

Cousin Emily's Revolt.

(Carroll Watson Rankin, in the 'Youth's Companion.')

Two persons stood upon the narrow plank walk at the outer edge of the long ore dock. One was a small, soberly-dressed woman of perhaps forty years of age. The other was a tall, radiant girl of seventeen. Their eyes were fixed upon a huge ore-carrier, steaming slowly out into the clear blue of Lake Superior. Five handkerchiefs of varying dimensions fluttered gaily from the stern rail, and five happy faces smiled back at the two watchers silhouetted against the ore-stained timbers of the dock.

'What an advertisement they'd make for tooth-powder!' said Katherine, watching the receding boat. 'Did you ever see such a beaming lot? Isn't it lovely for them to have a chance to take a lake-trip? Wasn't it nice of Uncle Joe to think of sending them all? Isn't it fun to see folks off?'

'No,' said her companion, unexpectedly, 'it isn't.'

'Why, Cousin Emily! Anybody'd think you weren't glad to have them go. Think what a change it will be for mother! Ten whole days without a mite of housekeeping to think of!'

'Of course, I'm glad for your mother's sake; she really needed the rest. But you just wait, Katherine, until you've been seeing people off for forty years, without ever going to any place yourself, and see how you like it! I've seen people off on steamboats and ore-carriers, on special trains and private cars, and just plain every-day cars since I was born; but I haven't been a dozen miles from home in all that time.'

'First of all, I saw everybody off to the Centennial. Did I go? Not a bit of it! Young as I was, I had to stay at home with your grandfather's sprained ankle. Then all the family went to Mary Banning's wedding, and left me at home to poultice Uncle Timothy's felon. Did I go to Green Bay to Forepaugh's circus? Did I go to Chicago to the ope-a? Did I get to the World's Fair or the Paris Exposition? Did I—'

'Why, Cousin Emily!'

But Cousin Emily, after a silence of forty years, was airing an unsuspected grievance, and paid no heed to astonished Katherine's interruption.

'Did I go to the family gathering at Madison? No, I didn't. Somebody had to stay in the house to keep the water-pipes from freezing, and I was that somebody. Did I go to the last whist tournament? I wanted to, but somebody had to stay with Cousin Anne's teething baby, and of course I was the one.'

'I didn't even get to Grandfather Perkins's funeral. I saw all the family off in a private car that time; but I was left at home with the Denberry twins. There are those twins on that boat this very minute; and here am I, seeing them off and staying here myself to chaperon you.'

'I'm sorry—' began Katherine.

'Oh, you needn't be. It isn't your fault. It isn't anybody's fault, unless it's mine. I tell you, Katherine, it doesn't pay to be a useful person. But come; let's go home. The boat went around the point two minutes ago.'

The plank walk was none too wide. While there was no actual danger, it was

necessary to proceed cautiously in order to avoid rubbing one's garments against the ore-crimsoned timbers on the one hand, or tumbling unceremoniously into the lake on the other. So Katherine led her more timorous second cousin along the narrow ledge, up the steps and into the safety of the broad, covered walk in absolute silence.

'Well, that's over,' said Cousin Emily, examining her sleeve for possible ore-dust. 'Katherine, I want you to promise never to tell anybody what I said about being sick of seeing people off and never going anywhere myself. I'm ashamed of myself for saying it. The family has been as good as gold to me all these years. I think I must have been tried and nervous after flying around all the morning trying to get everybody's things packed in the right bags. I'm afraid now that I put your mother's thimble in Tom's suit case.'

'All the better,' laughed Katherine.



'ISN'T IT FUN TO SEE FOLKS OFF.'

'She'd hem all the way from here to Cleveland if she had it. If Tom finds it he'll throw it overboard to keep her from sewing. Never mind, Cousin Emily. Rub out that anxious wrinkle and come along! I shan't tell a soul about all those trips you didn't take.'

And Katherine did not; but the girl who had never in her life planned anything for herself, since she had so many others to plan things for her, spent several days in deep thought. This was so unusual that Cousin Emily sent surreptitiously for the family doctor, who felt the girl's pulse while pretending to shake her hand, and then gravely recommended a freckle lotion.

Katherine's father was not wealthy, but on her mother's side the family was a large and influential one. It included one millionaire, one mine-owner and three railway men. To be sure, the millionaire was stingy, the mine-owner eccentric, and the railway men too busy to be bothered; but Katherine was not the girl to be hampered by trifles like these.

'Pooh!' said Katherine, tearing up a six-page letter, the result of an hour's hard labor. 'Uncle John hasn't time to read all that. He doesn't read anything but telegrams. I'll write him a telegram and send it by mail.'

Dear Uncle John,—Please send me one hundred dollars by return mail. Will explain later. It's all right.

Katherine Denham.

'It's all right if Katherine says so,' said the stingy millionaire, making out a check for seventy-five dollars, and then tearing it up and replacing it with one for an even hundred. 'There's the making of a fine business woman in that girl. Any other woman would have written a book.'

Then she wrote another uncle as follows:—

Dear Uncle Joe,—I want a trip pass to Cleveland and back for Cousin Emily, for boat after next. It's all right.

Katherine Denham.

'Then it is all right, since Katherine says so,' said Uncle Joseph. 'It must be quite a while since Emily has had a boat trip. I don't remember sending her a pass. She deserves a dozen.'

Next Katherine wrote to the most promising of the three railway men:

Dear Uncle Peter,—I want passes for Cousin Emily from Cleveland to Buffalo, New York, Washington and Boston, and any place else you can think of, and back to Cleveland again. She's going down by boat. It's all right.

Katherine Denham.

'Bless her soul, of course it's all right!' said the railway magnate, making out passes with his own hand. 'Her Cousin Belle wrote eleven pages when she asked for a pass from Milwaukee to Chicago, and I had to get her letter typewritten before I could read it.'

Katherine displayed such a deep and mysterious interest in the postman the following week that cousin Emily began to fear that the chaperoning of a young woman of seventeen was a position of no light responsibility.

The mystery was explained, however, when Katherine appeared one morning in Cousin Emily's doorway, with a radiant countenance, numerous slips of paper and a work-basket.

'There!' said Katherine, with dancing eyes. 'These are all yours!'

'Mine!' exclaimed Cousin Emily. 'What are they?'

'A little of everything,' replied the plotter. 'A lake trip, railway trips, a jaunt to Washington, a trip to the seashore, a trip to Boston, another to New York—you're to stay a month if you want to.'

'Katherine, you told!'

'I didn't! I never said a word!'

'But you explained—'

'Nothing,' said Katherine. 'This family's too large and too honest for explanations. Here, if you must cry, take my apron. But you haven't time. You're to go the minute the others get back. I've come prepared to sew on buttons by the quart and braid by the mile. You'll have to have some clothes, you know. It's a blessing your spring suit is so new!'

The day of Cousin Emily's departure dawned. The relatives that went to see her off formed a scattered procession that reached from one end to the other of the long ore-dock. Now that their attention was called to the fact, they all realized that quiet, unobtrusive, helpful Emily had