

VIII

1952 - 1953

The Canary Islands

We booked passage autumn of 1952 on the Holland Dutch Line's Ryndam, sailing from New York for Le Havre, France, en route to the Canary Islands. Toronto friends gave us a great send-off and we stopped over in New York to see old friends, the Charles Hutchings and Todd Russells.

Todd was the Star of the New York Howdy Doody Show, took us to the famous restaurant "Henri's" where many show people dined. This particular evening Ralph Bellamy joined us. York had a psychic sense and often read handwriting. Henri asked him to read the handwriting of his girlfriend. York didn't read the written word, just form, weight, distances between letters, position on page and his own intuitive sense.

York told Henri many surprising things about his girl that Henri felt no one else in the world knew but himself. Henri said: "I would like you to read another letter." The writing was different but York said, "This is the same person but under different circumstances. She is terribly upset." At the end Henri confessed York was right in every instance, the second letter was after they had broken their engagement.

A group having gathered around were listening in amazement. Ralph Bellamy asked if York would read his handwriting. He searched to find something, not written for that purpose. York again gave an astounding reading. In the main that Ralph's previous marriage had broken up and that he was about to marry again. York pointed out that he was about to marry the same sort of person and would face the same problems. Ralph was shaken. His friends, present later told York what he had said was absolutely true. One of the onlookers was John Reid King, who had his own popular New York television show. On the spot he offered York his

on a regular New York television show. York, the painter, turned it down.

We boarded the Ryndam to find huge bouquets and a bottle of champagne from our New York friends. At dinner we sat at a long table chatting with several fellow passengers and especially attracted to a young couple, Chuck and Bobbie MacIntosh. They had driven from California in three days in order to catch the boat. He was an engineer with Booze, Allen and Hamilton and Bobbie was a hospital architect in Seattle, Washington. We would spend time aboard ship together. They also were stopping over for a few days in Paris.

The Ryndam, we later learned is famous for its rolling, being called a "tub." The first night gave us trouble staying in our bunks and we awakened to find the floor awash with water and flowers. We slopped around in bare feet, putting things back in place. We were good sailors and didn't miss a meal; an interesting new experience, afternoon tea, an orchestra, dancing, films, bars, a swimming pool and a library where I spent many hours reading. We took long walks on deck and lounged in the comfortable deck chairs.

We arrived at Le Havre, caught the train to Paris and were surprised to see snow and Paris was slush. On taking a taxi at the station, we seemed to drive endlessly, becoming a little suspicious we confronted the driver. He pulled the old trick of hollering and threatening to call a gendarme, which quickly frightens the foreigner and they pay. We learned the station was very close to the hotel. The fare should have been the equivalent of US\$1 instead of \$8. The hotel gave us a beautiful room, French Provincial decor, but ruinously expensive. We told the desk we would be moving in the morning and they suggested a reasonable hotel, the Excelsior, just around the corner and the porter would help us move. The porter also offered us black market francs but not knowing the score we turned them down.

We no sooner had moved when the MacIntosh's appeared and the

four of us went everywhere enjoying our first glimpse of Paris, including the Louvre. York did many quick sketches of kiosks, avenues of trees and nuns with enormous, starched white hats. We said goodbye to the MacIntosh's, and they left to ski and climb in Switzerland.

A dirty train to the Spanish border kept us up all night sitting in two long filled facing seats. Legs ached from holding close, trying not to disturb the opposite person. One after another slipped their feet up on the facing seat during the night, such a relief! A man opposite seemed to be alone; after a few "excuse me's" and "thank you's," we had a few words. He was a businessman from London, married with a family, but he and his wife took separate vacations and he was going to Madrid, was interested in art and would be going to the Prado. His name was A.T.S. McGhee, he had a bit of an Australian accent.

In the morning we boarded a new train, the Talgo - clean, modern and faster than any train we had known. On arrival in Madrid, McGhee reappeared, saying that Thomas Cooke's Travel had arranged a hotel for him, the Margarita, inexpensive and invited us to join him. He was being met, we were tired and this greatly simplified things. The hotel was fine and we agreed to meet the following morning to go to the Prado. He turned out to be a good companion and profoundly interested in art.

The Prado was a joy, especially Pierro della Francesco. York could never spend enough time looking at his work; the space and abstract quality interested him. We also enjoyed Hieronymus Bosch, Velasquez and other great Spanish and Italian masters. We discovered the Goya drawings, under the eaves, and the Prado became a "must" for us.

We saw our old friend Dorsey Fisher, formerly at the American Embassy in Mexico, now posted to Madrid. Dorsey invited us to use the Embassy address for mail until we had an address in the Canary Islands, then he would send it along.

Cooke's told us to wait until Seville to make arrangements for the sea

journey. The ship is made up in Barcelona and they didn't know what would be available in Seville, check on arrival as to the departure date. At first Cooke's in Seville didn't know when it would arrive, just keep checking every day, they said.

In Seville we were astounded with the Moorish decoration in the palace, the beautiful gardens with orange and lemon trees. When the guard went the other way, York jumped and reached two oranges. As he landed, the guard was coming back and we felt guilty, slinking away and back to the hotel. I tried one right away and never tasted anything so bitter. When York returned, I said, "You must try the orange," but he was suspicious and tested gingerly. We laughed over our stolen fruit and remembered, of course, Seville oranges make the best marmalade because they are so bitter.

A few days later, the boat was supposed to arrive from Barcelona, and it would leave for the Canary Islands as soon as arrangements were complete. When pressed, Cooke's said it should arrive about 2 p.m. and sold us tickets, with locations to be filled in later. There was one boat a week. We returned midday, the boat was there and we got a room in second class. We boarded immediately and on looking back from the deck were horrified to see the gangplank being lifted.

We hurried to explore the ship and found horses and bulls, in crates on the lower deck, being sent for bullfights in the Canarias. The bulls looked fierce, we hoped the crates would hold. We sailed into the Mediterranean, past Cadiz, past Gibraltar, and out into the ocean.

The boat seemed so full when leaving Seville, one could hardly move on deck and the first night out the dining room was packed. The second day many had disappeared and fewer each day out. We could only surmise many weren't good sailors.

We met a German officer type at the bar who wished to buy us a drink, he had knife-edged creases in his trousers and carried leather gloves. We suspected he might be a Nazi, or the hard Prussian type. He was looking

over everyone and everything. Later we saw him up on the first-class deck but never again in second, though his ticket was second class. Apparently he had no scruples about enjoying the best.

It took three days to reach Las Palmas, Gran Canaria and then we were to travel overnight to Tenerife, our destination. York was worried in case he couldn't find masonite in Tenerife for his duco medium. He approached a well-dressed man near the dock, using the French name "isorel" or masonite. Sr. Alcovera, presenting his card, spoke a little English and knew exactly what we wanted even going with us to buy it. He said he often went to Tenerife and that we must visit him in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. Later when we did, he and his wife were gracious hosts.

Landing next morning in Tenerife, we went directly to the Hotel Pino de Oro with its lovely gardens, owned by an Englishman, Jack Lewis. Sr. Lewis was busy turning people away, saying there were no rooms available, but in an aside to us said, "Wait a moment." This puzzled us but he showed us a room which including all meals would cost about \$1 a day. Here we discovered French and English guests taking their empty wine bottles to be filled, costing about six cents, their names on the bottles were placed on their tables each meal. York discovered an unused billiard room and enquired about using it as a studio and it cost very little extra. A few days later, Sr. Lewis said there was a corner room with a balcony, facing the mountains available.

The hotel was at the head of the main, wide boulevard, Las Ramblas, which had a wide walkway with benches, sculptures and trees down the middle. The trees were the Flame trees with large bugle-like red flowers, all so beautiful. Large herds of goats wandered down Las Ramblas and it was amusing to see a goat with a huge red blossom sticking out of its mouth, also an occasional camel. We could see people who lived in caves going up the hills, cooking their meals over a small fire at the entrance. The women seemed to carry the loads and sometimes carrying a sizeable piece of

furniture. The indigenous Guanches lived in caves but few had survived the massacre by the Spaniards, who hunted them out with killer dogs “Canines,” the origin of the name Canary Islands. The Guanches were a proud people, white skinned, blue eyed who would not kowtow to the Spaniards.

The milkmaids, “Lecheras,” were on the streets each morning with their milk cans, wearing long skirts and white sun bonnets, a typical costume, and subjects for York’s brush. They invariably gathered around a fountain for chit chat.

Each evening we went to a sidewalk cafe for coffee and one evening on returning to the hotel, we stopped to listen to music outside a house. A young man came down the street, turned to enter, then came back to talk with us, in Spanish. We explained why we were standing there. He said it was his brother’s Saint’s day (birthday) and invited us to join the party.

The young man’s name was Eduardo Pinto and his younger brother was José Manuel. We found ourselves in the midst of a group of young people, including Eduardo’s older brother, a psychiatrist, Dr. Carlos Pinto, all firing questions, which we answered as best we could. They asked York to hum a few bars of Mexican music, then they carried on. They had such earnest, nice faces and all had a good time, singing and laughing until time to leave. On leaving, Dr. Carlos said we must come for tea every day at six p.m. We thanked him and left. We didn’t return for three days and they scolded us saying that we must come every day.

Presiding over the heavily laden table was their mother Laura, a very beautiful woman, dressed in black. They were lively gatherings—the first moment each day when most of the family and sometimes friends were able to get together exchanging the day’s news. It turned out that Carlos was also one of the two art critics on the islands, as well as an author of poetry and prose. He came to the billiard room studio to see York’s work and was deeply interested. Franco’s Spain had seen little art from the

outside, and people were curious.

I started Spanish lessons immediately with Hilda Comacho and during our conversation we talked about art among other things. She asked what kind of painting my husband did - it was semi-abstract with a feeling of cubism. To some it appeared abstract. Hilda admitted later that she had a friend, an art critic, who liked only abstract work. She brought Eduardo Westerdahl to the studio. This was a case of love at first sight, and we became lifelong friends. He was the manager of a bank but also one of the foremost art critics in Spain and South America. Among his friends were Pablo Picasso, Oscar Dominguez, Juan Gris, Joan Miro, Ben Nicholson and many others about whom he had written extensively. He talked about art regularly on the Air and wrote articles for the Press. Under Franco, Westerdahl felt Spain was 50 years behind the times in art. He welcomed artists from other countries often giving them studio space in his home which he shared with his mother. His mother was a dear, little white-haired lady with a pure Guanchen name, who married a Swede, now a widow. The walls of Eduardo's home were covered ceiling to floor with paintings by the world's famous, more advanced artists, mostly gifts. He contrived to introduce the latest in art to Spain during its isolation under Franco, though he had limited means, just his dedication.

Westerdahl was instrumental in bringing the first exhibition in the world of Cubist art to Spain. At that time York's work reflected some cubist influence and Westerdahl was entranced. He would bring young artists to the studio to look and talk with York, especially Hilda Comacho's son Fredy, who was a deaf-mute. Fredy had much opportunity to observe people, and was an accomplished mimic. Sometimes at parties he would pantomime people, there was never any doubt who the person was, causing much hilarity. He had noticed all the little idiosyncrasies they tried to hide. York's ability to make people laugh, as well as his painting, endeared him to Fredy. A sort of mental telepathy seemed to develop between them.

One day when York expected Fredy, he hid an unsuccessful work behind others. Fredy came in and walked directly to the group, reached behind and pulled it out, motioning towards it for an explanation. Fredy, when young, had been sent to Madrid to a deaf-mute school to learn to lip read and self-defence. Through his hands and facial expressions, both had many conversations this way.

After a few weeks at the Hotel Pino de Oro, an English woman, Peggy Phillips, (whose husband was head of a boys' school) with whom we had become friendly, told us her friend, Dyllis Davies, who had a lovely home and three servants, would like to lend us her home for six weeks while away. We went to see Dyllis, she couldn't charge us rent, under the law, but would be pleased if we would pay the servants, about \$12 a month. It was a beautiful home with a lovely garden; previously had been the French Consulate. It had Chippendale furniture, sterling silver, and many rooms, one suitable as a studio on the second floor. We happily accepted; it would help us stretch our precious dollars.

We soon found the maids enjoyed a strange custom. We were struggling along on pennies and realized far too much food was purchased each day, probably a habit formed when working for the Consulate. The mother arrived each evening after dinner with a large basket and took any food home. If we entertained or wished a snack during the evening, there was never a crumb in the house. At first we started hiding something in our clothes closet but later asked the cook to leave a little something.

Santa Cruz de Tenerife is hilly. A road winding up the hill at the bottom of the garden was a good 18 feet higher than our garden and we were astounded one day to see a huge truck upended against the wall supporting the road above. Apparently it had been backed over the edge accidentally and gravity did the rest. It settled nicely on its rear end, wheels against the earth wall up in the air. The question was how to get it out? It couldn't be brought through our garden so men went to work digging into

the hillside, made a steep road out by moving tons of earth, then carefully righted the truck and drove it out.

Our street was called Las Mimosas because of all the lovely big, yellow Mimosa trees. Often it was a little frightening walking home at night, big, killer dogs barked fiercely from the higher level keeping abreast as we passed. There was no protective barrier, only a prohibitive jump. Plantations used these killer dogs for protection but always enclosed with a great fence. A friend warned us never to come unannounced as we were only safe in their company.

While we were at Dyllis' house, her cat had kittens. One day the maid was holding baby kittens on her lap when the mother came to investigate. York did a drawing of this which he gave to Dyllis on her return. The painting La Familia ended up at Canada's National Gallery in Ottawa, bought from the Montreal exhibition at the Watson Galleries in 1952.

York painted steadily and had quite a number of canvases by the time Dyllis returned. As we were planning on going back to the hotel, Carlos Pinto came to say he had a studio for York and we were to move in with them as part of the family, not visitors. We joined them in late March and stayed until July.

The Pintos had a cook and each member had breakfast whenever they appeared. Lunch was the main meal of the day, at 2 p.m., afternoon tea at 6 p.m. with a full table, mostly sweets; supper was light, served from 10-12 p.m. Some went straight to bed from the table but we usually had a walk. Often we went to the Club Nautico (Yacht Club) with the Pintos before supper. It was pleasant sitting on the verandah watching the yachts maneuvering and the endless view of the sea, but usually we swam or played tennis.

Laura, the family's mother, always appeared each day for tea. Her husband, a poet, had died during the struggle against Franco. Her beauty

was famous all over Spain, because the King had singled her out when she was young and invited her to the palace. Now she only came out of her darkened room at teatime and busied herself up all night while others slept. The sun never touched her, she had a beautiful white complexion, perfect makeup, long painted fingernails; always dressed in black and smoking through a long cigarette holder. Conversation was lively, none of the five adults spoke a word of English which was excellent for our Spanish.

Often Laura would motion us to come into her room and we had many private conversations. She told us a sad story. She had been ill, had an operation, the doctor kept her on morphine too long because of the pain. She hadn't been able to break the habit. She had gone anonymously to a doctor on another island for help, he told her there was only one person who could help her - Dr. Carlos Pinto Grote in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. She thanked him and left. She said that it was impossible to go to her own son for help, and she stayed in her darkened room all day. She showed us her injection needle and the morphine. She wanted so much to free herself of the habit.

Laura had a German father and a Spanish mother; after her father died, her mother married a fine Spanish gentleman, Don Pedro Cabrera. He had a beautiful estate in La Laguna, Tenerife which we visited many times with our new found family. Don Pedro had travelled considerably, had a great interest in art and literature. Imagine our surprise on finding a Leonardo drawing, a Tennier's painting among others in his home. His library was a large building apart, where he had many first and rare editions. He died before our return in 1957 and left these treasures to his natural son from his first marriage.

The Pintos belonged to a small drama group called "Vino POCO," and they made us honorary members. York being such an extrovert with his ability to make people laugh was a welcome addition. The beautiful gardens of Don Pedro's estate were the usual locale for the plays.

Carlos mentioned a book that had been published in Canada, which he thought was the most important one on psychiatry ever published - Hans Selye's "Stress." He said, there was only one copy in the islands and the doctors took turns reading it, but that it was in English. We listened but said nothing. We thought of our friends, the Maxwell Hendersons in Montreal, and wrote asking them to airmail a copy to us. Within a short time along came the huge volume and we were pleased to present it to Carlos. The fact that I translated it for him gave my Spanish another boost.

Franco's revolution had been planned on the island of Tenerife, in the forest in the direction of the volcano Tiede. Around Tiede are extensive lava fields - marvellous high-standing shapes and forms. Beyond the lava beds is the forest where Franco met with his revolutionaries. Carlo's father and many of his friends had died in the ensuing civil war. The coup was unpopular around the world and put Spain's progress well behind other countries in so many ways. Carlos would tell us stories about it, but only inside his own home, never on the street or in the club. He felt that Franco had spies everywhere and because his father had been against Franco, he said he would never be able to hold an important position in medicine. He would be blackballed all through Spain during Franco's lifetime.

Carlos' office was at the entrance to his house, and the hallway his waiting room. Our bedroom was on the second floor, the studio the third. The three Pinto brothers would visit York's studio daily, without interrupting him, but Carlos would stay as long as possible hoping not to be noticed.

About midway in our sojourn, Carlos drove us around the island. We were anxious to see the fishing villages and the different aspects of Tenerife. It rose from sea level to 6400 feet where pines grew. York stopped to sketch as we travelled.

One stop was for a herd of camels while York made notes. The Spanish word for camel is majalulo, ma-ha-lu-lo, a word York loved to roll around

his tongue. It also means a stupid person. When certain words or phrases appealed to his musical sense he would use them as often as possible, with great emphasis, just like a native. Our friends always found this amusing. The Pintos urged him to read poetry and would double up with laughter at his antics.

The first night's stop was in a small fishing village, in a spartan, clean inn. We washed for dinner at an outside basin under a tree, had a drink, a nice simple meal with wine, coffee and liqueur. The entire bill for the three of us, with breakfast, equalled about \$1. We may have been about one-third of the way around the island. The second day after starting at dawn, we reached a special place in the afternoon where Carlos wished to buy goat's milk cheese. Carlos said, "From this point, we could make Santa Cruz tonight if you wished." Sensing that he would like to return we agreed and thereby missed seeing the last third of the island until our return in 1957. It turned out to be the really rugged, mountainous part.

Shortly after arriving we went to Eduardo Westerdahl's bank to change money. Eduardo asked, "Is this money declared?" We hesitated a bit, and he guessed the situation saying, "Come with me," introduced us to an East Indian with a store on the Plaza Candelaria to look at his silks and departed. I bought enough white silk for a suit, then the owner invited us into a back room for coffee. While we sat there talking, York asked about changing money. The merchant offered a much higher exchange than the bank. We dealt there for the rest of our sojourn. Before leaving, we didn't give him enough time to secure currency needed in Morocco. Surprisingly someone spoke to us on the plane, giving us a contact in Tangiers. Once you are known, word goes around and one receives help from unexpected quarters.

Eduardo Westerdahl would rent a car on Sundays and the four of us, including Hilda, would go to different parts of Tenerife. We stopped for lunch at various restaurants where the fare was usually seafood. While Eduardo spoke only Spanish, he was accustomed to talking with foreigners

and had a way of choosing words more easily understood. Whenever an artist from afar came to town, Eduardo would give a little party at his home and always invited us. This is how we met the Belgium painter, Luc Peire, from Paris. Luc was on his way to the Belgium Congo with his wife Jenny. During the Peires' short visit, Luc made a film, including local artists, which he called "Night Fishing." When they left we went to the dock to see them off. Big, black men, their skin glistening in the sun in their scant attire, were loading huge stalks of bananas on the boat. York got so excited thinking about the Belgium Congo, I could hardly get him off the boat before the gangplank was lifted.

While living in Tenerife, a forwarded letter from the US government saying we had failed to return slips of paper when leaving many months ago, asked us to return them to the nearest US consulate. We found the US consul, a Mr. Snidow and filled out the necessary papers. Mr. Snidow later invited us to his home, and we were surprised to see many paintings by Edvard Munch. He had acquired them while on a previous posting to Sweden. One work in particular reminded me of Fred Varley. It was a profile, facing left, with colour and composition similar to Varley's.

We often dined at the Charles Hamiltons in La Laguna, a short eight kilometres into higher, hilly country. The Hamiltons had started a shipping company a few generations earlier. They sent their children to be educated in England, before returning to join the shipping company.

Charles and his brother Wilfred, along with a cousin, would enact carefully planned little playlets on their unsuspecting guests.

The three, unnoticed, quietly moved their chairs to different corners of the room. The lights over a short period had been gradually dimmed. Suddenly a bark would be heard from one corner, answered by another, and then a third. At first it seemed to be outside and you paid little attention. Then more barks becoming angrier as the participants moved towards the centre. By that time the dogs were at each others' throats, a ferocious fight

ensued. Then they gradually moved back, as whimperings came from the losers. It was quite an act, drawing much applause.

York would then come on with a story about an African Potentate on board ship nearing New York. Several reporters boarded his ship well before docking, not wishing to miss a possible story. The first reporter, not knowing whether the Potentate spoke English, said, "Sir, how was your voyage?" The Potentate made many peculiar sounds, screeching, crackling, squealing and so on, finally saying in perfect English, "It was very good." The second said, "Sir, what do you think of the New York skyline?" Again came the squealing, humming, crackling and screeching, followed by "It's very impressive." The third said, "Sir, what do you think of our American girls?" Now with longer squealing, humming, screeching and visible excitement, he said, "They're very beautiful." The first one came back asking, "Sir, when you were arriving we didn't know whether you spoke English, where did you learn English?" More crackling, screeching, humming and squealing, followed by "On short wave."

It's impossible to put into words, the foolish, asinine look on York's face when telling this story, strangers thought he had gone daft, then when the surprising punch line came, they burst into uncontrollable laughter. York was no mean raconteur. Others admitted that they told his story when he wasn't around, but no one would do so in front of him, no matter how much pleading. The painter Al Collier and others taped the story as told by York. As Max Beerbohm said, "Even in private or accidental intercourse, few are the men whose humour can reduce us, be we never so susceptible, to paroxysms of mirth."

One Sunday Eduardo Westerdahl invited York to go on a wine-tasting tour to Arafo, famous for its wine cellars. York actually did settle down to sketch while his friends went into the first cellar. When they brought wine for him to taste, he joined them. They visited many famous cellars. The wine was stored in large, wooden barrels, and the first pitcher of wine drawn

was thrown out. York had a keen sense of taste and surprised the others by selecting the best. They would eat a piece of bread to clear the palate before tasting another wine. Most of the day was spent in Arafo. Eduardo and York returned to Santa Cruz late for Hilda's dinner. I was there when a hat came spinning into the room through the open window. Hilda tossed it right out again, but that didn't discourage them. In they came feeling no pain to entertain us with tales of their experiences.

We used buses to get around, called the Guagua (pronounced Wawa). York painted in Puerta de la Luz, Bajamar, Oratava, Santa Cruz and many other places. At Easter we went to Oratava to see the magnificent carpets of flowers. Millions of fresh petals, held in place with wet sand, covered the main thoroughfare all day. The designs were like Persian carpets. People avoided stepping on them, and the priests were the first to walk on them on their way in the early evening to the church.

Our daughter Virginia, in Toronto, was to be married shortly after our return. She had designed her wedding dress and sent her design to me with her measurements, also the measurements of her two grandmothers. They liked the idea of having their dresses made in the Canaries by my newly discovered Norwegian dressmaker who had designed my silk white suit and my dress for the wedding. All the dresses fitted beautifully.

Near the end of our sojourn, Westerdahl asked York if he would show his paintings in the municipal gallery, Circulo de Bellas Artes. York explained he couldn't afford to frame them, it would be too difficult to get them back to Canada. Westerdahl was anxious that they be shown for the sake of the artists and public to see what was happening in art elsewhere. Westerdahl talked it over with his committee, returned to tell York they would frame the exhibition, pay all expenses, then keep the frames for future use. It was agreed but then there was the problem that nothing would be for sale. He needed his work for his exhibition at the new Laing Gallery in Toronto on his return to Canada. There had already been many inquiries

about purchasing works, when told nothing was for sale, they found this strange. What artist doesn't like to sell his work?

The exhibition opened in June with a crowded gallery and a splendid reception. There were 31 paintings and six drawings. A fine appreciation was written by Westerdahl; he, Pinto and others were on the Air, in the Press, daily speaking about the exhibition.

Westerdahl said York was leaving behind many disciples; they would name a street after him, because he had brought so much to their islands! York left two paintings as gifts - one to Dr. Carlos Pinto and one to Eduardo Westerdahl and a little watercolour for Laura. Laura begged to return with us, thinking she could get help with her morphine problem. We had to refuse much as we loved her, it would have been too big a responsibility.

Shortly before leaving, Maud Dominguez, a French woman and former wife of Tenerife painter, Oscar Dominguez, began to appear with Eduardo and Hilda became less visible. Maud excelled in enamel on copper among other things designed jewellery. I acquired a few pieces. Maud's own marriage with Oscar had broken up because he had a wandering eye for the ladies. At present he was living with a French Countess in her castle on top of a mountain in France. Maud was an interesting and aware person, worldly, intelligent and good to Eduardo. A short time later Maud and Eduardo were married. It was a terrible blow to Hilda and she soon died.

The custom whereby art gallery dealers gave contracts to artists was rare in 1952. The Laing Galleries of Toronto offered York a contract of \$10,000 a year, extra on sales over this amount and if under would acquire paintings up to this amount. They would have first call on his work. A very fair deal and most artists' dream. York signed the contract without much thought because he enjoyed working with his friend Blair Laing, who had plans to show his work in other countries. York was conscious of the fact that the father, Arthur Laing, controlled the galleries and Blair had little say.

The contract took the form of a monthly cheque to the Canary Islands. It would arrive in Tenerife without any list or information about works sold. It looked like just a cold commercial deal. York was a strong individualist, the love and excitement of his painting outweighed money. He decided one year was all he wanted of this arrangement. On his return he would ask to go back to the old system of putting some of his works on consignment and once again be free.