CLASSICS TO GO

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY SHORT STORIES

1909 TO 1922

L. M. MONTGOMERY

Lucy Maud Montgomery

Short Stories 1909 to 1922

L. M. Montgomery

Short Stories 1909 to 1922

A Golden Wedding	1909
A Redeeming Sacrifice	1909
A Soul that Was Not At Home	1915
Abel And His Great Adventure	1917
Akin to Love	1909
Aunt Philippa and the Men	1915
Bessie's Doll	1914
Charlotte's Ladies	1911
Christmas at Red Butte	1909
How We Went to the Wedding	1913
Jessamine	1909
Miss Sally's Letter	1910
My Lady Jane	1915
Robert Turner's Revenge	1909
The Fillmore Elderberries	1909
The Finished Story	1912
The Garden of Spices	1918
The Girl and the Photograph	1915
The Gossip of Valley View	1910
The Letters	1910

The Life-Book of Uncle Jesse	1909
The Little Black Doll	1909
The Man on the Train	1914
The Romance of Jedediah	1912
The Tryst of the White Lady	1922
Uncle Richard's New Year Dinner	1910
White Magic	1921

A Golden Wedding[ToC]

The land dropped abruptly down from the gate, and a thick, shrubby growth of young apple orchard almost hid the little weather-grey house from the road. This was why the young man who opened the sagging gate could not see that it was boarded up, and did not cease his cheerful whistling until he had pressed through the crowding trees and found himself almost on the sunken stone doorstep over which in olden days honeysuckle had been wont to arch. Now only a few straggling, uncared-for vines clung forlornly to the shingles, and the windows were, as has been said, all boarded up.

The whistle died on the young man's lips and an expression of blank astonishment and dismay settled down on his face—a good, kindly, honest face it was, although perhaps it did not betoken any pronounced mental gifts on the part of its owner.

"What can have happened?" he said to himself. "Uncle Tom and Aunt Sally can't be dead—I'd have seen their deaths in the paper if they was. And I'd a-thought if they'd moved away it'd been printed too. They can't have been gone long—that flower-bed must have been made up last spring. Well, this is a kind of setback for a fellow. Here I've been tramping all the way from the station, a-thinking how good it would be to see Aunt Sally's sweet old face again, and hear Uncle Tom's laugh, and all I find is a boarded-up house going to seed. S'pose I might as well toddle over to Stetsons' and inquire if they haven't disappeared, too."

He went through the old firs back of the lot and across the field to a rather shabby house beyond. A cheery-faced woman answered his knock and looked at him in a puzzled

fashion. "Have you forgot me, Mrs. Stetson? Don't you remember Lovell Stevens and how you used to give him plum tarts when he'd bring your turkeys home?"

Mrs. Stetson caught both his hands in a hearty clasp.

"I guess I haven't forgotten!" she declared. "Well, well, and you're Lovell! I think I ought to know your face, though you've changed a lot. Fifteen years have made a big difference in you. Come right in. Pa, this is Lovell—you mind Lovell, the boy Aunt Sally and Uncle Tom had for years?"

"Reckon I do," drawled Jonah Stetson with a friendly grin. "Ain't likely to forget some of the capers you used to be cutting up. You've filled out considerable. Where have you been for the last ten years? Aunt Sally fretted a lot over you, thinking you was dead or gone to the bad."

Lovell's face clouded.

"I know I ought to have written," he said repentantly, "but you know I'm a terrible poor scholar, and I'd do most anything than try to write a letter. But where's Uncle Tom and Aunt Sally gone? Surely they ain't dead?"

"No," said Jonah Stetson slowly, "no—but I guess they'd rather be. They're in the poorhouse."

"The poorhouse! Aunt Sally in the poorhouse!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Yes, and it's a burning shame," declared Mrs. Stetson. "Aunt Sally's just breaking her heart from the disgrace of it. But it didn't seem as if it could be helped. Uncle Tom got so crippled with rheumatism he couldn't work and Aunt Sally was too frail to do anything. They hadn't any relations and there was a mortgage on the house."

"There wasn't any when I went away."

"No; they had to borrow money six years ago when Uncle Tom had his first spell of rheumatic fever. This spring it was clear that there was nothing for them but the poorhouse. They went three months ago and terrible hard they took it, especially Aunt Sally, I felt awful about it myself. Jonah and I would have took them if we could, but we just couldn't—we've nothing but Jonah's wages and we have eight children and not a bit of spare room. I go over to see Aunt Sally as often as I can and take her some little thing, but I dunno's she wouldn't rather not see anybody than see them in the poorhouse."

Lovell weighed his hat in his hands and frowned over it reflectively.

"Who owns the house now?"

"Peter Townley. He held the mortgage. And all the old furniture was sold too, and that most killed Aunt Sally. But do you know what she's fretting over most of all? She and Uncle Tom will have been married fifty years in a fortnight's time and Aunt Sally thinks it's awful to have to spend their golden wedding anniversary in the poorhouse. She talks about it all the time. You're not going, Lovell"—for Lovell had risen—"you must stop with us, since your old home is closed up. We'll scare you up a shakedown to sleep on and you're welcome as welcome. I haven't forgot the time you caught Mary Ellen just as she was tumbling into the well."

"Thank you, I'll stay to tea," said Lovell, sitting down again, "but I guess I'll make my headquarters up at the station hotel as long as I stay round here. It's kind of more central."

"Got on pretty well out west, hey?" queried Jonah.

"Pretty well for a fellow who had nothing but his two hands to depend on when he went out," said Lovell cautiously. "I've only been a labouring man, of course, but

I've saved up enough to start a little store when I go back. That's why I came east for a trip now—before I'd be tied down to business. I was hankering to see Aunt Sally and Uncle Tom once more. I'll never forget how kind and good they was to me. There I was, when Dad died, a little sinner of eleven, just heading for destruction. They give me a home and all the schooling I ever had and all the love I ever got. It was Aunt Sally's teachings made as much a man of me as I am. I never forgot 'em and I've tried to live up to 'em."

After tea Lovell said he thought he'd stroll up the road and pay Peter Townley a call. Jonah Stetson and his wife looked at each other when he had gone.

"Got something in his eye," nodded Jonah. "Him and Peter weren't never much of friends."

"Maybe Aunt Sally's bread is coming back to her after all," said his wife. "People used to be hard on Lovell. But I always liked him and I'm real glad he's turned out so well."

Lovell came back to the Stetsons' the next evening. In the interval he had seen Aunt Sally and Uncle Tom. The meeting had been both glad and sad. Lovell had also seen other people.

"I've bought Uncle Tom's old house from Peter Townley," he said quietly, "and I want you folks to help me out with my plans. Uncle Tom and Aunt Sally ain't going to spend their golden wedding in the poorhouse—no, sir. They'll spend it in their own home with their old friends about them. But they're not to know anything about it till the very night. Do you s'pose any of the old furniture could be got back?"

"I believe every stick of it could," said Mrs. Stetson excitedly. "Most of it was bought by folks living handy and I don't believe one of them would refuse to sell it back. Uncle Tom's old chair is here to begin with—Aunt Sally give me

that herself. She said she couldn't bear to have it sold. Mrs. Isaac Appleby at the station bought the set of pink-sprigged china and James Parker bought the grandfather's clock and the whatnot is at the Stanton Grays'."

For the next fortnight Lovell and Mrs. Stetson did so much travelling round together that Jonah said genially he might as well be a bachelor as far as meals and buttons went. They visited every house where a bit of Aunt Sally's belongings could be found. Very successful they were too, and at the end of their jaunting the interior of the little house behind the apple trees looked very much as it had looked when Aunt Sally and Uncle Tom lived there.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Stetson had been revolving a design in her mind, and one afternoon she did some canvassing on her own account. The next time she saw Lovell she said:

"We ain't going to let you do it all. The women folks around here are going to furnish the refreshments for the golden wedding and the girls are going to decorate the house with golden rod."

The evening of the wedding anniversary came. Everybody in Blair was in the plot, including the matron of the poorhouse. That night Aunt Sally watched the sunset over the hills through bitter tears.

"I never thought I'd be celebrating my golden wedding in the poorhouse," she sobbed. Uncle Tom put his twisted hand on her shaking old shoulder, but before he could utter any words of comfort Lovell Stevens stood before them.

"Just get your bonnet on, Aunt Sally," he cried jovially, "and both of you come along with me. I've got a buggy here for you ... and you might as well say goodbye to this place, for you're not coming back to it any more."

"Lovell, oh, what do you mean?" said Aunt Sally tremulously.

"I'll explain what I mean as we drive along. Hurry up—the folks are waiting."

When they reached the little old house, it was all aglow with light. Aunt Sally gave a cry as she entered it. All her old household goods were back in their places. There were some new ones too, for Lovell had supplied all that was lacking. The house was full of their old friends and neighbours. Mrs. Stetson welcomed them home again.

"Oh, Tom," whispered Aunt Sally, tears of happiness streaming down her old face, "oh, Tom, isn't God good?"

They had a right royal celebration, and a supper such as the Blair housewives could produce. There were speeches and songs and tales. Lovell kept himself in the background and helped Mrs. Stetson cut cake in the pantry all the evening. But when the guests had gone, he went to Aunt Sally and Uncle Tom, who were sitting by the fire.

"Here's a little golden wedding present for you," he said awkwardly, putting a purse into Aunt Sally's hand. "I reckon there's enough there to keep you from ever having to go to the poorhouse again and if not, there'll be more where that comes from when it's done."

There were twenty-five bright twenty-dollar gold pieces in the purse.

"We can't take it, Lovell," protested Aunt Sally. "You can't afford it."

"Don't you worry about that," laughed Lovell. "Out west men don't think much of a little wad like that. I owe you far more than can be paid in cash, Aunt Sally. You must take it—I want to know there's a little home here for me and two kind hearts in it, no matter where I roam."

"God bless you, Lovell," said Uncle Tom huskily. "You don't know what you've done for Sally and me."

That night, when Lovell went to the little bedroom off the parlour—for Aunt Sally, rejoicing in the fact that she was again mistress of a spare room, would not hear of his going to the station hotel—he gazed at his reflection in the gilt-framed mirror soberly.

"You've just got enough left to pay your passage back west, old fellow," he said, "and then it's begin all over again just where you begun before. But Aunt Sally's face was worth it all—yes, sir. And you've got your two hands still and an old couple's prayers and blessings. Not such a bad capital, Lovell, not such a bad capital."

A Redeeming Sacrifice[ToC]

The dance at Byron Lyall's was in full swing. Toff Leclerc, the best fiddler in three counties, was enthroned on the kitchen table and from the glossy brown violin, which his grandfather brought from Grand Pré, was conjuring music which made even stiff old Aunt Phemy want to show her steps. Around the kitchen sat a row of young men and women, and the open sitting-room doorway was crowded with the faces of non-dancing guests who wanted to watch the sets.

An eight-hand reel had just been danced and the girls, giddy from the much swinging of the final figure, had been led back to their seats. Mattie Lyall came out with a dipper of water and sprinkled the floor, from which a fine dust was rising. Toff's violin purred under his hands as he waited for the next set to form. The dancers were slow about it. There was not the rush for the floor that there had been earlier in the evening, for the supper table was now spread in the dining-room and most of the guests were hungry.

"Fill up dere, boys," shouted the fiddler impatiently. "Bring out your gals for de nex' set."

After a moment Paul King led out Joan Shelley from the shadowy corner where they had been sitting. They had already danced several sets together; Joan had not danced with anybody else that evening. As they stood together under the light from the lamp on the shelf above them, many curious and disapproving eyes watched them. Connor Mitchell, who had been standing in the open outer doorway with the moonlight behind him, turned abruptly on his heel and went out.

Paul King leaned his head against the wall and watched the watchers with a smiling, defiant face as they waited for the set to form. He was a handsome fellow, with the easy, winning ways that women love. His hair curled in bronze masses about his head; his dark eyes were long and drowsy and laughing; there was a swarthy bloom on his round cheeks; and his lips were as red and beguiling as a girl's. A bad egg was Paul King, with a bad past and a bad future. He was shiftless and drunken; ugly tales were told of him. Not a man in Lyall's house that night but grudged him the privilege of standing up with Joan Shelley.

Joan was a slight, blossom-like girl in white, looking much like the pale, sweet-scented house rose she wore in her dark hair. Her face was colourless and young, very pure and softly curved. She had wonderfully sweet, dark blue eyes, generally dropped down, with notably long black lashes. There were many showier girls in the groups around her, but none half so lovely. She made all the rosy-cheeked beauties seem coarse and over-blown.

She left in Paul's clasp the hand by which he had led her out on the floor. Now and then he shifted his gaze from the faces before him to hers. When he did, she always looked up and they exchanged glances as if they had been utterly alone. Three other couples gradually took the floor and the reel began. Joan drifted through the figures with the grace of a wind-blown leaf. Paul danced with rollicking abandon, seldom taking his eyes from Joan's face. When the last mad whirl was over, Joan's brother came up and told her in an angry tone to go into the next room and dance no more, since she would dance with only one man. Joan looked at Paul. That look meant that she would do as he, and none other, told her. Paul nodded easily—he did not want any fuss just then—and the girl went obediently into the room. As she turned from him, Paul coolly reached out his hand and

took the rose from her hair; then, with a triumphant glance around the room, he went out.

The autumn night was very clear and chill, with a faint, moaning wind blowing up from the northwest over the sea that lay shimmering before the door. Out beyond the cove the boats were nodding and curtsying on the swell, and over the shore fields the great red star of the lighthouse flared out against the silvery sky. Paul, with a whistle, sauntered down the sandy lane, thinking of Joan. How mightily he loved her—he, Paul King, who had made a mock of so many women and had never loved before! Ah, and she loved him. She had never said so in words, but eyes and tones had said it—she, Joan Shelley, the pick and pride of the Harbour girls, whom so many men had wooed, winning their trouble for their pains. He had won her; she was his and his only, for the asking. His heart was seething with pride and triumph and passion as he strode down to the shore and flung himself on the cold sand in the black shadow of Michael Brown's beached boat.

Byron Lyall, a grizzled, elderly man, half farmer, half fisherman, and Maxwell Holmes, the Prospect schoolteacher, came up to the boat presently. Paul lay softly and listened to what they were saying. He was not troubled by any sense of dishonour. Honour was something Paul King could not lose since it was something he had never possessed. They were talking of him and Joan.

"What a shame that a girl like Joan Shelley should throw herself away on a man like that," Holmes said.

Byron Lyall removed the pipe he was smoking and spat reflectively at his shadow.

"Darned shame," he agreed. "That girl's life will be ruined if she marries him, plum' ruined, and marry him she will. He's bewitched her—darned if I can understand it. A dozen

better men have wanted her—Connor Mitchell for one. And he's a honest, steady fellow with a good home to offer her. If King had left her alone, she'd have taken Connor. She used to like him well enough. But that's all over. She's infatuated with King, the worthless scamp. She'll marry him and be sorry for it to her last day. He's bad clear through and always will be. Why, look you, Teacher, most men pull up a bit when they're courting a girl, no matter how wild they've been and will be again. Paul hasn't. It hasn't made any difference. He was dead drunk night afore last at the Harbour head, and he hasn't done a stroke of work for a month. And yet Joan Shelley'll take him."

"What are her people thinking of to let her go with him?" asked Holmes.

"She hasn't any but her brother. He's against Paul, of course, but it won't matter. The girl's fancy's caught and she'll go her own gait to ruin. Ruin, I tell ye. If she marries that handsome ne'er-do-well, she'll be a wretched woman all her days and none to pity her."

The two moved away then, and Paul lay motionless, face downward on the sand, his lips pressed against Joan's sweet, crushed rose. He felt no anger over Byron Lyall's unsparing condemnation. He knew it was true, every word of it. He *was* a worthless scamp and always would be. He knew that perfectly well. It was in his blood. None of his race had ever been respectable and he was worse than them all. He had no intention of trying to reform because he could not and because he did not even want to. He was not fit to touch Joan's hand. Yet he had meant to marry her!

But to spoil her life! Would it do that? Yes, it surely would. And if he were out of the way, taking his baleful charm out of her life, Connor Mitchell might and doubtless would win her yet and give her all he could not.

The man suddenly felt his eyes wet with tears. He had never shed a tear in his daredevil life before, but they came hot and stinging now. Something he had never known or thought of before entered into his passion and purified it. He loved Joan. Did he love her well enough to stand aside and let another take the sweetness and grace that was now his own? Did he love her well enough to save her from the poverty-stricken, shamed life she must lead with him? Did he love her better than himself?

"I ain't fit to think of her," he groaned. "I never did a decent thing in my life, as they say. But how can I give her up—God, how can I?"

He lay still a long time after that, until the moonlight crept around the boat and drove away the shadow. Then he got up and went slowly down to the water's edge with Joan's rose, all wet with his unaccustomed tears, in his hands. Slowly and reverently he plucked off the petals and scattered them on the ripples, where they drifted lightly off like fairy shallops on moonshine. When the last one had fluttered from his fingers, he went back to the house and hunted up Captain Alec Matheson, who was smoking his pipe in a corner of the verandah and watching the young folks dancing through the open door. The two men talked together for some time.

When the dance broke up and the guests straggled homeward, Paul sought Joan. Rob Shelley had his own girl to see home and relinquished the guardianship of his sister with a scowl. Paul strode out of the kitchen and down the steps at the side of Joan, smiling with his usual daredeviltry. He whistled noisily all the way up the lane.

"Great little dance," he said. "My last in Prospect for a spell, I guess."

"Why?" asked Joan wonderingly.

"Oh, I'm going to take a run down to South America in Matheson's schooner. Lord knows when I'll come back. This old place has got too deadly dull to suit me. I'm going to look for something livelier."

Joan's lips turned ashen under the fringes of her white fascinator. She trembled violently and put one of her small brown hands up to her throat. "You—you are not coming back?" she said faintly.

"Not likely. I'm pretty well tired of Prospect and I haven't got anything to hold me here. Things'll be livelier down south."

Joan said nothing more. They walked along the spruce-fringed roads where the moonbeams laughed down through the thick, softly swaying boughs. Paul whistled one rollicking tune after another. The girl bit her lips and clenched her hands. He cared nothing for her—he had been making a mock of her as of others. Hurt pride and wounded love fought each other in her soul. Pride conquered. She would not let him, or anyone, see that she cared. She would *not* care!

At her gate Paul held out his hand.

"Well, good-bye, Joan. I'm sailing tomorrow so I won't see you again—not for years likely. You will be some sober old married woman when I come back to Prospect, if I ever do."

"Good-bye," said Joan steadily. She gave him her cold hand and looked calmly into his face without quailing. She had loved him with all her heart, but now a fatal scorn of him was already mingling with her love. He was what they said he was, a scamp without principle or honour.

Paul whistled himself out of the Shelley lane and over the hill. Then he flung himself down under the spruces, crushed his face into the spicy frosted ferns, and had his black hour alone.

But when Captain Alec's schooner sailed out of the harbour the next day, Paul King was on board of her, the wildest and most hilarious of a wild and hilarious crew. Prospect people nodded their satisfaction.

"Good riddance," they said. "Paul King is black to the core. He never did a decent thing in his life."

A Soul That Was Not at Home[ToC]

There was a very fine sunset on the night Paul and Miss Trevor first met, and she had lingered on the headland beyond Noel's Cove to delight in it. The west was splendid in daffodil and rose; away to the north there was a mackerel sky of little fiery golden clouds; and across the water straight from Miss Trevor's feet ran a sparkling path of light to the sun, whose rim had just touched the throbbing edge of the purple sea. Off to the left were softly swelling violet hills and beyond the sandshore, where little waves were crisping and silvering, there was a harbour where scores of slender masts were nodding against the gracious horizon.

Miss Trevor sighed with sheer happiness in all the wonderful, fleeting, elusive loveliness of sky and sea. Then she turned to look back at Noel's Cove, dim and shadowy in the gloom of the tall headlands, and she saw Paul.

It did not occur to her that he could be a shore boy—she knew the shore type too well. She thought his coming mysterious, for she was sure he had not come along the sand, and the tide was too high for him to have come past the other headland. Yet there he was, sitting on a red sandstone boulder, with his bare, bronzed, shapely little legs crossed in front of him and his hands clasped around his knee. He was not looking at Miss Trevor but at the sunset—or, rather, it seemed as if he were looking through the sunset to still grander and more radiant splendours beyond, of which the things seen were only the pale reflections, not worthy of attention from those who had the gift of further sight.

Miss Trevor looked him over carefully with eyes that had seen a good many people in many parts of the world for

more years than she found it altogether pleasant to acknowledge, and she concluded that he was quite the handsomest lad she had ever seen. He had a lithe, supple body, with sloping shoulders and a brown, satin throat. His hair was thick and wavy, of a fine reddish chestnut; his brows were very straight and much darker than his hair; and his eyes were large and grey and meditative. The modelling of chin and jaw was perfect and his mouth was delicious, being full without pouting, the crimson lips just softly touching, and curving into finely finished little corners that narrowly escaped being dimpled.

His attire was a blue cotton shirt and a pair of scanty corduroy knickerbockers, but he wore it with such an unconscious air of purple and fine linen that Miss Trevor was tricked into believing him much better dressed than he really was.

Presently he smiled dreamily, and the smile completed her subjugation. It was not merely an affair of lip and eye, as are most smiles; it seemed an illumination of his whole body, as if some lamp had suddenly burst into flame inside of him, irradiating him from his chestnut crown to the tips of his unspoiled toes. Best of all, it was involuntary, born of no external effort or motive, but simply the outflashing of some wild, delicious thought that was as untrammelled and freakish as the wind of the sea.

Miss Trevor made up her mind that she must find out all about him, and she stepped out from the shadows of the rocks into the vivid, eerie light that was glowing all along the shore. The boy turned his head and looked at her, first with surprise, then with inquiry, then with admiration. Miss Trevor, in a white dress with a lace scarf on her dark, stately head, was well worth admiring. She smiled at him and Paul smiled back. It was not quite up to his first smile, having more of the effect of being put on from the outside, but at

least it conveyed the subtly flattering impression that it had been put on solely for her, and they were as good friends from that moment as if they had known each other for a hundred years. Miss Trevor had enough discrimination to realize this and know that she need not waste time in becoming acquainted.

"I want to know your name and where you live and what you were looking at beyond the sunset," she said.

"My name is Paul Hubert. I live over there. And I can't tell just what I saw in the sunset, but when I go home I'm going to write it all in my foolscap book."

In her surprise over the second clause of his answer, Miss Trevor forgot, at first, to appreciate the last. "Over there," according to his gesture, was up at the head of Noel's Cove, where there was a little grey house perched on the rocks and looking like a large seashell cast up by the tide. The house had a stovepipe coming out of its roof in lieu of a chimney, and two of its window panes were replaced by shingles. Could this boy, who looked as young princes should—and seldom do—live there? Then he was a shore boy after all.

"Who lives there with you?" she asked. "You see"—plaintively—"I must ask questions about you. I know we like each other, and that is all that really matters. But there are some tiresome items which it would be convenient to know. For example, have you a father—a mother? Are there any more of you? How long have you been yourself?"

Paul did not reply immediately. He clasped his hands behind him and looked at her affectionately.

"I like the way you talk," he said. "I never knew anybody did talk like that except folks in books and my rock people."

"Your rock people?"

"I'm eleven years old. I haven't any father or mother, they're dead. I live over there with Stephen Kane. Stephen is splendid. He plays the violin and takes me fishing in his boat. When I get bigger he's going shares with me. I love him, and I love my rock people too."

"What do you mean by your rock people?" asked Miss Trevor, enjoying herself hugely. This was the only child she had ever met who talked as she wanted children to talk and who understood her remarks without having to have them translated.

"Nora is one of them," said Paul, "the best one of them. I love her better than all the others because she came first. She lives around that point and she has black eyes and black hair and she knows all about the mermaids and water kelpies. You ought to hear the stories she can tell. Then there are the Twin Sailors. They don't live anywhere—they sail all the time, but they often come ashore to talk to me. They are a pair of jolly tars and they have seen everything in the world—and more than what's in the world, if you only knew it. Do you know what happened to the Youngest Twin Sailor once? He was sailing and he sailed right into a moonglade. A moonglade is the track the full moon makes on the water when it is rising from the sea, you know. Well, the Youngest Twin Sailor sailed along the moonglade till he came right up to the moon, and there was a little golden door in the moon and he opened it and sailed right through. He had some wonderful adventures inside the moon—I've got them all written down in my foolscap book. Then there is the Golden Lady of the Cave. One day I found a big cave down the shore and I went in and in and in—and after a while I found the Golden Lady. She has golden hair right down to her feet, and her dress is all glittering and glistening like gold that is alive. And she has a golden harp and she plays all day long on it—you might hear the music if you'd listen carefully, but prob'bly you'd think it was only

the wind among the rocks. I've never told Nora about the Golden Lady, because I think it would hurt her feelings. It even hurts her feelings when I talk too long with the Twin Sailors. And I hate to hurt Nora's feelings, because I do love her best of all my rock people."

"Paul! How much of this is true?" gasped Miss Trevor.

"Why, none of it!" said Paul, opening his eyes widely and reproachfully. "I thought you would know that. If I'd s'posed you wouldn't I'd have warned you there wasn't any of it true. I thought you were one of the kind that would know."

"I am. Oh, I am!" said Miss Trevor eagerly. "I really would have known if I had stopped to think. Well, it's getting late now. I must go back, although I don't want to. But I'm coming to see you again. Will you be here tomorrow afternoon?"

Paul nodded.

"Yes. I promised to meet the Youngest Twin Sailor down at the striped rocks tomorrow afternoon, but the day after will do just as well. That is the beauty of the rock people, you know. You can always depend on them to be there just when you want them. The Youngest Twin Sailor won't mind—he's very good-tempered. If it was the Oldest Twin I dare say he'd be cross. I have my suspicions about that Oldest Twin sometimes. I b'lieve he'd be a pirate if he dared. You don't know how fierce he can look at times. There's really something very mysterious about him."

On her way back to the hotel Miss Trevor remembered the foolscap book.

"I must get him to show it to me," she mused, smiling. "Why, the boy is a born genius—and to think he should be a shore boy! I can't understand it. And here I am loving him already. Well, a woman has to love something—and you

don't have to know people for years before you can love them."

Paul was waiting on the Noel's Cove rocks for Miss Trevor the next afternoon. He was not alone; a tall man, with a lined, strong-featured face and a grey beard, was with him. The man was clad in a rough suit and looked what he was, a 'longshore fisherman. But he had deep-set, kindly eyes, and Miss Trevor liked his face. He moved off to one side when she came and stood there for a little, apparently gazing out to sea, while Paul and Miss Trevor talked. Then he walked away up the cove and disappeared in his little grey house.

"Stephen came down to see if you were a suitable person for me to talk to," said Paul gravely.

"I hope he thinks I am," said Miss Trevor, amused.

"Oh, he does! He wouldn't have gone away and left us alone if he didn't. Stephen is very particular who he lets me 'sociate with. Why, even the rock people now—I had to promise I'd never let the Twin Sailors swear before he'd allow me to be friends with them. Sometimes I know by the look of the Oldest Twin that he's just dying to swear, but I never let him, because I promised Stephen. I'd do anything for Stephen. He's awful good to me. Stephen's bringing me up, you know, and he's bound to do it well. We're just perfectly happy here, only I wish I'd more books to read. We go fishing, and when we come home at night I help Stephen clean the fish and then we sit outside the door and he plays the violin for me. We sit there for hours sometimes. We never talk much—Stephen isn't much of a hand for talking—but we just sit and think. There's not many men like Stephen, I can tell you."

Miss Trevor did not get a glimpse of the foolscap book that day, nor for many days after. Paul blushed all over his beautiful face whenever she mentioned it.

"Oh, I couldn't show you that," he said uncomfortably. "Why, I've never even showed it to Stephen—or Nora. Let me tell you something else instead, something that happened to me once long ago. You'll find it more interesting than the foolscap book, only you must remember it isn't true! You won't forget that, will you?"

"I'll try to remember," Miss Trevor agreed.

"Well, I was sitting here one evening just like I was last night, and the sun was setting. And an enchanted boat came sailing over the sea and I got into her. The boat was all pearly like the inside of the mussel shells, and her sail was like moonshine. Well, I sailed right across to the sunset. Think of that—I've been in the sunset! And what do you suppose it is? The sunset is a land all flowers, like a great garden, and the clouds are beds of flowers. We sailed into a great big harbour, a thousand times bigger than the harbour over there at your hotel, and I stepped out of the boat on a 'normous meadow all roses. I stayed there for ever so long. It seemed almost a year, but the Youngest Twin Sailor says I was only away a few hours or so. You see, in Sunset Land the time is ever so much longer than it is here. But I was glad to come back too. I'm always glad to come back to the cove and Stephen. Now, you know this never really happened."

Miss Trevor would not give up the foolscap book so easily, but for a long time Paul refused to show it to her. She came to the cove every day, and every day Paul seemed more delightful to her. He was so quaint, so clever, so spontaneous. Yet there was nothing premature or unnatural about him. He was wholly boy, fond of fun and frolic, not too good for little spurts of quick temper now and again, though, as he was careful to explain to Miss Trevor, he never showed them to a lady.

"I get real mad with the Twin Sailors sometimes, and even with Stephen, for all he's so good to me. But I couldn't be mad with you or Nora or the Golden Lady. It would never do."

Every day he had some new story to tell of a wonderful adventure on rock or sea, always taking the precaution of assuring her beforehand that it wasn't true. The boy's fancy was like a prism, separating every ray that fell upon it into rainbows. He was passionately fond of the shore and water. The only world for him beyond Noel's Cove was the world of his imagination. He had no companions except Stephen and the "rock people."

"And now you," he told Miss Trevor. "I love you too, but I know you'll be going away before long, so I don't let myself love you as much—quite—as Stephen and the rock people."

"But you could, couldn't you?" pleaded Miss Trevor. "If you and I were to go on being together every day, you could love me just as well as you love them, couldn't you?"

Paul considered in a charming way he had.

"Of course I could love you better than the Twin Sailors and the Golden Lady," he announced finally. "And I think perhaps I could love you as much as I love Stephen. But not as much as Nora—oh, no, I wouldn't love you quite as much as Nora. She was first, you see; she's always been there. I feel sure I couldn't ever love anybody as much as Nora."

One day when Stephen was out to the mackerel grounds, Paul took Miss Trevor into the little grey house and showed her his treasures. They climbed the ladder in one corner to the loft where Paul slept. The window of it, small and square-paned, looked seaward, and the moan of the sea and the pipe of the wind sounded there night and day. Paul had many rare shells and seaweeds, curious flotsam and jetsam of shore storms, and he had a small shelf full of books.

"They're splendid," he said enthusiastically. "Stephen brought me them all. Every time Stephen goes to town to ship his mackerel he brings me home a new book."

"Were you ever in town yourself?" asked Miss Trevor.

"Oh, yes, twice. Stephen took me. It was a wonderful place. I tell you, when I next met the Twin Sailors it was me did the talking then. I had to tell them about all I saw and all that had happened. And Nora was ever so interested too. The Golden Lady wasn't, though—she didn't hardly listen. Golden people are like that."

"Would you like," said Miss Trevor, watching him closely, "to live always in a town and have all the books you wanted and play with real girls and boys—and visit those strange lands your twin sailors tell you of?"

Paul looked startled.

"I—don't—know," he said doubtfully. "I don't think I'd like it very well if Stephen and Nora weren't there too."

But the new thought remained in his mind. It came back to him at intervals, seeming less new and startling every time.

"And why not?" Miss Trevor asked herself. "The boy should have a chance. I shall never have a son of my own—he shall be to me in the place of one."

The day came when Paul at last showed her the foolscap book. He brought it to her as she sat on the rocks of the headland.

"I'm going to run around and talk to Nora while you read it," he said. "I'm afraid I've been neglecting her lately—and I think she feels it."

Miss Trevor took the foolscap book. It was made of several sheets of paper sewed together and encased in an oilcloth

cover. It was nearly filled with writing in a round childish hand and it was very neat, although the orthography was rather wild and the punctuation capricious. Miss Trevor read it through in no very long time. It was a curious medley of quaint thoughts and fancies. Conversations with the Twin Sailors filled many of the pages; accounts of Paul's "adventures" occupied others. Sometimes it seemed impossible that a child of eleven should have written them, then would come an expression so boyish and naive that Miss Trevor laughed delightedly over it. When she finished the book and closed it she found Stephen Kane at her elbow. He removed his pipe and nodded at the foolscap book.

"What do you think of it?" he said.

"I think it is wonderful. Paul is a very clever child."

"I've often thought so," said Stephen laconically. He thrust his hands into his pockets and gazed moodily out to sea. Miss Trevor had never before had an opportunity to talk to him in Paul's absence and she determined to make the most of it.

"I want to know something about Paul," she said, "all about him. Is he any relation to you?"

"No. I expected to marry his mother once, though," said Stephen unemotionally. His hand in his pocket was clutching his pipe fiercely, but Miss Trevor could not know that. "She was a shore girl and very pretty. Well, she fell in love with a young fellow that came teaching up t' the harbour school and he with her. They got married and she went away with him. He was a good enough sort of chap. I know that now, though once I wasn't disposed to think much good of him. But 'twas a mistake all the same; Rachel couldn't live away from the shore. She fretted and pined and broke her heart for it away there in his world. Finally her husband died and she came back—but it was too late for her. She only lived a

month—and there was Paul, a baby of two. I took him. There was nobody else. Rachel had no relatives nor her husband either. I've done what I could for him—not that it's been much, perhaps."

"I am sure you have done a great deal for him," said Miss Trevor rather patronizingly. "But I think he should have more than you can give him now. He should be sent to school."

Stephen nodded.

"Maybe. He never went to school. The harbour school was too far away. I taught him to read and write and bought him all the books I could afford. But I can't do any more for him."

"But I can," said Miss Trevor, "and I want to. Will you give Paul to me, Mr. Kane? I love him dearly and he shall have every advantage. I'm rich—I can do a great deal for him."

Stephen continued to gaze out to sea with an expressionless face. Finally he said: "I've been expecting to hear you say something of the sort. I don't know. If you took Paul away, he'd grow to be a cleverer man and a richer man maybe, but would he be any better—or happier? He's his mother's son—he loves the sea and its ways. There's nothing of his father in him except his hankering after books. But I won't choose for him—he can go if he likes—he can go if he likes."

In the end Paul "liked," since Stephen refused to influence him by so much as a word. Paul thought Stephen didn't seem to care much whether he went or stayed, and he was dazzled by Miss Trevor's charm and the lure of books and knowledge she held out to him.

"I'll go, I guess," he said, with a long sigh.

Miss Trevor clasped him close to her and kissed him maternally. Paul kissed her cheek shyly in return. He thought it very wonderful that he was to live with her always. He felt

happy and excited—so happy and excited that the parting when it came slipped over him lightly. Miss Trevor even thought he took it too easily and had a vague wish that he had shown more sorrow. Stephen said farewell to the boy he loved better than life with no visible emotion.

"Good-bye, Paul. Be a good boy and learn all you can." He hesitated a moment and then said slowly, "If you don't like it, come back."

"Did you bid good-bye to your rock people?" Miss Trevor asked him with a smile as they drove away.

"No. I—couldn't—I—I—didn't even tell them I was going away. Nora would break her heart. I'd rather not talk of them anymore, if you please. Maybe I won't want them when I've plenty of books and lots of other boys and girls—real ones—to play with."

They drove the ten miles to the town where they were to take the train the next day. Paul enjoyed the drive and the sights of the busy streets at its end. He was all excitement and animation. After they had had tea at the house of the friend where Miss Trevor meant to spend the night, they went for a walk in the park. Paul was tired and very quiet when they came back. He was put away to sleep in a bedroom whose splendours frightened him, and left alone.

At first Paul lay very still on his luxurious perfumed pillows. It was the first night he had ever spent away from the little seaward-looking loft where he could touch the rafters with his hands. He thought of it now and a lump came into his throat and a strange, new, bitter longing came into his heart. He missed the sea plashing on the rocks below him—he could not sleep without that old lullaby. He turned his face into the pillow, and the longing and loneliness grew worse and hurt him until he moaned. Oh, he wanted to be back home! Surely he had not left it—he could