

and I fell to the floor. I never saw mother again—they carried me up to my room on that morning, and before I was well enough to go down they had taken her away.

My illness was a blessing in one way, for Stewart had been so anxious about me as almost to forget his grief, and now the joy of knowing that I was safe made him happy, for "you see Robbie," he said to me, "your sickness made me realize how lonely and helpless I would be if you were to die too."

The doctor, though a stranger to us before mother's illness, had proved the kindest of friends; he had seen to everything connected with the funeral, for we had made very few friends in our new home, and Stewart had told him, when he asked if he could send for anyone to come to us, that he did not know anyone whom we could ask. But of course he could not be expected to pay our bills, though nothing would induce him to charge us a cent for attendance, and when we came to talk over our affairs with him we found that we were \$50 in debt for funeral expenses.

We sat up until very late that night over the fire talking. The first thing to do, the doctor had told us, was to write to the owners of the vessel and ascertain what was due to father. This he had promised to do himself on the morrow, so that until the answer came we were in perfect ignorance as to what we should have to live on. But one thing we were determined about, and that was, that we would not write to uncle Stewart for assistance, unless, as mother said, we were in want, for we both had a vague idea that he would prove a second Ralph Nicholby, and separate us; as that old, unfeeling uncle had Ralph and his sister. As for Mattie (who had been admitted to our conference), she declared that she would never leave us and that while she had two hands, they should work for us. As for wages, she did not

want any, for to think of two young things like we were being left alone in the world was, as she expressed it, "a fright."

We went to bed feeling anxious, but our minds were too much occupied with thoughts of our future to dwell on our recent affliction.

The next few days were not so dull as might have been expected, for Dr. Wright brought his wife to call on me, and they carried Stewart (who, they thought, was looking very sick) off to stay with them, and Mattie's and my time was fully occupied in making over a black dress of Mother's for me. I did not intend going into mourning, by which I mean crape. I had never liked it, having always felt that should it ever be my misfortune to lose one near and dear to me I should not need to be smothered in crape to remind me of them. And apart from my dislike I could not afford it, and felt that it would not be right to spend money on anything that was unnecessary. So Mattie and I just made over Mother's dress, which was almost new, and with two others not so good which I already had, and a bonnet made out of materials in the house, my mourning outfit was complete.

Dr. Wright took Stewart with him on his rounds, and every day they found time to call and see me more than once, and I was delighted with the change in him, he looked so bright and happy, and so professional that I called him Doctor from that day. On the third evening of Stewart's absence Dr. Wright came in alone to see me, and brought the answer from the ship-owners, which was to the effect that Father had received all that was due to him before starting, the receipt for which could be seen at their office. They sympathized deeply with his widow, and begged her acceptance of the enclosed check for one hundred dollars, as a token of the esteem in which they held her lamented husband. The blow to