the distant hotel and paddled out into the lake. In a few moments they were out from the lee of the island and felt the full strength of the waves and wind. It was well that they had started so soon, for the water was growing every moment rougher. George paddled on silently for a while. "Grace," he said finally, "I am going to ask you to lie down in the bottom; it will distribute the weight better, and steady us. Be a little careful," he said, still paddling, as she began to follow his direction. "There, that's right. Rest your head upon my coat."

He paddled on, making excellent headway, but in a few moments spoke again. He did not look at her, for he had to give all his attention to paddling, but he spoke cheerily, and as if without the slightest apprehension of danger. "We may as well be prepared for anything that might happen, so I'm going to give you an emergency lecture. In the first place, can you swim? No? well, it's of no consequence. But what I wish to say is this,—if my paddle breaks, or anything similar happens, we'll go over, sure pop. Please take the extra paddle in your hand, and cling to it if we do go over. Remember, whatever you do, not to struggle, and not to scream. I can get you to the canoe, and we can cling to it till the others pick us up. That's all,—only don't imagine, because I say this, that there is any danger. We are perfectly safe, I assure you, and have gotten about quarter way home already."

He said no more, but paddled on diligently. There was enough danger to make him give all his muscle and skill to the management of the canoe. She lay quietly in the bottom of the frail craft, without any sense of danger, trusting to him, and watching him half dreamily—watching, and admiring,—ah, Grace! a dangerous practice! The swish of the curling whitecaps, the quick tossing of the canoe, diminished not the least her sense of security. And as for George, he stole occasional glances at her, and got plentiful inspiration from the sweet, trusting face below him.

Time passed so quickly that she was surprised when he suddenly said, "Here we are! steady, now!" Then the boat shot into a little cove, the bow ran up on the shore, and he sprang out into the shallow water, took her in his arms and bore her ashore. The others were close behind and landed in a moment. There was little said as they walked up to the hotel, where they found it was supper time, so that no one noticed their arrival.

But after supper the gossips, comfortably seated on the piazza for a chat, were electrified by an unexpected phenomenon. The young people, whose lateness to supper was nothing unusual, came out of the dining room and stood in the doorway, where they chatted together for a short while. Then, as usual, they started for a walk, but—George and Grace went one way, and Will and Eleanor the other! What was going to happen? Such a thing had never been done before. It could not be by accident that each man had gone off with the wrong girl. But it was so strange, and when the young men were to return to the city the next day, too! The calculations of the sewing circle were thrown out completely.

The young men were in their room that night, each sitting silently smoking at a window, and watching—the moon. The room was in disorder, for packing had been vigorously going on. The two were placed so that they could see each other, and talk if they wished, but neither seemed inclined to speak, and the glances that they cast at each other seemed furtive and stolen. There was something in the air,—a stiffness, a constraint.

After a long silence Will took his pipe out of his mouth.

"Stiff paddling this afternoon."

"Yes," grunted George, and they puffed on for a while in silence. Each seemed to wish to speak, but without exactly knowing how to begin. Finally George hazarded a remark.