

AILSA FARGE

The name, Ailsa, suggests the poetry in green uplands, and of the sea. So does the house itself, enthroned in the deep emerald of protecting woods, with wide windows looking out to the ocean's rim.

There are many stirring legends of mountain-tops. The gnomes and dwarfs of the Catskills were real creatures as they grew under the pen of Washington Irving. But the legend of our own High Mountain is a human story. No eerie creatures of the imagination are necessary to make those heights beloved of those who live under its shadows. On the high blue line pulsating hopes of strong men were born, and achieved.

Sea-weary sailors tell that after a hard transatlantic passage, the first land color which breaks the long monotony of the deep ocean swell is High Mountain. Suddenly in <sup>the</sup> dull gray of the sea, the soft amethyst cusp of the New Jersey summit rises with promise of calm and rest.

One well-known story tells of a Scotsman who left his homeland in search of success. There was little joy in the journey for his thoughts flew back to all he had left behind in his joyous Highlands, where his affections had been stifled that he might try his luck in another country. He looked forward only to the year when he could return. Then his eyes caught the first blue point on the horizon and his spirit found new courage. Within himself he right then resolved

to buy a small spot within the sight of that blue peak, that he would remember always with the pride of reawakened hope.

The traveller, John W. MacCullough, kept this self-promise and built on the slopes of the far hill. His home was built in the tradition of his British forebears, castlesque with towers piercing the forest wall, turreted, with heavy bines suggesting the strength of "knights of old, when barons held their sway." Grey dells and tree-fast glens simulated the rugged beauty of Scotland, and John MacCullough found peace in every inch of his three and one-half acres. When a lad he had heard the thud of heavy seas on Ailsa Crag, and marvelled at their strength and power, and on calm days at the music in the lull of the waves. The place and the name were dear to him, so he gave memory tangibility, and new meaning in a new world, in a new Ailsa Crag.

In his journeys to and fro he met a kindred spirit, Mr. Sutherland, and begged him to accept his hospitality, to share the loveliness of the mountain retreat. Mr. Sutherland came, loved this place, and loitered on and on, until his life was done. John MacCullough went back to Scotland. He was no longer young. His family and friends urged him to stay, to die in his native land, to sell that far-away Ailsa to some American.

His caretaker came to Mrs. G.A.Hobart and asked that she buy it. He knew that she, better than all others, would care for and appreciate the beauty which lived in every nook and cranny of the place. But Mrs. Hobart had her large home in the city, where memories of international scope had been made. She did not feel that she could use another home so very near the city. If she bought at all it would be far in the mountains, or within the sight of the sea, she said. However, she promised the manager of Mr. MacCullough's estate, that if the place were offered at public auction, she would send an agent and instruct him to bid up to \$5,000, and if there were no higher bid, she would take the place at that figure. She said she had no idea, for what purpose she would use the place, but her promise had been given and she would keep that promise.

There were few bidders, for Haledon was a long hard mountain-slope above the city and difficult for horses of working men. So Mrs. Hobart's bid for \$5,000 was not passed and kept her word. Mr. Fred Greenwood did the actual bidding.

"But what under the sun, will you do with a place away out there?" asked her curious friends.

"Ah," said Mrs. Hobart, with a knowing twinkle in her eyes, "Junior wants a place to take his friends sledding and for outdoor games. The woodsy spots will be just right for picnics, don't you think?"

"But," they persisted, "that house? What can you do with that huge stone bulk?"

"Dances!" patiently continued The Lady, whose keen business-acumen foresaw the day when Haledon would no longer be an isolated hamlet on a dirt-road turnpike.

Nevertheless as she predicted it proved an ideal place for picnics, and parties and dances, and one notable Christmas Mrs. Hobart planned an extra large party for her son. What merry-making brewed as the horses dragged the straw-strewn sleighs up Haledon hill. Songs went ringing out across snow-blanketed glens. Inside, a great fire gave welcome and the floors reschoed with stamping feet. In the crescent-shaped bay of the tower-corner a Christmas sparkled like a bubble in the fire-glow and offered gay satisfaction for impatient guessers.

More fun. More laughter. More Christmas joy, as the packages were opened. Mrs. Hobart, the hostess, was noted for her prophet-like penchance for choosing the right gift for the right person, but here she outdone herself. She had guessed the heart's desire of each guest. But where and what was Junior's gift? The crowd surged forward. Where was Junior's? It was the very last. Its shape was unusual for Christmas wrapping. It was n't soft and squeezy like the others. It looked for all the world like a college diploma.

Junior's brow crinkled in puzzled lines. He stood close to his mother, as he slowly opened the scroll. The group came closer. Silence. The fire crackled and seemed loud.

The tissue wrapper fell to the floor at Junior's feet.

"What is it, Mother?" he asked impatient to know the meaning of the long legal script.

"The deed, Junior. Deed to this house." She spoke with new pride, as one speaks to a son who has come to man's estate and responsibilities.

"The deed! But Mother, if I own it who's going to pay the taxes?" She had guessed right. Her lad had truly come into his full business powers and was conscious of the responsibilities entailed.

"Tut! Junior! You mercenary wretch!" Laughed his Mother, proud of his sagacity. Proud that he had followed in the footsteps of his father, yet withall a bit sad that he no longer needed her direction in life's details.

From that moment Junior Hobart accepted his share of life's tasks.

He loved the hills around the place and saw that he must purchase more property to secure egress with trespassing. He bought this land from Abraham McCulloch, who had an excellent spring, from which he sold bottled water, in the valley below the hill.

His estate increased. Likewise his business interests in the city: Mr. Hobart became a member of the New York Stock Exchange and expanded his financial affairs. With Alexander Gray, he established offices in New York, Passaic and Paterson. This meant larger friendships and broader acquaintance circles. Rooms must be provided for conferences in an intimate atmosphere. So from 1915 to 1919, while Mr. Hobart held an important place in New York financial circles, his country estate gradually increased in size and beauty.

Mr. Wentworth and Mr. Vreeland worked together to provide a home fitted to the environment, secluded yet easily accessible, a granite mass against the forest green. Thirty rooms grouped in perfect symmetry. Mrs. Hobart, ever the generous mother, added a billiard room. For the growing family, her grandchildren, she conceived an indoor playroom. And, after a happy summer, 1926, with her children in Lily Pond Lane, Easthampton, Long Island, she came to live with them at Ailsa. Here she watched her grandchildren grow into sturdy youngsters, from the cubby babies she cuddled in her arms, even before the mother herself had seen them. For full sixteen years she gave of her mature wisdom, whenever her son and daughter and children came to her for advice. She was not merely grandmother, she was knit into the essence of their lives and thoughts. But, the old memories of the home where she and her famous husband had shared so many happy and understanding years; the old Carroll Hall, where Presidents had come for her charming hospitality and gracious opinions on national issues, was calling. So, in 1932, the last day of the old year, and the first of the new, Mrs. Hobart came back to the city home which had, like an

friend, stood awaiting her return. Here her friends could drop in for a moments cheering chat when en route to the town. Here, like a queen in her shell-shaped chair, she could recall all the cycle of years, and make happiness for those who were honored with her welcome.

Above the city Ailsa Farms, offered its long sweeping meadows, its curving lanes, its solitudes, but Mrs. Hobart clung to the home of her youthful years.

Carroll Hall and Ailsa; each are a part of her life.

Ailsa, first a small woodland retreat with a stone house, where each morning the nurses took the children up from the heat and murk of the city where they could find health and vibrant life under lapis skies and clean mountain winds.

Ailsa. A lovely balustrated mansion, commanding the distant skyline of New York, the rim of the sea, and just below the city of Paterson clustered like a toy-box in jumbled confusion. And on all sides, running brooks, birds caroling joy in this sanctuary, a world of floral loveliness. And within the laughter of a happy family.

Carroll Hall. A landmark in the busy city street. The gray mansard contours of another day. But to Patersonians a cherished spot, for within, is Paterson's First Lady, of whom they say, even as the seaman, when he saw the rim of High Mountain, "Peace comes from that place, and from it also God's Spirit of Graciousness."

Carroll Hall and Ailsa Farms, both are a part of Paterson's history, each in its own decade stimulated citizens to pride and pleasure in being a part of the same traditions

*Mrs. Mollie Winchester was Mrs. Hobart's  
Secretary*

*Mr. Graf - This is  
was written by Mrs.  
George F. Winchester*

Paterson  
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COLLEGE GROUNDS HAVE HISTORY OF FAME AND ELEGANCE

Writer's Note:

The history of the Hobart Estate and family are replete with mysteries. Searches through archives, old documents, newspaper clippings, and other materials reveal many conflicts in information. Although records were scarce and contradictory, they reveal a rich heritage for the land which now holds William Paterson College. The following story reflects as accurate an account of that heritage as can be accumulated from those records.