

publishers and take charge of my girls instead. You know she will be wonderful with them. She accepted provisionally. Poor Helen has had enough of this irrevocable contract business; she wants everything in life to be on trial!

For the older boys something particularly nice has happened; we have received a gift of gratitude from J. F. Bretland. He went down to thank the doctor for Allegra; they had a long talk about the needs of the institution, and J. F. B. came back and gave me a check for \$3000 to build the Indian camps on a substantial scale. He and Percy and the village architect have drawn up plans, and in two weeks, we hope, the tribes will move into winter quarters.

What does it matter if my one hundred and seven children have been burned out, since they live in such a kind-hearted world as this?

Friday.

I suppose you are wondering why I don't vouchsafe some details about the doctor's condition. I can't give any first-hand information, since he won't see me. However, he has seen everybody except me — Betsy, Allegra, Mrs. Livermore, Mr. Bretland, Percy, various trustees; they all report that he is progressing as comfortably as could be expected with two broken ribs and a fractured fibula. That, I believe, is the professional name of the particular leg bone he broke. He does n't

like to have a fuss made over him, and he won't pose gracefully as a hero. I myself, as grateful head of this institution, called on several different occasions to present my official thanks, but I was invariably met at the door with word that he was sleeping and did not wish to be disturbed. The first two times I believed Mrs. McGurk; after that — well, I know our doctor! So when it came time to send our little maid to prattle her unconscious good-bys to the man who had saved her life, I despatched her in charge of Betsy.

I have n't an idea what is the matter with the man. He was friendly enough last week, but now, if I want an opinion from him, I have to send Percy to extract it. I do think that he might see me as the superintendent of the asylum, even if he does n't wish our acquaintance to be on a personal basis. There is no doubt about it, our Sandy is Scotch!

LATER.

It is going to require a fortune in stamps to get this letter to Jamaica, but I do want you to know all the news, and we have never had so many exhilarating things happen since 1876, when we were founded. This fire has given us such a shock that we are going to be more alive for years to come. I believe that every institution ought to be burned to the ground every twenty-five years in order to get rid of old-fashioned equipment and obsolete ideas. I am super-

lately glad now that we did n't spend Jarvis's money last summer; it would have been intensively tragic to have had that burn. I don't mind so much about John Grier's, since he made it in a patent medicine which, I hear, contained opium.

As to the remnant of us that the fire left behind, it is already boarded up and covered with tar-paper, and we are living along quite comfortably in our portion of a house. It affords sufficient room for the staff and the children's dining-room and kitchen, and more permanent plans can be made later.

Do you perceive what has happened to us? The good Lord has heard my prayer, and the John Grier Home is a cottage institution!

I am,

The busiest person north of the equator,

S. McBRIDE.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

January 16.

*Dear Gordon:*

Please, please behave yourself, and don't make things harder than they are. It's absolutely out of the question for me to give up the asylum this instant. You ought to realize that I can't abandon my chicks just when they are so terribly in need of me. Neither am I ready to drop this blasted philanthropy. (You can see how your language looks in my handwriting!)

You have no cause to worry. I am not overworking. I am enjoying it; never was so busy and happy in my life. The papers made the fire out much more lurid than it really was. That picture of me leaping from the roof with a baby under each arm was overdrawn. One or two of the children have sore throats, and our poor doctor is in a plaster cast; but we're all alive, thank Heaven! and are going to pull through without permanent scars.

I can't write details now; I'm simply rushed to death. And don't come—please! Later, when things have settled just a little, you and I must have a talk about you and me, but I want time to think about it first.

S.

but he does n't know it. He's in the stage now where he's sort of enjoying his troubles; he feels himself a tragic hero, a man who has suffered deeply. But I notice that when Betsy is about, he offers cheerful assistance in whatever work is toward.

Gordon telegraphed to-day that he is coming to-morrow. I am dreading the interview, for I know we are going to have an altercation. He wrote the day after the fire and begged me to "chuck the asylum" and get married immediately, and now he's coming to argue it out. I can't make him understand that a job involving the happiness of one hundred or so children can't be chucked with such charming insouciance. I tried my best to keep him away, but, like the rest of his sex, he's stubborn. Oh dear, I don't know what's ahead of us! I wish I could glance into next year for a moment.

The doctor is still in his plaster cast, but I hear is doing well, after a grumbly fashion. He is able to sit up a little every day and to receive a carefully selected list of visitors. Mrs. McGurk sorts them out at the door, and repudiates the ones she does n't like.

Good-by. I'd write some more, but I'm so sleepy that my eyes are shutting on me. (The idiom is Sadie Kate's.) I must go to bed and get some sleep against the one hundred and seven troubles of to-morrow.

With love to the Pendletons,

S. McB.

January 21.

*Dear Judy:*

Helen Brooks is taking hold of those fourteen fractious girls in a most masterly fashion. The job is quite the toughest I had to offer, and she likes it. I think she is going to be a valuable addition to our staff.

And I forgot to tell you about Punch. When the fire occurred, those two nice women who kept him all summer were on the point of catching a train for California — and they simply tucked him under their arms, along with their luggage, and carried him off. So Punch spends the winter in Pasadena, and I rather fancy he is theirs for good. Do you wonder that I am in an exalted mood over all these happenings?

LATER.

Poor bereaved Percy has just been spending the evening with me, because I am supposed to understand his troubles. Why must I be supposed to understand everybody's troubles? It's awfully wearing to be pouring out sympathy from an empty heart. The poor boy at present is pretty low, but I rather suspect—with Betsy's aid—that he will pull through. He is just on the edge of falling in love with Betsy,

January 22.

*Dear Judy:*

This letter has nothing to do with the John Grier Home. It's merely from Sallie McBride.

Do you remember when we read Huxley's letters our senior year? That book contained a phrase which has stuck in my memory ever since: "There is always a Cape Horn in one's life that one either weathers or wrecks oneself on." It's terribly true; and the trouble is that you can't always recognize your Cape Horn when you see it. The sailing is sometimes pretty foggy, and you're wrecked before you know it.

I've been realizing of late that I have reached the Cape Horn of my own life. I entered upon my engagement to Gordon honestly and hopefully, but little by little I've grown doubtful of the outcome. The girl he loves is not the *me* I want to be. It's the *me* I've been trying to grow away from all this last year. I'm not sure she ever really existed. Gordon just imagined she did. Anyway, she does n't exist any more, and the only fair course both to him and to myself was to end it.

We no longer have any interests in common; we are not friends. He does n't comprehend it; he thinks that I am making it up, that all I have to do is to

take an interest in his life, and everything will turn out happily. Of course I do take an interest when he's with me. I talk about the things he wants to talk about, and he does n't know that there's a whole part of me—the biggest part of me—that simply does n't meet him at any point. I pretend when I am with him. I am not myself, and if we were to live together in constant daily intercourse, I'd have to keep on pretending all my life. He wants me to watch his face and smile when he smiles and frown when he frowns. He can't realize that I'm an individual just as much as he is.

I have social accomplishments. I dress well, I'm spectacular, I would be an ideal hostess in a politician's household—and that's why he likes me.

Anyway, I suddenly saw with awful distinctness that if I kept on I'd be in a few years where Helen Brooks is. She's a far better model of married life for me to contemplate just this moment than you, dear Judy. I think that such a spectacle as you and Jervis are a menace to society. You look so happy and peaceful and companionable that you induce a defenseless on-looker to rush off and snap up the first man she meets—and he's always the wrong man.

Anyway, Gordon and I have quarreled definitely and finally. I should rather have ended without a quarrel, but considering his temperament,—and mine, too, I must confess,—we had to go off in a big smoky explosion. He came yesterday afternoon, after I'd

written him not to come, and we went walking over Knowltop. For three and a half hours we paced back and forth over that windy moor and discussed ourselves to the bottommost recesses of our beings. No one can ever say the break came through misunderstanding each other!

It ended by Gordon's going, never to return. As I stood there at the end and watched him drop out of sight over the brow of the hill, and realized that I was free and alone and my own master, well, Judy, such a sense of joyous relief, of freedom, swept over me! I can't tell you; I don't believe any happily married person could ever realize how wonderfully, beautifully *alone* I felt. I wanted to throw my arms out and embrace the whole waiting world that belonged suddenly to me. Oh, it is such a relief to have it settled! I faced the truth the night of the fire when I saw the old John Grier go, and realized that a new John Grier would be built in its place and that I would n't be here to do it. A horrible jealousy clutched at my heart. I could n't give it up, and during those agonizing moments while I thought we had lost our doctor, I realized what his life meant, and how much more significant than Gordon's. And I knew then that I could n't desert him; I had to go on and carry out all of the plans we made together.

I don't seem to be telling you anything but a mess of words, I am so full of such a mess of crowding emotions; I want to talk and talk and talk myself into co-

herence. But, anyway, I stood alone in the winter twilight, and I took a deep breath of clear cold air, and I felt beautifully, wonderfully, electrically free; and then I ran and leaped and skipped down the hill and across the pastures toward our iron confines, and I sang to myself. Oh, it was a scandalous proceeding, when, according to all precedent, I should have gone trailing home with a broken wing. I never gave one thought to poor Gordon, who was carrying a broken, bruised, betrayed heart to the railroad station.

As I entered the house I was greeted by the joyous clatter of the children trooping to their supper. They were suddenly *mine*, and lately, as my doom became more and more imminent, they had seemed fading away into little strangers. I seized the three nearest and hugged them hard. I have suddenly found such new life and exuberance, I feel as though I had been released from prison and were free. I feel,—oh, I'll stop,—I just want you to know the truth. Don't show Jervis this letter, but tell him what's in it in a decently subdued and mournful fashion.

It's midnight now, and I'm going to try to go to sleep. It's wonderful not to be going to marry some one you don't want to marry. I'm glad of all these children's needs, I'm glad of Helen Brooks, and, yes, of the fire, and everything that has made me see clearly. There's never been a divorce in my family, and they would have hated it.

I know I'm horribly egotistical and selfish; I ought

to be thinking of poor Gordon's broken heart. But really it would just be a pose if I pretended to be very sorrowful. He'll find some one else with just as conspicuous hair as mine, who will make just as effective a hostess, and who won't be bothered by any of these damned modern ideas about public service and woman's mission and all the rest of the tomfoolery the modern generation of women is addicted to. (I paraphrase, and soften our young man's heartbroken utterances.)

Good-by, dear people. How I wish I could stand with you on your beach and look across the blue, blue sea! I salute the Spanish main.

*Addio!*

SALLIE.

January 27.

*Dear Dr. MacRae:*

I wonder if this note will be so fortunate as to find you awake? Perhaps you are not aware that I have called four times to offer thanks and consolation in my best bed-side manner? I am touched by the news that Mrs. McGurk's time is entirely occupied in taking in flowers and jelly and chicken broth, donated by the adoring ladies of the parish to the ungracious hero in a plaster cast. I know that you find a cap of homespun more comfortable than a halo, but I really do think that you might have regarded me in a different light from the hysterical ladies in question. You and I used to be friends (intermittently), and though there are one or two details in our past intercourse that might better be expunged, still I don't see why we should let them upset our entire relationship. Can't we be sensible and expunge them?

The fire has brought out such a lot of unexpected kindness and charity, I wish it might bring out a little from you. You see, Sandy, I know you well. You may pose to the world as being gruff and curt and ungracious and scientific and inhuman and SCOTCH, but you can't fool me. My newly trained psychological eye has been upon you for ten months, and I have applied the Binet test. You are really kind and sym-

## DEAR ENEMY

pathetic and wise and forgiving and big, so please be at home the next time I come to see you, and we will perform a surgical operation upon Time and amputate five months.

Do you remember the Sunday afternoon we ran away, and what a nice time we had? It is now the day after that.

SALLIE MCBRIDE.

P.S. If I condescend to call upon you again, please condescend to see me, for I assure you I won't try more than once! Also, I assure you that I won't drip tears on your counterpane or try to kiss your hand, as I hear one admiring lady did.

The Dochther  
is ashleep and  
I can't be lettin'  
ye oop.



THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Thursday.

*Dear Enemy:*

You see, I'm feeling very friendly toward you this moment. When I call you "MacRae" I don't like you, and when I call you "Enemy" I do.

Sadie Kate delivered your note (as an after-thought). And it's a very creditable production for a left-handed man; I thought at first glance it was from Punch.

You may expect me to-morrow at four, and mind you're awake! I'm glad that you think we're friends. Really, I feel that I've got back something quite precious which I had carelessly mislaid.

S. McB.

P.S. Java caught cold the night of the fire and he has the toothache. He sits and holds his cheek like a poor little kiddie.

Thursday, January 29.

*Dear Judy:*

Those must have been ten terribly incoherent pages I dashed off to you last week. Did you respect my command to destroy that letter? I should not care to have it appear in my collected correspondence. I know that my state of mind is disgraceful, shocking, scandalous, but one really can't help the way one feels. It is usually considered a pleasant sensation to be engaged, but, oh, it is nothing compared with the wonderful untrammled, joyous, free sensation of being unengaged! I have had a terribly unstable feeling these last few months, and now at last I am settled. No one ever looked forward to spinsterhood more thankfully than I.

Our fire, I have come to believe, was providential. It was sent from heaven to clear the way for a new John Grier. We are already deep in plans for cottages. I favor gray stucco, Betsy leans to brick, and Percy, half-timber. I don't know what our poor doctor would prefer; olive green with a mansard roof appears to be his taste.

With ten different kitchens to practise in, won't our children learn how to cook! I am already looking about for ten loving house mothers to put in charge.

DEAR ENEMY

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I think, in fact, I'll search for eleven, in order to have one for Sandy. He's as pathetically in need of a little mothering as any of the chicks. It must be pretty dispiriting to come home every night to the ministrations of Mrs. McGur-rk.

How I do not like that woman! She has with complacent firmness told me four different times that the dochther was ashleep and not wantin' to be disturbed. I have n't set eyes on him yet, and I have just about finished being polite. However, I waive judgment until to-morrow at four, when I am to pay a short, unexciting call of half an hour. He made the appointment himself, and if she tells me again that he is ashleep, I shall give her a gentle push and tip her over (she's very fat and unstable) and, planting a foot firmly on her stomach, pursue my way tranquilly in and up. Luellen, formerly chauffeur, chambermaid, and gardener, is now also trained nurse. I am eager to see how he looks in a white cap and apron.

The mail has just come, with a letter from Mrs. Bretland, telling how happy they are to have the children. She inclosed their first photograph — all packed in a governess cart, with Clifford proudly holding the reins, and a groom at the pony's head. How is that for three late inmates of the John Grier Home? It's all very inspiring when I think of their futures, but a trifle sad when I remember their poor father, and how he worked himself to death for those three chicks who are going to forget him. The Bretlands will do



their best to accomplish that. They are jealous of any outside influence and want to make the babies wholly theirs. After all, I think the natural way is best — for each family to produce its own children, and keep them.

Friday.

I saw the doctor to-day. He's a pathetic sight, consisting mostly of bandages. Somehow or other we got our misunderstandings all made up. Isn't it dreadful the way two human beings, both endowed with fair powers of speech, can manage to convey nothing of their psychological processes to each other? I have n't understood his mental attitude from the first, and he even yet does n't understand mine. This grim reticence that we Northern people struggle so hard to maintain! I don't know after all but that the excitable Southern safety-valve method is the best.

But, Judy, such a dreadful thing — do you remember last year when he visited that psychopathic institution, and stayed ten days, and I made such a silly fuss about it? Oh, my dear, the impossible things I do! He went to attend his wife's funeral. She died there in the institution. Mrs. McGurk knew it all the time, and might have added it to the rest of her news, but she did n't.

He told me all about her, very sweetly. The poor man for years and years has undergone a terrible strain, and I fancy her death is a blessed relief. He

confesses that he knew at the time of his marriage that he ought not to marry her, he knew all about her nervous instability; but he thought, being a doctor, that he could overcome it, and she was beautiful! He gave up his city practice and came to the country on her account. And then after the little girl's birth she went all to pieces, and he had to "put her away," to use Mrs. McGurk's phrase. The child is six now, a sweet, lovely little thing to look at, but, I judge from what he said, quite abnormal. He has a trained nurse with her always. Just think of all that tragedy looming over our poor patient good doctor, for he is patient, despite being the most impatient man that ever lived!

Thank Jervis for his letter. He's a dear man, and I'm glad to see him getting his deserts. What fun we are going to have when you get back to Shadywell, and we lay our plans for a new John Grier! I feel as though I had spent this past year learning, and am now just ready to begin. We'll turn this into the nicest orphan-asylum that ever lived. I'm so absurdly happy at the prospect that I start in the morning with a spring, and go about my various businesses singing inside.

The John Grier Home sends its blessing to the two best friends it ever had!

*Addio!*

SALLIE.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

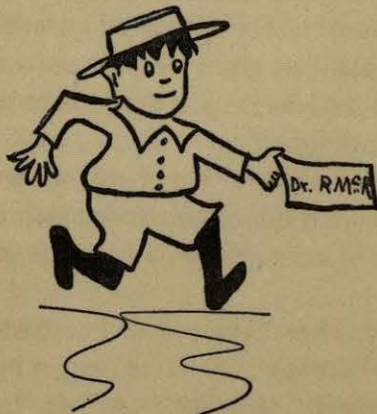
Saturday at half-past six in the morning!

*My dearest Enemy:*

"Some day soon something nice is going to happen."

Were n't you surprised when you woke up this morning and remembered the truth? I was! I could n't think for about two minutes what made me so happy.

It's not light yet, but I'm wide awake and excited and having to write to you. I shall despatch this note by the first to-be-trusted little orphan who appears, and it will go up on your breakfast tray along with your oatmeal.



I shall follow *very promptly* at four o'clock this afternoon. Do you think Mrs. McGurk will ever countenance the scandal if I stay two hours, and no orphan for a chaperon?

It was in all good faith, Sandy, that I promised not to kiss your hand or drip tears on the counterpane, but I'm afraid I did both—or worse! Positively, I did n't suspect how much I cared for you till I crossed the threshold and saw you propped up against the pillows, all covered with bandages, and your hair singed off. You are a sight! If I love you now, when fully one third of you is plaster of Paris and surgical dressing, you can imagine how I'm going to love you when it's all you!

But my dear, dear Robin, what a foolish man you are! How should I ever have dreamed all those months that you were caring for me when you acted so abominably SCOTCH? With most men, behavior like yours would not be considered a mark of affection. I wish you had just given me a glimmering of an idea of the truth, and maybe you would have saved us both a few heartaches.

But we must n't be looking back; we must look forward and be grateful. The two happiest things in life are going to be ours, a *friendly* marriage and work that we love.

Yesterday, after leaving you, I walked back to the asylum sort of dazed. I wanted to get by myself and *think*, but instead of being by myself, I had to have

Betsy and Percy and Mrs. Livermore for dinner (already invited) and then go down and talk to the children. Friday night—social evening. They had a lot of new records for the victrola, given by Mrs. Livermore, and I had to sit politely and listen to them. And, my dear—you'll think this funny—the last thing they played was "John Anderson, my joe John," and suddenly I found myself crying! I had to snatch up the nearest orphan and hug her hard, with my head buried in her shoulder, to keep them all from seeing.

John Anderson, my joe John,  
 We clamb the hill thegither,  
 And monie a canty day, John,  
 We've had wi' ane anither;  
 Now we maun totter down, John,  
 But hand in hand we'll go,  
 And sleep thegither at the foot,  
 John Anderson, my joe.

I wonder, when we are old and bent and tottery, can you and I look back, with no regrets, on monie a canty day we've had wi' ane anither? It's nice to look forward to, is n't it—a life of work and play and little daily adventures side by side with somebody you love? I'm not afraid of the future any more. I don't mind growing old with you, Sandy. "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in."

The reason I've grown to love these orphans is because they need me so, and that's the reason—at least one of the reasons—I've grown to love you.

You're a pathetic figure of a man, my dear, and since you won't make yourself comfortable, you must be *made* comfortable.

We'll build a house on the hillside just beyond the asylum—how does a yellow Italian villa strike you, or preferably a pink one? Anyway, it won't be green. And it won't have a mansard roof. And we'll have a big cheerful living-room, all fireplace and windows and view, and no McGURK. Poor old thing! won't she be in a temper and cook you a dreadful dinner when she hears the news! But we won't tell her for a long, long time—or anybody else. It's too scandalous a proceeding right on top of my own broken engagement. I wrote to Judy last night, and with unprecedented self-control I never let fall so much as a hint. I'm growing Scotch myself!

Perhaps I didn't tell you the exact truth, Sandy, when I said I had n't known how much I cared. I think it came to me the night the John Grier burned. When you were up under that blazing roof, and for the half hour that followed, when we didn't know whether or not you would live, I can't tell you what agonies I went through. It seemed to me, if you did go, that I would never get over it all my life; that somehow to have let the best friend I ever had pass away with a dreadful chasm of misunderstanding between us—well—I could n't wait for the moment when I should be allowed to see you and talk out all that I have been shutting inside me for five months.

And then — you know that you gave strict orders to keep me out; and it hurt me dreadfully. How should I suspect that you really wanted to see me more than any of the others, and that it was just that terrible Scotch moral sense that was holding you back? You are a very good actor, Sandy. But, my dear, if ever in our lives again we have the tiniest little cloud of a misunderstanding, let's promise not to shut it up inside ourselves, but to *talk*.

Last night, after they all got off,—early, I am pleased to say, since the chicks no longer live at home,—I came up-stairs and finished my letter to Judy, and then I looked at the telephone and struggled with temptation. I wanted to call up 505 and say good night to you. But I did n't dare. I'm still quite respectably bashful! So, as the next best thing to talking with you, I got out Burns and read him for an hour. I dropped asleep with all those Scotch love-songs running in my head, and here I am at daybreak writing them to you.

Good-by, Robin lad, I lo'e you weel.

SALLIE.

THE END



CAPILLA ALFONSINA

U. A. N. L.

Esta publicación deberá ser devuelta antes de la última fecha abajo indicada.


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