EACH AND ALL

THE SEVEN LITTLE SISTERS PROVE THEIR SISTERHOOD

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BY

JANE ANDREWS

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TO

Margie and Andrews

AND TO THE FOUR YOUNGEST MEMBERS OF MY SCHOOL

Dossie, Edith, Dadie, and Georgie

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE BOOK

CONTENTS

A PUPIL'S RECOLLECTIONS OF MISS ANDREWS' SCHOOL

One of my greatest delights while a pupil at Miss Andrews' school—and I remember my attendance there as one long delight—was the coming of December 1st, her birthday and mine. It was her custom to celebrate the birthdays of her scholars by allowing them to select in part the lessons and exercises for the day, a joyful privilege which was of course shared by all, though the pride of planning with her the session of our double anniversary was mine alone. All the birthdays were occasions to remember, for the final hour was pretty sure to be given up to a story. "Story" was what we always called it, though it might, indeed, be story, play, or poem, or selection from either, or a chapter from an unfinished book of her own. When it was the latter she used always to ask for our criticisms, which we were not at all afraid to give, though I never remember them as being anything other than enthusiastically favorable. But we appreciated the honor of being asked, and occasionally offered suggestions for further adventures of the "Seven Little Sisters," which were of too extravagant and thrilling a nature to be adopted.

Next to birthdays, the days which we most prized

were the very stormy ones, when but few were present, for these, too, brought stories, geographical games, experiments, and other variations from the usual routine. There was an ardent rivalry between the pupils regarding these days, and few of us started for school on a tempestuous morning without reckoning mentally how many of our mates had timid parents who would be likely to keep them at home. Many a time, as I came panting up the stairs on a wild day in winter, have I glanced along the row of hat pegs, triumphant if most of them were empty, disappointed if they held a row of dripping hoods and mufflers. Once, in a storm so furious that I had remained over night at the house of a schoolmate, she and I started the next morning through drifts more than waist deep for school, where we were, naturally, the only pupils. She lived nearer than I, and struggled home again at noon, but Miss Andrews kept me over night, and I had the bliss of sleeping in the schoolroom itself, in a bed made up on two settees.

We were all too fond of school to lose more of it than could be helped. When Miss Andrews was called to Boston on business about her books she would leave us to keep school by ourselves, appointing a special scholar to the charge of each class. We wrote our report of the day on the blackboard for her to see when she got home, and we so felt the responsibility of being placed on honor that the day was more likely to be one of unusual good behavior than of disorder. Once, and once only, I was willfully late to school. Learning on the way that the ice had broken up in the Merrimac and carried away a span of the bridge, I turned aside and ran down to see

the sight. I returned to school after having seen it, half an hour late, and very uncomfortable; not that I feared either punishment or scolding, but some expression of disappointment, which I should mind more than either. But Miss Andrews was greatly interested in what I had seen, said she was glad I went, and assured the school that if she had known of it in time she would have taken the whole of us down to the river herself.

Indeed, she often called our attention to matters of local or national interest, and kept us as wide-awake and with as broad an outlook as possible. During a presidential year she explained to us the chief problems at issue between the two parties, and there were few of us who did not become in consequence very ardent young politicians. The excitement and suspense of the Tilden-Hayes contest and the novel expedient of the Electoral Commission roused the warmest interest in school, and I remember running a half mile bareheaded, and leaving my supper standing on the table, to tell the final news to another girl as interested as I.

These are very trifling incidents, but, indeed, all the school incidents that I recall are so, for the history of a perfect school, like that of a fortunate country, leaves little to relate. One thing which was characteristic is that when one day we begged Miss Andrews to give us a motto, we found it shortly afterwards on the wall, done very daintily in gold and blue—the words which I am sure were the very best that could have been given to us, well-intentioned, careless, inconsiderate, exuberant youngsters that we were—*Self-Control*.

But it is not possible to give much of an idea of a school where the central spring of everything was the personality of the teacher. Going to school to Miss Andrews was much more going to Miss Andrews than going to school; and far more valuable than anything she taught us, well and wisely as we were taught, was the contact with her sweet and strong and noble nature. I think I can say that the public opinion of that school was of a higher standard than that of any school or circle I have since encountered. However faulty, mean, or childish the behavior of any of us, I do not think there was one who did not respect and admire what was good and fine, and often, if not always, aspire to it. A pupil of that school who left it with intelligence unawakened must have been dull indeed; a pupil who left it with no stirring of those finer guides to goodness, sympathy, and the sense of honor, must have been one in whom it was a task of little hope to try to rouse them.

Ethel Parton

THE STORY OF AGOONACK AND HER SAIL UPON THE ICE ISLAND

Do you remember Agoonack, the little Esquimau girl who lived through the long sunshine and the long darkness?

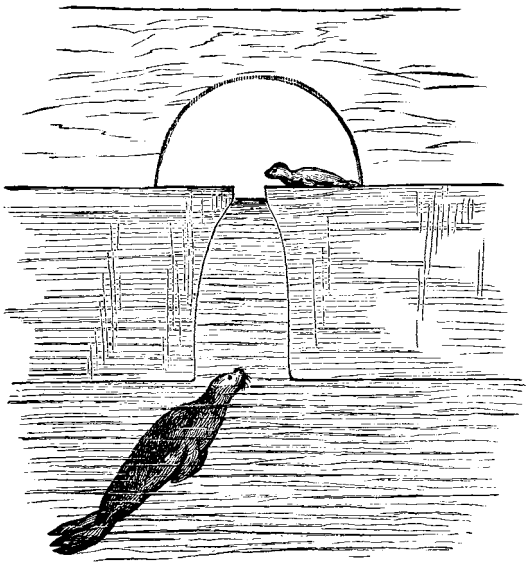
I have had news of her lately. Do you want to know what it is? Then come with me once more to the cold countries and visit our old acquaintances, the seals and the bears, and the chubby little girl and her baby brother.

It is an April day. If we were at home we should perhaps hear a bluebird sing. There would be swelling leaf-buds on the lilac and the horse-chestnut trees, and little green tufts of grass pushing up here and there in sunny spots, and out in the pine woods I am sure we should find mayflowers. But in the far-away cold countries there are no such pleasant signs of spring; and yet there are some things that are very cheering to the people who live there. Best of all, there is the sun, that has come back again after the long night and gives them now a short day, just a few hours long. Then Puseymut the seal, who knows that the spring is coming, has begun to build her curious house. And about these seal

houses I must tell you, for they are almost as curious and pretty as a bird's nest.

You know the seals live in the water. And here the water is all covered with ice—ice as thick as you are tall, little Edith, and in some places very much thicker. And on the top of the ice there is deep, deep snow. Now, of what can the seal build her house?

Ah! you merry children who build snow houses in winter know very well of what it is built. See, I will make you a picture of it, and the mother seal swimming in the clear water just below. Here is the passageway or entry,



cut through the clear, hard ice. To make that was difficult work for the mother seal, but she did it all herself. See what a little doorway leads into the pretty arched room above—a room whose walls are of snow. It is shaped just like an Esquimau house. Indeed, I have sometimes

thought that the Esquimaux learned of the seals how to make their houses. It is hardly big enough, you will say, for the mother seal to live in. No, she didn't build it for herself. She can swim about wherever she likes, come up to some little hole in the ice for an occasional breath of fresh air, creep out and sun herself if the day is warm; and, in short, she doesn't seem to need a house for herself.

For whom, then, is the little house? Georgie thinks it must be for her baby. And Georgie is right; for in that pretty, round house lies a little white baby seal, with soft hazel eyes and tiny little flippers hardly big enough to swim with as yet. And she lies there so snugly while the mother goes away for food, and gives a little call of welcome when she hears her coming up the ice entry that leads to the door.

On this April day Agoonack has on her bearskin jumper and hood, and runs out on the snow beside her father, who carries his long spear in his hand. The sun is up and sends level rays across the ice, and makes the little girl think of warmth, although, if she had a thermometer, she would see that it stands at -30°; and that is colder than you have ever known it to be. She trots briskly along beside her father, until with a sudden "Hush!" and touch of his hand on her shoulder he stops the child in the shelter of a great iceberg, and, running swiftly forward, with a sudden jump he breaks through the snow crust, and has come crashing down into the pretty seal igloë, and seized the baby seal. The poor little thing is so taken by surprise that it can only utter a plaintive cry, which the mother, swimming off in

the clear water under the ice, hears instantly, and she hastens, as any mother would, to help her poor child.

Metek knows she will come, and he is ready. Her smooth, round head and mild eyes have scarcely appeared above the ice, when she is struck by his spear and drawn out through the hole. And now she will furnish meat for dinner, oil for the lamp, and boots for the men.

I think you wouldn't like to see all this; it would be too painful. But Agoonack is used to it, and she knows besides, that, if they catch no seals, they will have nothing to eat; and hunger is to her as painful as is death to this poor seal.

Do you remember where her father stopped her while he ran forward to the seal igloë?

It was in the shelter of an iceberg, wasn't it, Dossie?

Now, if he had known something about the iceberg, I am sure he would never have left his little daughter there alone; indeed, I think he wouldn't have liked to stop there very long himself. Creep with me round to the other side of the berg and up the slippery slope a little way. Here is a narrow opening in the ice. It is like the mouth of a little cave. Look in and see the beautiful, clear, blue ice walls of this crystal room. If we had come an hour ago I believe you would have been ready to turn and run quickly away, without stopping to see that this is Mother Bruin's nursery, and she and her two children were at play in it.

"But who is Mother Bruin?"

Why, don't you know? she is the great white bear, Nannook, as Agoonack calls her. And, although she would be a very surly creature if we should meet her on the ice, at home here in the crystal nursery she plays with the two cubs, rolls them over with her paw, pats them, and cuddles and hugs them as tenderly in her rough way as your mother does you. And sometimes she takes them out sliding down the steep snow hills, sitting on their hind legs, and steering down, after a good coasting place has been worn by their mamma. You see, they have their little family pleasures. I wish we might be friends with them, but, unfortunately, they know very well that Metek would rejoice to have their flesh for meat, and their warm, shaggy skins for clothes, so they return the compliment and kill him if they can. And now you see why he wouldn't have left Agoonack there if he had known. But, fortunately for the child, Mamma Bruin had taken little Hugger and Growler out for a walk just at that time, and she did not return until the child and her father were safe at home, and drinking seal's-blood soup for supper.

They have company, too, at supper tonight; not that it is at all surprising for them to have company, for any hunter who has killed a seal never keeps it all to himself, but is always kind enough to invite his neighbors to share his feast. But to-night they have a rare and wonderful visitor—Kudlunah, Metek calls him; and, if we knew the Esquimau language, we should understand that this queer word means "white man."

Never has Agoonack or little Sipsu seen such a man. His cheeks are red, his eyes are bright, and he has a curly beard; his voice is very pleasant, and he can speak a few words of their own language. And out of his pockets come treasures such as the little ones have never dreamed of. The shy little girl can hardly look up and say "Thank you" when he puts a string of bright beads round her neck; and her father grunts out his satisfaction over a knife, the best thing to cut with that he ever saw in his life.

But where did this white man come from? Ah, yes! that is the greatest wonder, after all; for he points far away to the south to show where his home is, and he says "oomiak" (ship), when they wonder how he came so far. To-night he will sleep in their hut, and tomorrow, if they will go with him, he will show them his great oomiak. And so, when the seal feast is finished and the Kudlunah, as well as the rest, has drunk his bowl of seal's-blood soup, they lie down together.

In the morning Metek goes with the stranger, but the others stay at home, doubting whether it can be perfectly safe to trust themselves in such company upon so short an acquaintance. But Agoonack thinks all day of the wonderful Kudlunah, and she plays with her pretty beads, and says over and over again softly to herself "Koyenna, koyenna" (thanks, thanks). And she is the first one to see her father far in the distance, a black speck on the moonlit snow, as he trudges homeward with his hands full of presents and his head full of strange and marvellous news.

You know it doesn't make much difference to the Esquimaux whether they sit up late or not, for the sunrise could hardly be called the beginning of day at any time of year; and, sleep as late as they might in the morning, nobody would cry: "What a shame that the sun should find you in bed!"

So this evening even little Sipsu cuddles forgotten behind his mother, and listens with wide-open mouth and eyes to the story of the great oomiak built all of wood—wood which you remember is so precious in the Esquimau land—and as big as a hundred kyaks. It is filled with pale-faced, shaggy-bearded Kudlunahs, plenty of knives, and, better than that, strange weapons, stronger than spears, for out of them flashes fire, and a seal will be struck dead with the terrible noise that follows that flash.

Oh, that was a marvellous story! Agoonack could hardly believe it; but she learned by and by to be very familiar with the guns and pistols, and very thankful for them, too. You will see pretty soon how that came about, for before a week has passed even the little girl herself has been on board the great oomiak, and tasted the Kudlunahs' food, a ship biscuit, as strange and unknown to her as seal's-blood soup to you. Think how funny it would be to taste for the first time bread or cracker!

The child's mother, too, is made very happy when she receives needles and thread (so much better than her bone needles and seal sinews) and a good pair of scissors, as payment for the bag of eider down that

she gathered last summer when the ducks came to make their nests among the rocks. The exchange of these things as presents or in trade shows them that the white men and the Esquimaux can serve each other, and awakens a very friendly feeling between them; and when Metek kills a seal or a bear the white captain is always welcome at the feast.

When two or three months have passed, the Kudlunahs are going away. They have only stopped for a little while, to search along the rocky shores for traces of some lost friends of theirs who sailed that way many years ago, and, finding none here, they will push on through the icy seas, hoping for better success farther north.

One day just before they started, Metek was called down into the cabin of the ship to see the captain, and when he came up it was with a smile on his broad face, and a look of great importance which made him hold his head very high. What had the captain been saying to him?

"Metek," he said, "you are a good hunter. Will you go with us on this voyage to kill seals and walruses for us? I will teach you to shoot, and give you a rifle; and you shall be paid with knives, guns, powder, and shot."

Then Metek answered: "I will go with the great captain, but I cannot leave my wife and children behind. How could they live alone? They cannot hunt; they would die of hunger."

Then the captain sat silent and thoughtful for a minute or two, and at last, seeing that what Metek had

spoken was plainly true, he answered: "Bring your wife and children with you." It was this that made Metek so proud and happy, and he hurried home with his news.

Ah! now they must break up housekeeping; but that is an easy thing, easier even than for Gemila in the desert, for her father had mats and tents, and camels and goats, and water bags. But Metek's family had nothing at all to carry, except a seal-skin drinking cup, a knife or two, the precious new sewing utensils, some strings of beads, the clothes they wear, and one additional suit for summer, which the mother has just sewed out of tuktoo, or reindeer skin. So it is a very easy matter to make the change, and the berth of the ship is a luxurious bed for Sipsu and Agoonack.

I can't tell you all the wonderful things that happened for the next few months, while the great oomiak, after pushing through the icy sea as far as it could go, was at last frozen fast among the great ice floes; or how Metek learned so well to shoot the seals and the bears, and provide fresh meat for the whole ship's company.

But we are coming to a very important time—a time when the ice begins to break up, and, tossed by the rising and falling tides, it crowds and crushes the strong ship. And at last one night, dark and very stormy too, while the children, who are so used to the thumping and tossing, are asleep rolled up in bearskins, a great shout is heard through the storm; the ship is leaking badly, and they must throw out upon the ice as many things as possible.

The barrels and casks, the bundles of skins, and the heavy boats are soon upon the floe; and in the hurry and confusion somebody picks up the roll of skins in which the children are sleeping, and they are tossed out like any other bundle.

When at last the dim morning dawns, behold, the ship has drifted away, and left upon the great cake of floating ice a party of fifteen men, besides Metek and his wife, and the two little children who have crept out of their nest of skins and are neither surprised nor frightened at finding themselves in this strange position.

Think of it, children. How would you like it?—a great cake of ice two or three miles broad, almost like a floating island. When the days are warm enough to thaw a little, it moves with the moving water, and freezes hard to the land or the icebergs when a cold snap comes.

I believe you and I should be very much troubled about it, and I dare say the captain felt very anxious, but he did not say so; he tried to be cheerful and hopeful, and plan what to do.

In some ways it is not so bad, you see, because if they are floating in the water they will meet both seals and walruses, and can get something to eat. And there is another good thing to remember—they are drifting always southward, and that takes them towards warmer seas, towards home—at least, towards the Kudlunah's home. But the way is long, and the ice boat may not sail always steadily on as they would like. You know they

cannot steer it as men do a ship, or even as you do your sled. They must patiently let it take its own way and its own time; and what are they to do for shelter and for fire, even if food is plenty?

I think the Kudlunahs would have been poorly off, although they are so wise, if it hadn't been for Esquimau Metek then. See how he goes promptly to work to build snow houses—igloës he calls them. The ice floor is cold, to be sure, and the platform of ice raised at one side for a bed seems colder still when you lie down. But there are two old canvas sails that will serve for carpets, and in a few hours the arched snow walls are finished, so high in the middle that the captain himself can stand upright; and a window one foot square of clear ice lets in light enough to see each other by, even when the seal-blubber lamp is not burning. There is a home for them, and a pretty comfortable home too, they think. But it is now the middle of October, and winter is coming. To be sure, they have casks of pemican and some barrels of biscuits, but it takes a great deal of food to feed nineteen hungry people every day; and in the cold countries you have to eat a great deal more than we do here. Food, as you will one day learn, is like fuel for a little fire inside of you that keeps you warm, and, the colder the weather is, the more of that fuel is needed to keep the fire burning.

Metek must hunt every day for seals. Unfortunately it is just the time when the bears are taking their long nap; for you must know that they are very lazy fellows in the winter, and creep away to some snug hiding place, where they doze and dream until early spring. It

wouldn't be easy to find that hiding place, so they can't expect much bear's meat.

There is another reason why they dread the winter. Who can tell me what it is?

"It must be the darkness," says Dadie. You are right, my little boy; that is what they dread, and what you and I should dread too—not to see the sun day after day and week after week, perhaps not even to see each other's faces.

"But why don't they light their lamps?" says Edith. Ah! there may be a sad reason for not doing that. Don't you remember that if no seals are killed there will be no oil for the lamps?

I cannot tell you all about it; the story is too long and too sad. You see what the dangers are, but neither you nor I, who live so safely at home in our warm houses, and find a good dinner on our tables every day, can really understand how hard it was for them. There were days of no light, no dinner, no comfort of any kind. There were nights when the ice island cracked in two, and one-half drifted away before morning. There were times when the children moaned, "I am so hungry," and their mother gave them a little piece of sealskin to chew to make believe it was meat.

Among the Kudlunahs was one who had blue eyes and fair hair, and who spoke sometimes in a language strange even to his companions. He had come from the river Rhine. Do you remember Louise and Fritz and little Gretchen, who once lived there?

This man had a wise way of looking at the stars and finding out by them in what direction the ice island was drifting. He could also tell you wonderful things about icebergs, and about birds and beasts, and fishes too; in short, he was what we should call a scientific man, but that hard word didn't puzzle Agoonack as it does you, for she had never heard it. Her only knowledge of Mr. Meyer is his kindness to her when he one day slips a bit of meat into her thin little hand and says: "My little cousin at home is no bigger than you, you poor child."

At last there was a time when the sun came back. Oh, how glad they all were! But even that blessing seemed to bring a fresh trouble with it, for they had floated now into warmer seas, and you all know what the sunshine will do to the ice and snow. It is very well that they should be melted, we say; but then, we don't happen to live on an ice island and in a snow house.

By and by the time comes when it is no longer safe to sleep in the snow houses. Cold as the nights are, they must be ready at any minute to leap into the boat, should the now tiny island crack in two. And the poor boat is neither large nor strong.

They have drifted now so far southward that the ice is breaking up all about them, and, happily for them, the seals are sporting in the spring sunshine.

It is the last day of April. To-morrow will be May Day. You will have May fairs, May parties, May flowers. What pleasure will come to these poor people drifting in the icy seas? Oh! it is something better than May fairs, or parties, or even flowers. They see the long black line

of smoke made by a steamer, miles away, but coming on slowly, steadily, through the ice, to find them. Isn't that the very, very best blessing for them? And aren't you very, very glad? I am sure that I am.

Oh, the comfort, the rest, and the safety! And the way that sturdy little steamer puffs and steams away towards home, with her load of weary, thin, worn-out men! Towards *home*, did I say? But haven't they drifted far beyond Agoonack's home, and now aren't they going still farther from it? That is true. And, after the first relief of finding themselves safe is over, Metek goes to the Nalegak Soak (great captain) and asks how he is ever to reach his home again. And the captain comforts him with the promise that, when they reach the United States, he shall be sent safely back in the first ship that goes up to the frozen seas for whale fishing; and in the meantime he and his wife and children will see a new sight—whole cities full of tall houses built of stone or wood, railroads and factories, and, indeed, more wonders than they can name.

But all this while they are steaming steadily on. They have left the icebergs far behind them; grassy shores are sometimes seen in the distance; the sun is so hot at noon that the fur clothing is uncomfortable, but, unhappily, they have no other.

At last comes a day when they cast anchor at a crowded wharf. The news of their rescue had been sent before them, and friends have crowded down to welcome them home again. Oh, there is such a hand-shaking and kissing! Everybody forgets Agoonack and

Sipsu, who do not know what to make of all the happy greetings. At least, they can understand how glad the people are; that is something that can be told alike in all languages. But it makes them feel all the more lonely, for nobody is glad to see them. But what little blue-eyed girl has her arms about Mr. Meyer's neck? Now see, he is leading her by the hand and looking on this side and on that until he spies the little Esquimau girl in her corner. He puts the soft white hand into the little brown one and says: "Louise, this is Agoonack, the little girl who has drifted with us fifteen hundred miles on the ice."

Louise, the fair-faced, sweet, clean little girl; Agoonack, the dark and dirty—yes, still dirty—little Esquimau, the lonely little stranger in a strange land.

Louise looks her full in the face for one minute, then her arms are round Agoonack's neck, and her red lips are giving her a hearty kiss of welcome.

They are little sisters, after all.