

ings erected by the get-rich-quick speculators. The flimsy houses and buildings of '24 and '25 had been washed from their foundations, but the land still held. Safe in the bulkheads Carl had built stood the land sucked from the bottom of Biscayne Bay. Well-built homes, soundly constructed buildings such as the hotels, stood intact in the sunshine that poured down beneficently over Miami Beach.

Carl began the republishing of Miami Beach. Fresh paint and clean streets, soundly built new homes made a cleanly city more beautiful than before.

It was a blessing, after all, that the ugly ineptitudes that had sprung up in the wake of the binder boys had to be swept away in the clearing of the debris. Within a year one would never know a hurricane had visited the playland city; and in Miami Beach we learned to refer to that tragic visitation of 1926 as "the storm," just as San Franciscans speak of the earthquake of 1906 as "the fire."

Miami Beach lifted in new beauty and new assurance, as Carl had prophesied. Fighting as he was, in the days following the hurricane, to reestablish the ruined city, he had found time to write me in Paris, where I had returned after my marriage. Though I was the wife of another man, and though Carl was driven by anxiety and exhaustion, he wrote:

Dear Jane,—Don't worry about the hurricane. It will prove to be the greatest blessing to Miami Beach in the long run. Miami Beach will be more beautiful, bigger and better than ever before. After we get rid of this shyster boom trash there will be only hurricane-proof structures allowed to be built. Miami Beach will ride all tides of time and change and coming through this storm will only make her the winner and the gainer in the end. As old Jess Andrew said, "Nothing much happened to Miami Beach—but a hell of a lot happened to the weather!"

Love, Carl.

Carl did not tell me he was sinking millions into the rebuilding of Miami Beach, and that in the meantime Montauk, his dream city in the North, lay neglected on the sandy tip of Long Island.

XXXII. Irons in Other Fires

MIAMI BEACH was on its way to renewed beauty and prosperity before Carl returned to Montauk. I came back from Europe with my new husband and Jackie and moved into the farmhouse Carl had bought for me at East Williston on the way to Montauk. We found it to be a charming place, three-story and Victorian, with ginger-bread balconies and cupolas.

The house was gay with flowered wallpaper and ruffled curtains, and there were snow-white marble mantels in every room. Carl had not forgotten my love for soundless floors, and all three stories were carpeted with the softest of velvet.

From the long front gallery we looked over twenty acres of apple orchard and tall maples.

"Like it, honey?" Carl asked anxiously. He had driven over from Montauk to welcome us in our new home.

"It's perfect, darling. Only, there isn't a brook. Remember I said I'd never live in the country without a singing brook?"

I was teasing, of course, but Carl took me seriously. "Hell, I'll build you a glassed-in swimming pool. That will beat a brook all hollow."

Early the next morning Bob and I were awakened by the rumble of approaching trucks. A battalion of workmen from Montauk were invading the apple orchard. Before our eyes the swimming pool began to materialize.

Carl was as tenderly overbearing as ever. He fussed over Bob and me as though we were children. Nearly every day he drove over from Montauk, and never did he arrive empty-handed.