

disregarding
g in a young
s always like
on exactly as
gments said
"I am not fit
equally futile.
-so stubborn!
npt to justify
hausted per-
ied and hurt.
gly, "I can't
ke the effort.
e allowances.
nt to get back

But I know
t. I want to
g and looking
with a little
Jane and me.
? I am quite

e would think
Angus! He's
a trip to the
k intelligently
surd! But I
n't his reason.
now and the
k even you are
-you know to

Esther murmured something indistinguishable and Miss Annabel departed much pleased with her own perspicacity. And she did help. She let it be known at the Ladies' Aid that she quite understood Esther and approved of her. After all, it was senseless to run away from trouble since trouble can run so much faster. And it was natural and right of Esther to feel that nowhere could she find so much sympathy and consideration as in her own town. Travelling was fatiguing anyway.

As for the school, that was easily arranged. A little discreet wire pulling and Esther was once more established as school mistress of District Number Fifteen. People shook their heads, but by the time of the first snowstorm they had ceased to prophesy nervous prostration, and by the time sleighing was fairly established they were ready to admit that the girl had acted sensibly after all.

No one guessed that there was another reason for Esther's refusal to go away. It was a simple reason and had to do with the fact that in Coombe the mails were sure and regular. Travellers miss letters and strange addresses are uncertain at best, but in Coombe there was small chance of any untoward accident befalling a certain weekly letter in the handwriting of Professor Willits. Esther lived upon these letters. Brief and dry though they were, they formed the motive power of her life and indeed it was from one of them that she had received the impetus which roused her from her first trance of grief and horror.

"My dear young lady (Willits had written).

"I believe that there are times when the truth is a good thing. It might be tactful to pretend that I do not know the real reason of Callandar's collapse but it would also be foolish. I think he is