

THE BOARDWALK

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The boardwalk by Margaret Widdemer

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MARGARET WIDDEMER

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BY

MARGARET WIDDEMER

AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE-GARDEN HUSBAND,"
"THE WISHING-RING MAN," "THE OLD
ROAD TO PARADISE," ETC.



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To

DOCTOR JAMES FRANCIS ACKERMAN
BEST AND KINDEST OF DOCTORS AND FRIENDS

2039041

FOREWORD

THE BOARDWALK

It begins by the Allenwood flume, where the little boys go to catch herring in the spring. It stretches down for about two miles, diving through the 'Arches Pavilion, where the young lovers go to look at the water on lonely days when they hope they will not be disturbed.

Further on it passes Knockers' Row, where the middle-aged women sit and tell each other their thoughts about the passersby. Then comes Wesley Pavilion, circled with booths and full of dancers in summer, most desolate of all places in the winter. Then it goes in a wide outward circle, as if it were not over-religious, around the roofed place in the Grove where the praise meetings are held; more lumpily and bumpily, for the Grove authorities are canny souls. They do not replace their part of the Boardwalk as often as the Park Council, which handles money not its own and hence votes it away royally for improvements.

After that it passes the Grove pier, where the

old men sit fishing benignantly, not so much interested in their catch as pleased to be out in the air with the sun and the sea.

It is like a pattern of life.

In summer it is crowded. The gaily dressed people surge up and down it in a long, sauntering procession. It is strung with colored lights that from sea look like a long necklace of jewels. "It's a lovely Boardwalk," the summer people say with all the rapture of their two weeks off. We, waiting a little impatiently for them to go, answer with a trained courtesy—for are summer people not our livelihood?—that seems a trifle bored.

We are not bored; blasé, a little perhaps, with the tawdrily exciting summers we have known since babyhood. But the Boardwalk is our life; and one doesn't make amiable compliments about one's life.

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