

PART TWO

Ben, who had been independent before marriage, taught her to cook and to iron the white shirts he wore fresh each day when he went jauntily off to succeed in his new career and left her to domestic isolation.

As she wrote to Lurry, "It's such a man's world. Ben is in raptures. The job seems to be all his heart desires. The museum is really gorgeous, each new room done absolutely in the manner of the country whose things are to be exhibited. Ben directs a crew of six men 'in the galleries,' placing the collection of jades, screens, bronzes, and paintings. He has a walnut office and an assistant who adores him. It does make him feel clever and authoritative to be adored.

"I need him to be happy, and I can't be alive and thrilly deep in me without him, so there you are. But I find it hard to think of my end of this job—housework and cooking and washing and dishes—as a real job. It's so piffly boring. Yet I want to do it well and I shall. Ben makes the money I spend but the difference is he loves what he does and I don't..."

I wonder if she ever reflected on how she had repeated her mother's life pattern. Doré hated Detroit as Margaret Rowe had hated China, and their fates were determined by a husband's calling. Nothing in her letters suggests that the parallel occurred to her.

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Hoping to lighten his wife's gloom, Ben agreed to adopt a pure white wirehaired terrier puppy. Named "Yanger," he was a ringer for the dog they had to leave in Peking. As Doré wrote, "Ben knows I am restless still, so he has been stretching his blessed self to make me happy—getting tickets to concerts and shows and taking me to the biggest hotel for dinner and dancing to soft, coeey jazz and I loved it. It makes me wish I were a nicer girl, not so full of moods."

It did lift her spirits to listen, anonymously, to flattering audience comments after Ben's lectures. "He is really making a marvelous go of this job," she wrote. "One old dame said, 'What I admire most is his exceptional precision in use of the king's English'."

The formal opening of the museum's new Asian Art division was "a white-tie-beaded-evening-dress affair" full of celebrities and directors of

