

RAINY WEEK

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Rainy week by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott

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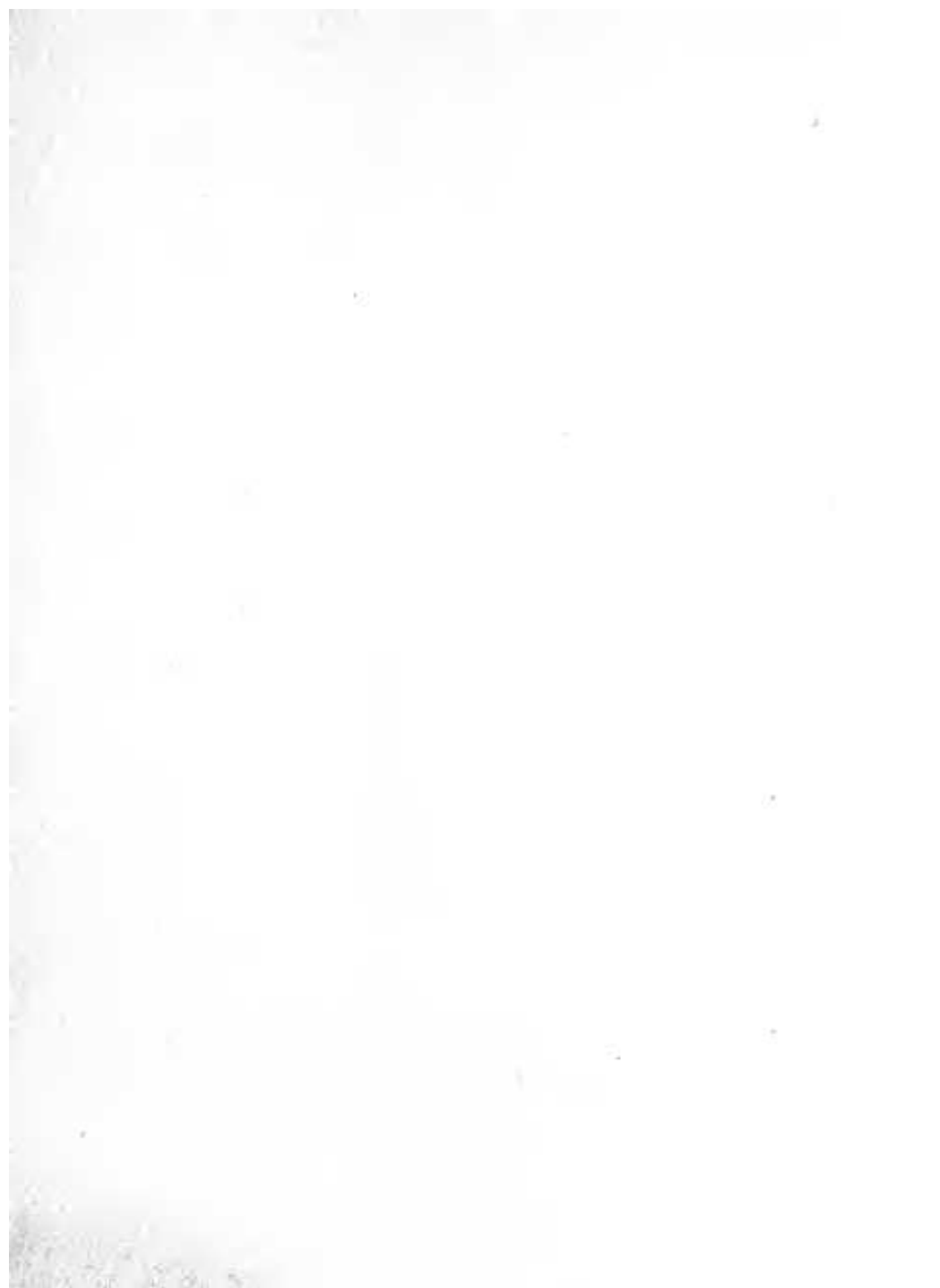
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ELEANOR HALLOWELL ABBOTT

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BY

ELEANOR HALLOWELL ABBOTT

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GOOD-WILL TO DOGS," ETC.



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RAINY WEEK

CHAPTER I

IN the changes and chances of our New England climate it is not so much what a Guest can endure outdoors as what he can originate indoors that endears him most to a weather-worried Host.

Take Rollins, for instance, a small man, dour, insignificant—a prude in the moonlight, a duffer at sailing, a fool at tennis—yet once given a rain-patter and a smoky fireplace, of an audacity so impertinent, so altogether absurd, that even yawns must of necessity turn to laughter—or curses. The historic thunderstorm question, for instance, which he sprang at the old Bishop's house-party after five sweltering days of sunshine and ecclesiastical argument: "Who was the last person you kissed before you were married?"

A question innocent as milk if only swal-

lowed! But unswallowed? Gurgled? Spat like venom from Bishop to Bishop? And from Bishop's Wife to Bishop's Wife? Oh la! Yet that Rollins himself was the only unmarried person present on that momentous occasion shows not at all, I still contend, the slightest "natural mendacity" of the man, but merely the perfectly normal curiosity of a confirmed Anchoret to learn what truths he may from those who have been fortunate—or unfortunate enough to live.

Certainly neither my Husband nor myself would ever dream of running a house-party without Rollins!

Yet equally certain it is not at all on Rollins's account but distinctly on our own that we invariably set the date for our annual house-party in the second week of May.

For twenty years, in the particular corner of the New England sea-coast which my husband and I happen to inhabit, it has never, with one single exception only, failed to rain from morning till night and night till morning again through the second week of May!

With all weather-uncertainties thus settled perfectly definitely, even for the worst, it is a comparatively easy matter for any Host

and Hostess to *Stage* such events as remain.

It is with purely confessional intent that I emphasize that word "stage." Every human being acknowledges, if honest, some one supreme passion of existence. My Husband's and mine is for what Highbrows call "the experimental drama."

We call it "Amateur Theatricals."

Yet even this innocent passion has not proved a serene one!

After inestimable seasons of devotion to that most ruthless of all goddesses, the Goddess of Amateur Theatricals, involving, as it does, wrangles with

Guests who refuse to accept unless they are assured that there will be a Play.

wrangles with

Guests who refuse to accept unless assured that there will not be a Play.

wrangles with

Guests already arrived, unpacked, tubbed, seated at dinner, who discover suddenly that their lines are too long.

wrangles with

Guests already arrived, unpacked, tubbed, seated at dinner, who discover equally suddenly that their lines are too short.