their handkerchiefs into their mouths to stop all the laughter. How he had climbed up the fire escape ladder and into her bedroom, and come down with the box of matches in his mouth so he could hold on with both hands, and she had said 'Good Rover – fetch it, drop it, boy.' She seemed to hear again his little agitated staccato voice. 'You hold this big one in your hand, and then light it, and throw it away.' And she had held the big one and lighted a match. A great noise came. 'God, my hand' she said – and fell into the great Dark. Then there came the long long days, and the little voice always telling her to hold it in her hand. And at last the Doctor had told her that a very sad thing had happened – and she had said dear dear – couldn't he sew on five nice neat little crackers instead of the fingers, and she could live at the North Pole and be quite safe. He had left the room and closed the door loudly behind him. 'Bring five hooks' she called, and lay still and laughed.

Kathie thought of it all quietly, calmly now. 'I am well now' she thought - 'if there is anything to be well for. I suppose they want to keep me here as long as possible because they don't know what is to happen next.' Suddenly she flung back the covers and slipped out of bed. She felt as though she was walking on needles, and slowly, carefully, she dragged herself over to the dressingtable. Then she looked at her reflection in the mirror above. A long thin face, lines of suffering deeply engraved by the Artist Pain, an extraordinary pallor in her cheeks and lips. 'That is Kathie' she said hoarsely, 'Kathie', and then suddenly realised the illness was over. Now she was looking back. 'The fact that I have done this proves that it is over' she said. She looked curiously at her bandaged hand and then suddenly bent her head, and kissed it. Then she crept back to bed, and when her Mother came, opening the door very softly and just poking her head in, Kathie said 'Good morning. Can I see the paper?', and Mother, almost unbelieving, rushed into the girls' room and told them, and the three of them clung together and then went in to see her.

She wondered why – what could have happened? Then she crept out of bed and ran to the head of the stairs. Leslie sat there whistling and plaiting a piece of flax. At the sight of her he stopped and uttered an exclamation. 'Dear little chappie' she said, 'fly and bring me a paper – just for a secret don't tell a soul darling.' He slid down the bannister and in a moment he was back, the paper inside his sailor blouse. Kathie sat down in her armchair. It was a difficult matter to manage a newspaper with one hand. She had to¹ lay it on the table. Bah! "Wool rising", "Fashionable wedding", "Trouble in Russia". Surely all this was very harmless. She turned over the page. "Visit of Prominent Musician. Recital tonight at Town Hall. Interview by our Special Correspondent"