thrasher wake them, and may they

hear hummingbirds at noon in the hedges, and may the dragon-fly flash bright before them by day and the firefly at night when they follow the old trails of the open world!

These are my memories, the fruit of a new life not yet ended. But I have thought of the end. The thought of it came to me once, not tormentingly, not even sorrowfully, after our return from England, when we were camping in a cosy hollow at the top of a hill in New York. It was an autumn night and, as we lay still in the old brown tent the smoke from our dying fire scented the air. Death became grandly inevitable in my mind, as in actuality, and it was not altogether unlovely.

To give back to the earth the body broken by life's hardness, to let it be dissolved again to feed the roots of upstanding trees and through the roots the fruits of them—that did not seem terrible in the night. I ought to be glad, I thought, to be renewed in such beauty. To let the flesh become a rainbow would be good. Perhaps many years later, I told myself, young people glad of that into which I had been translated, would come to this very place to enjoy, with senses more

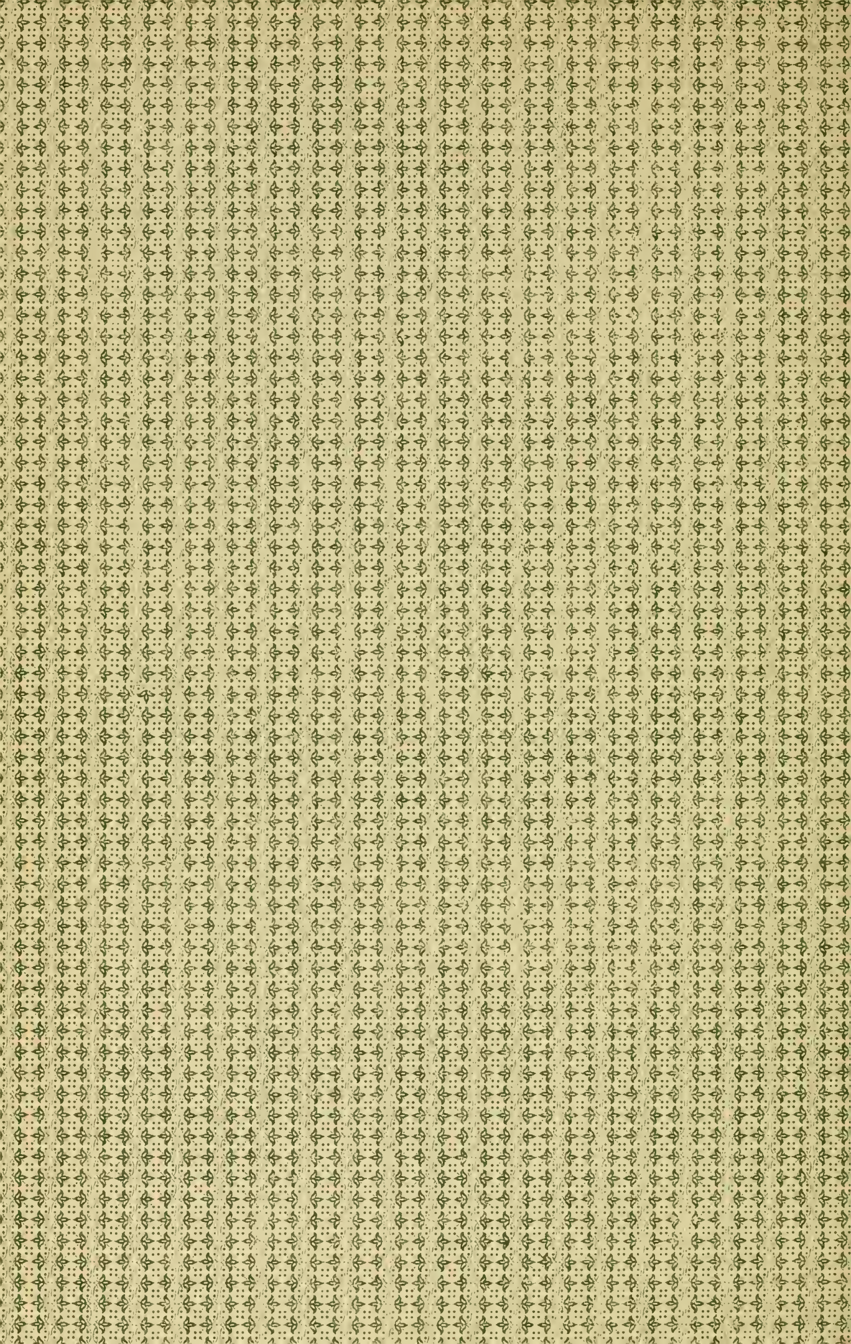
acute than mine and with a finer understanding, all that I had known and loved.

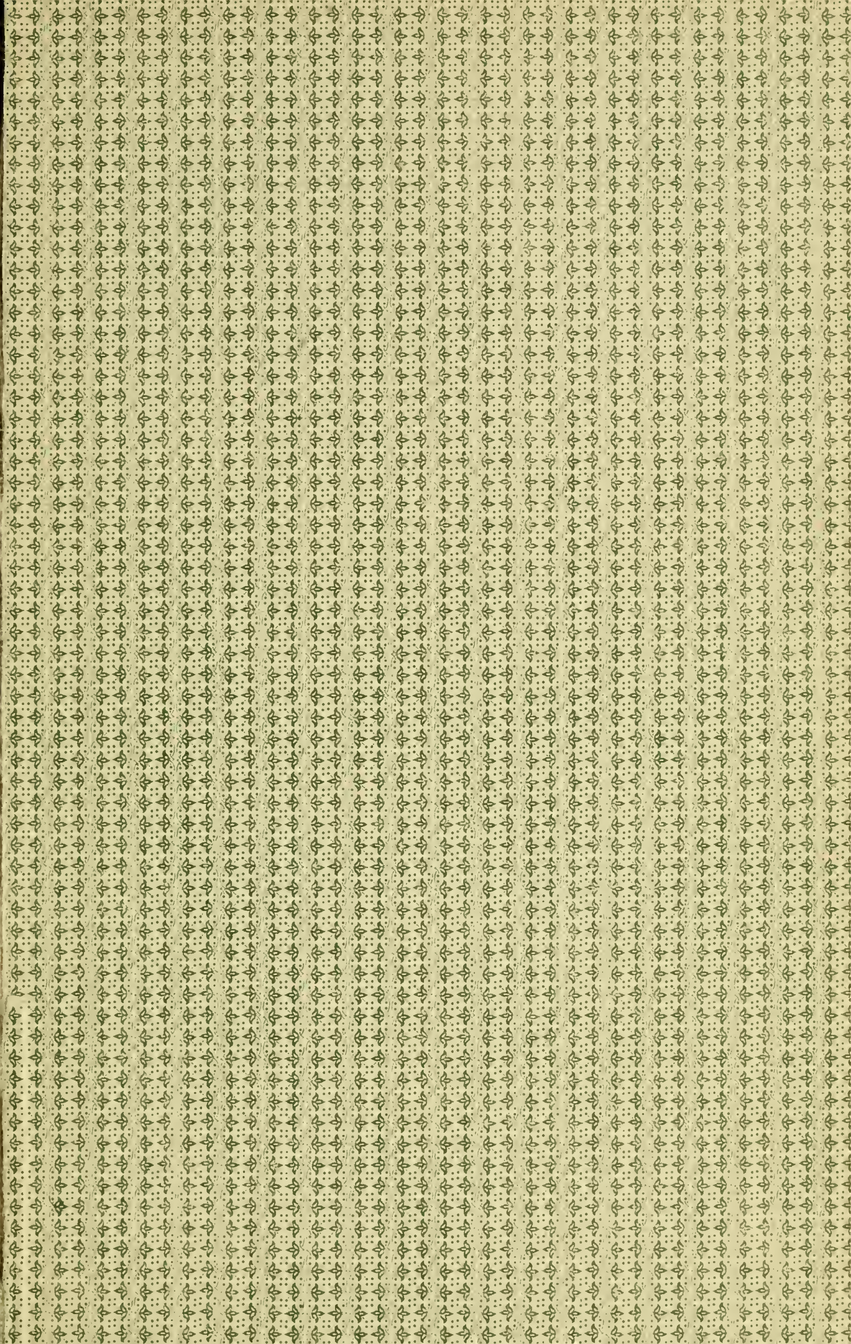
To scatter abroad over the world the separable parts of my spirit, sparks freed from that indivisible flame that is myself, like red leaves in a wind—perhaps that would not be altogether tragic either. My dreams and deeds, capable of mutation and combination through some splendid chemistry unknown to me, might yet be immortal and indestructible in the world that I have known and loved. Facing the firm realities of rest upon the rugged earth had enabled me to face the final reality of which we know little save that it is real for us all.

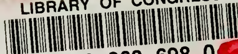
These are my memories. They have faces as glad as morning, as profound as night. Out of my life they look back at me with cheer and warning and prophecy and comprehension and belief. And over and over again, silently but surely, they cry out to one another,

"*Gloria!*"

"*Gloria in excelsis deo!*"






LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 018 360 698 0