



## BATTERING AGAINST THE FEDERAL WALL

The great American Depression hit the country in October 1929, on a day remembered as Black Tuesday. Banks closed, financiers jumped out of windows, and J. Noah lost a substantial part of his fortune. Yet on the very day the stock market broke, he called up his investment manager from the Union League Club in Manhattan and commanded "Sell anything you can, only make it enough to buy my wife the mink coat she's always wanted." If he had to go down, his Margy would go with him in style.

Margaret, meanwhile, was ready to tackle her biggest challenge—getting the federal Comstock Law repealed by Congress. This time she decided to get advice, she chose the John Price Jones Corporation to help her.

The Jones Corporation gave her expert counsel on how to lobby, organize, and raise funds for a national endeavor, with all of which she agreed, but she was shocked when they suggested she join forces with Mary Ware Dennett to consolidate the birth-control movement. Mrs. Dennett had gotten a lot of publicity as a result of her sex-pamphlet trial, and while she had disbanded the Voluntary Parenthood League, she was receiving almost as many invitations to lecture as Margaret. Besides, the sedate Mary Dennett was far more acceptable to the medical profession than the volatile Margaret Sanger. But, for Margaret to belatedly admire Dennett was one thing—join forces with her? Never

A second shock came when the Jones Corporation declared that a nation-wide campaign would take far more money than Margaret had anticipated. The Depression, instead of ending quickly, as most people had expected, was getting worse. As a result, the Jones people were afraid she would never be able to raise enough funds. Here Margaret was cocky. During the past few years some of the richest people in the country had become her admirers—not only men like Juliet's uncle, Charles Brush, who now contributed even larger gifts to be used at her discretion, but George Eastman of the Eastman Kodak Company, and John D. Rockefeller, son of the man she had blasted in the *Woman Rebel*. In a pinch, of course, she could always call on her husband as well, J. Noah might complain loudly about his financial losses, but he would dig into his pocket when Margaret smiled at him. Indeed, during the height of the Depression years, while bankruptcies were breaking out all over the country, Margaret and her main financial assistant, Mrs. Ida Timme, managed to raise \$150,000 for birth control, no mean sum during those bad years.

Yet perhaps the most shocking suggestion of the Jones Corporation was that Margaret step down as leader of the campaign. They stated frankly that she had become not only famous, but notorious, the Catholic opposition stiffened perceptibly whenever her name was mentioned. Her reaction to this was as expected. She shot off a blistering letter saying that under no circumstances would she retreat from a position, "which years of study, work and consecration have made unique." She immediately gathered scores of volunteer Washington assistants about her and hired a doctor, a minister, and a social worker to lobby at conventions of their colleagues. In 1931 she formally opened a headquarters for her national publicity drive at 1343 H Street—with herself as undisputed head.

Still, she was essentially a general without an army. She needed hundreds of assistants throughout the country—women to organize cities, counties, and states, volunteers to ring doorbells and keep going the kind of grass-roots endeavor that is needed in a political campaign. After a few months, she had organized enough people to mount a campaign.

The best-known was Mrs. Thomas Hepburn, mother of actress Katharine. Mrs. Hepburn was born Katharine Martha Houghton in Corning, New York, though she was so far socially removed from Margaret, they had never met. Katharine's uncle, Amory Houghton, was presi-

dent of the Corning Glass Works, and Katharine's mother was one of those ladies with parasols whom Margaret envied. Yet Katharine Houghton had been brought up to be far more than a socialite. Her mother was the first woman in Corning to start a social discussion club, and she had stated in her will that she wanted her three daughters to go to college. When Amory, the family patriarch and will executor, disagreed, refusing to dole out college money, Katharine, though only sixteen, threatened to take him to court. "He can run a big factory, but not me," she stormed.

At Bryn Mawr she majored in political economy, supplementing Amory's stingy allowance by tutoring. She put up a sign in the washroom offering to teach anyone in any subject.

Soon after graduation, she married Dr. Thomas Hepburn. They settled in Hartford, Connecticut, where the young Mrs. Hepburn founded the Woman's Equal Franchise League, which later became The League of Women Voters. Attractive, red-headed, and feminine under her starched shirtwaists and mannish ties, she spoke about woman's suffrage on street corners and before men's clubs. Her league won women the right to vote in Connecticut in 1919, a year ahead of the national victory.

Fully aware of the need for birth control as well, she bore two children a year and a half apart, decided this was enough for the time being, waited four years to have two more, and then took another four years to complete her family.

Prostitution and venereal disease attracted her attention, when she found out that the biggest brothel in town was located next to the police station, on property owned by the Catholic Church. She trumpeted her findings so loudly the brothel was closed. Later, when a friend died of acute gonorrheal salpingitis caught from her new husband, Mrs. Hepburn founded the American Social Hygiene Society with Harvard's President Eliot at its head.

She had met Margaret at a birth-control dinner in 1928, laughed with her over the coincidence of their coming from the same town, and now joined the anti-Comstock campaign as Federal Legislative Chairman.

In Washington, Mrs. Hepburn was peppery. If she thought a Congressman was talking too long and boring his listeners during a Congressional debate, she moved to a seat behind him and pulled at his coattails until he sat down. But when she decided to run for the Senate herself, her husband objected so strongly she gave in.

The campaign under way, Margaret suddenly came to another decision. She would dismiss Anna Lifschiz, her longtime secretary, and do it as ruthlessly as she had divorced Bill Sanger. She summoned Anna to the living room of the house she had rented in Washington as her personal retreat and announced "All things wear out their usefulness in time. Typewriters, desks, people. I'm sorry, but you have lost your usefulness to the movement. You'll have to go."

In Anna's place she took on Florence Rose, a stout spinster with what her friends called a passion for push. "You can talk and talk to Florence Rose but she doesn't budge," was a common remark. (She would dismiss Florence Rose as abruptly when Rose proved too obstinate and pushy for the staid university crowd Margaret began to associate with.)

Later, Margaret became contrite over her dismissal of Anna, and found her a job as manager of the newly opened branch of the Holland Rantos Company in Los Angeles. When she told Anna she was doing this, Anna protested that she had no more experience managing an office than she originally had in typing. But Anna took in misfits and oddballs who worked so hard for her that the operation became a success.

For the New Year, Hugh, knowing her passion for diaries, sent her one as a New Year's present, interlarding the dates with poetic quotes in his tiny handwriting. Margaret, meanwhile, planned an intensive speaking tour of the West Coast as well as a Western states conference in Los Angeles.

The conference was held on February 20 at the Los Angeles Biltmore. Margaret's diary records Mrs. B. P. Schulberg, wife of the movie producer and mother of Budd Schulberg, as a member of its committee, "plus at least four Doctors of Divinity, two Ph. D.'s and two M. D.'s, the last being the hardest to snare."

J. Noah joined her in Los Angeles, perhaps because he had no other way of filling his time. Summers he still made the round of fine hotels, reciting to Margaret the details of every meal. But winters he stayed at Willowlake with nothing to do, except chat with the gardener or visit a neighbor if his chauffeur could manage to get one of his cars down the icy slope. The Christmas before, Grant had sent him a box of fine cigars, and he admitted, "I am so bored I have been smoking a big one three times a day."

Out West, they rented a small house in Pasadena, complete with

cook, butler, maids, and chauffeur Juliet visited them on her way home from Mexico after her movie proved an abysmal failure. She was thoroughly downcast. Margaret thought it would cheer Juliet up if she, Juliet, and J. Noah formally became members of Unity, a religious cult they had been toying with for some time.

Unity was an obscure cult founded in 1887 by Charles Fillmore, a crippled and bankrupt man, whose wife was ill with tuberculosis. He announced he had discovered "a mental treatment that was guaranteed to cure every ill the flesh is heir to," though he declared it was neither a church nor a denomination, but "a non-sectarian educational institution demonstrating that the teaching of Jesus is practical as a way of life seven days a week."

Fillmore admitted that sin and sickness were real but taught they could be overcome. Health was natural, he said, sickness unnatural, if one avoided anything that injured the body such as anger, hatred, self-interest, alcohol, or tobacco, he could tune into the Universal Mind and get whatever he desired.

Then, having declared against self-interest, he reversed himself and had the audacity to rewrite the twenty-third psalm:

The Lord is my banker—my credit is good  
 He giveth me the key to his strongbox  
 He restoreth my faith in richness  
 He guideth me in the paths of prosperity  
 for His name's sake!

This psalm had strong appeal, because the Depression was now in full swing and Fillmore asked for no dues, only "love-offerings" and subscriptions to his paper.

Margaret in particular got a great deal from Unity, staying in it for the rest of her life. It seems she sought many substitutes for her lost Catholicism. In her 1930 diary she reminded herself to buy a book called *The Christian Science Practitioner*, and another called *Egoists, a Book of Supermen*. She gave donations to the American Tagore Association and, at the other extreme, attended a Socialist get-together on New York's lower East Side. At the same time, in an interesting juxtaposition, she rated her favorite hotels and Parisian shops.

She remained generous to her old friends and family, too. Vito Sicelchia and his children got their annual Christmas present. The

Board of Child Welfare of the Corrado Children's Home and the Poughkeepsie Children's Home regularly got fifty dollars each, while her sister Nan got an allowance of one hundred dollars a month and her brother Joe, out of work, was given one hundred dollars a month, as well. And when Grant graduated from Princeton Medical School, sending her a telegram saying, "Passed everything with flying colors," she rushed him a return letter. "What wonderful news, dearest son, your telegram brought us. Pater was so proud and happy he began telling everyone as though *he* did it." She deposited five hundred dollars in Grant's name to start a savings account. At the same time, Stuart got a gift of two hundred dollars. All this, plus the eighteen hundred dollars a year for Havelock, and a special sum to Robert Parker for helping her do an article for *Parents' Magazine*, were duly entered in her check book. A whopping one hundred seven thousand was paid to Tripler and Company, New York's most exclusive haberdasher, for the made-to-order clothes J. Noah needed to accommodate his extra weight. All in all, unlike many of the formerly wealthy, Mr. and Mrs. J. Noah H. Slee were not singing, "Brother, can you spare a dime?" during the Depression.

Yet with all her high living and religious strivings, Margaret was often sad. She had odd dreams, one of which she related to Havelock.

Last night I dreamed about Bernard Shaw. I was lying on his bed (innocently) with him. His hands were bandaged from broken wrists and he was pink and fat—very jolly with children (his own) running about. Later I dreamed that like a flash of light came a picture of the Madonna & Child on a wall in front of me, a beautiful painting filling all the side of the wall. The queerest thing was that when the flash came I made the sign of the cross on myself as the Catholic children are taught to do. Then at once I was amazed that I did that—so that I seemed to be in two states of consciousness at once. It was a nice dream so full of color and motion. All because I started to dream of Shaw.

She dreamed about Bill Sanger too, writing Grant.

Some day when you are in N. Y. I want you to look up your father and let me know if he is in a bad way. I've been dreaming about him for several weeks off and on and think you or Stuart

should look in on him and give him some money if he is ill or very hard up

Margaret undoubtedly felt guilty about Bill and through Grant, who had remained his father's favorite, sought to remedy the situation. Grant found Bill living on the top floor of a walk-up tenement at 277 West Eleventh Street, not ill but hard up indeed. If help was offered him, he would certainly have refused.

Margaret as usual was the chief speaker in behalf of her campaign. In addition, she used a lecture bureau to arrange nearly two thousand speeches for her associates. The best of these speakers was Hazel Moore, a charming Southerner who had left the Red Cross to go after senators, congressmen, and organizations like the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Groups like the General Federation of Women's Clubs took special efforts to reach. When Mrs. Moore, for example, showed up in Detroit to attend one of their national conventions, the delegates wouldn't let her in. Refusing to be fazed, she waited outside and handed out pamphlets to the delegates as they emerged. Even after she put on her best Southern accent, it took her weeks to win over the South Carolina delegation, months to win over a half a dozen other Southern clubs, and a full year to get the Federation itself to appoint a committee to report on the "doctors-only bill." After three years, Mrs. Moore got what she was after—a vote of 493-17 in the bill's favor.

Religious groups were similarly wooed, though here, Margaret usually preferred to do the wooing herself. For five minutes on the platform of a religious convention, she would travel hundreds of miles. When she heard that Rabbi Sidney Goldstein and Reverend Charles Francis Potter might be receptive to her cause, she hurried to see them and plead with them to contact other ministers. When she got the support of the American Unitarian Association followed by the Special Commission on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage of the Presbyterian Churches, and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ (a parent body representing twenty-three million Protestants), she sent out jubilant press releases. And when the United Churches of Christ gave her bill an overwhelming backing by declaring it was "in the interests of morality and sound scientific knowledge and the protection of both parents and children (to) repeal both Federal and State laws prohibit-

ing the communication of information about birth control by physicians and other qualified persons," she sent out more releases, quoting the Churches of Christ word for word

"I couldn't have put it better myself," she exulted, and the *New York Herald Tribune* and *World Telegram* agreed

All this activity, of course, stirred the Catholics to even stiffer opposition. A strident foe was Father Charles Coughlin, the so-called "radio priest," who thundered "We know that contraceptives are bootlegged in corner drug stores surrounding our high schools. Why are they around the high schools? To teach them to fornicate and not get caught. All this bill means is how to fornicate and not get caught." When this last harangue was made before a congressional hearing at which were present many of Margaret's associates, they felt as if they had almost been called prostitutes to their faces, and Margaret had to restrain them from throwing their inkwells at him.

The Reverend Wendell Corey of Notre Dame used his own highly emotional approach. "Continue the practice (of birth control)," said Reverend Corey, "and the sons of the yellow man or the black will some day fill the President's chair in Washington." And a large group of Catholic doctors in Brooklyn and the Bronx quickly organized a campaign of their own against the bill, with Methodists and Baptists joining them. This caused the *Milwaukee Sentinel* to protest "The spirit of the guarantee of religious liberty has been forgotten apparently by the very churches which thrive under its protection." And so the battle raged.

The Federal Legislative Committee now went into heated action. If twenty thousand letters had to be sent to men and women throughout the country asking them to urge their congressional representatives to support the anti-Comstock bill, the Washington volunteers stayed at their desks all night and got them out. If they became so weary they wanted to quit early, Margaret took them all out for coffee, and laughed them into a new surge of effort that kept them working long into the evening. Her laugh seldom failed to recharge them, it still had a magic all its own.

If it were not for the haven of Willowlake, however, she could not have kept going. England had been her escape valve for years. During the hectic campaign time, Willowlake took its place. When she became exhausted, she retreated there, ate her breakfast on the porch that

overlooked the lake's blue waters and holed up in her private apartment for lunches and dinners J Noah became more and more furious over her seclusion, screaming at her over the house phone, but she refused to budge "I always tell him that Ellis once said there ought to be a league for the husbands of famous wives," she confided to one of her associates Slee wanted no league He wanted his wife, but she couldn't be had

Only her old maid Daisy was allowed to penetrate her seclusion Daisy indeed had become practically a member of the family She would march into the living room whenever she felt like it, and slump into an armchair to listen to the conversation "What are you doing here?" Slee would demand furiously "Just gettin' an education Just gettin' an education," Daisy would reply

Always, though, Margaret was quickly back on the campaign trail, with Slee usually going along From the Western states conference, Margaret had written to Grant, whom she now seldom saw, "It's a lot of work I wonder I don't stop and play with life a little while I have the golden opportunity to play I guess a queer driving force gets hold of us, isn't it? You have it too, I think "

After the Western states conference, she reported to Grant that it was a BIG success and detailed to him a few days later a typical schedule

Am going hard, lecturing every night Pater *wild* We leave Thurs March 13 for Denver—I speak there and leave for Chicago the same night Wild again! Arrive Chicago the 17th and leave for Madison, Wis at once Then up to Minneapolis (to speak) for 18th & 19th—then back to Oberlin College and cross again to St Louis for the 23rd and leave that night for home via Penn R R Pater will go on to N Y alone from Chicago

Grant answered wistfully from the university that he was dying to see her, didn't know when he'd missed her more He guessed it was because, "as I grow older I appreciate you more "

At this point Margaret got the politically naive idea of trying to get lame-duck congressmen to sponsor her "doctor's only" bill If Comstock had his bill passed by lame ducks, she could too But Comstock's success had been a fluke, generally lame ducks, knowing their political careers are through, mainly linger around Washington until their time

is up They may occasionally try to get something accomplished, but they don't try too hard

The first lame duck whose help Margaret thought she had won over to her cause was an eighty-year-old senator from Massachusetts, Frederick Huntington Gillette He had been around for many years and distinguished himself by doing nothing He did nothing for her either Three other lame ducks did little more They each went so far as to introduce the "doctor's only" bill, and each time they did she wrote Havelock jubilantly "I'm sure we'll win this time " But she was always let down, they couldn't get it out of committee, for their fellow congressmen might act one way in private, another in public Birth control was just too touchy a subject to be aired Margaret had done a survey showing that few congressmen had more than three children, clearly birth control was being practiced Still, one senator summed up his feelings "The whole business is so damn nasty I can't bear to talk about it or even think of it If I were the Creator and were making the universe all over, I'd leave sex out of it"

And even when some of the more liberal legislators were willing to open up the debate, the Catholics opposed them so vigorously they were overpowered When Mrs Dennett had campaigned, the Catholics had given her merely lukewarm opposition When Margaret or her followers appeared, they became fiery The National Catholic Welfare Council set up its own lobby in Washington on the grounds of "protecting morality and the family," and matched every group that backed Margaret's bill with one that opposed it They even stooped to personal attacks on Margaret, using an old tactic called "ad hominem," meaning "if you can't attack the subject, attack the person behind it "

Some non-Catholics joined them The Canon, William Sheafe Chase, an Episcopalian, once more denounced the doctor's bill as a "crook's bill," insinuating that Margaret and her husband were making huge profits out of manufacturing contraceptives when actually the opposite was true They were buying them at any price and reselling them at cost, just to keep up with the demand

Slee, who was in charge of buying diaphragms, was very particular about quality A 1930 letter, from an L Halsenbad of the Ramses Company in New York, does its best to answer his complaints about faulty diaphragms Halsenbad has been abroad and compared his diaphragms with those of German make He is sure his are better—"less blisters, less cloudy, more transparent," yet Slee is dissatisfied

Slee wanted the shape changed Halsenbad has the forms altered Slee has complained the diaphragms are too heavy Halsenbad has them made thinner The rings aren't right He has them corrected Other firms use compound rubber but he uses pure rubber "which is as much different from using low grade axle grease as Three-in-One Oil " Halsenbad is sure that when Slee and his wife get his diaphragms, they pound them, pummel them, step on them, and send them back as defective But he's been a rubber manufacturer for forty years, and to please the successful Mr Slee whom he respects, he'll try again

Margaret responds in her own way to the Catholics' attacks on her She went so far as to accuse one woman who appeared as a legislative witness for the Catholic Church of knowing nothing about birth control because she was a "childless woman " Indeed, when Pope Pius XI issued his 1930 encyclical on birth control *Casti Connubi* (On Chaste and Christian Marriage), Margaret went after him too

The Pope issued his marriage encyclical in response to the British Lambeth Conference held on August 15, 1930, where the Anglican Bishops cautiously endorsed birth control as an alternative to abstinence "as long as these measures are carried out for sound reasons and done in the light of Christian principles " Pope Pius XI refused to go that far For the first time, to be sure, he declared that intercourse between married persons during pregnancy or after the menopause (or at other times when conception was impossible) was not an act "against nature " But in all other cases, abstinence was still the only permissible method of birth control

In an article written in answer to the Pope, which was published in *The Nation* and widely distributed in reprint form, Margaret declared abstinence "positively harmful to health " It could, she said, bring on serious nervous derangement As her authority, she cited "medical science," though she never defined the words "medical science" any more than the church defined the word "natural," except to say that natural meant "something that appealed to the natural reason of all men "

If Margaret had been a better scholar, she would have said that contraception had never been specifically mentioned in either the Old or the New Testaments Nor had there been official church opposition to it until Sixtus V issued an encyclical against it in the sixteenth century, and even then, he rescinded his encyclical two years later

The prohibition against contraceptives, the Pope stated, was mainly to protect women, as the male user of contraceptives was apt to undergo moral degeneration "It is also to be feared that the man growing used to the employment of contraceptive practices, may finally lose respect for the woman, and no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer his respected and beloved companion " Considering this statement, Jesuit historian Garry Wills points out that it might as well be said that frequent repetition of communion would lower respect for God

Margaret took a break from her campaign work while Congress was in its summer recess, writing to Havelock about the Bureau "We are now grand as can be Your picture hangs on the walls as always and blessings and graces our work " After a summer at Willowlake, she told him, she was planning to take a trip to London, then go on to Zurich in September to attend an international birth-control conference she had organized there, "to include all the things that Geneva left out " But she postponed her trip when she heard that Havelock was ill "It simply made me shudder to think of your losing consciousness even for a few minutes I was so relieved to learn you are O K again Pray keep well & don't do anything but *SIT!*"

J Noah was in the hospital too, recovering from surgery for a double hernia

Still, Margaret soon changed her mind again She would go to Europe earlier than planned because she heard that Hugh, practically broke, was thinking of selling Sand Pit

I can't bear for you to even think of giving up Sand Pit!!! The idea is preposterous I wrote you yesterday that I should likely not find time to go to Sand Pit (while en route to Zurich) and asked if you could meet me at the boat & drive me to London Now I *must* see you that's all Don't for God's Sake sell Sand Pit without first giving your friends a chance to help you We have all been having a difficult time financially the last six months But something must be done & can & will be done

She sailed for London on the *Europa* on July 23, leaving J Noah at home to recuperate When she received a cable from him soon after she

arrived, saying "Return Every day is like a week Cruel to leave me," she scribbled across the cable her intended reply "How can you send such a selfish message to me when I am so far away?"

After a month in England with Hugh and Havelock, Margaret left to attend the Zurich conference There, Margaret impressed Anna K Daniels, an American doctor, as a "neatly dressed woman who looked always sad" But when Dr Daniels flirted with a bachelor whom Margaret considered her exclusive domain, Margaret informed her that, when a desirable man was in the offing, she had first choice As Dr Daniels knew nothing about Margaret's personal life, she concluded that Margaret had no husband or children She was quite surprised later when she was working at the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and casually asked Grant Sanger who was on the staff "Are you by any chance related to the famous Margaret Sanger?" He replied quietly "She is my mother" It hadn't occurred to him to mention the fact

Margaret had many reasons for appearing sad during 1930 Hugh was broke and Havelock was ill, and as an added slap in the face, or so it seemed to her, the *Birth Control Review* had quite changed The magazine was now regularly using articles and reviews by Mary Ware Dennett as well as advertising a free copy of her pamphlet "The Sex Side of Life" with each new subscription Equally outrageous to Margaret, it was listing Marie Stopes' book *Sex and the Young* as suggested reading on sex education, instead of recommending only Margaret's *What Every Boy and Girl Should Know*

She countered these personal blows in many ways One was to get J Noah to send a check to Hugh, who she said was as ill as Havelock J Noah sent it on left-over stationery from his former business, decorated with brightly colored pictures of Three-in-One oil in cans and jars "My dear Poet," he wrote

I am so truly sorry to hear of your illness and that you are so utterly miserable, that it becomes a pleasure to me to enclose a small check so you may go to the sea shore or elsewhere as I am a great believer in a change of surroundings to be one of the best panaceas for right hopeful thinking I know how very depressed one must get to be out of sorts As today is M S's birthday have been reading proof with her all morning for her new autobiography I am glad to report her health better than usual, imag-

me her taking a swim in the lake every morning, especially these autumn days, and while I take a cold shower the year round, I want a warm bathroom Dear man get well soon

The Zurich conference proved quite different from the Geneva conference three years before Birth control was openly discussed now—a significant advance

Back at Willowlake, Margaret reported her success to Havelock

Just returned from Zurich The Conference was good About 125 persons, mainly doctors and other chemists, all experienced in B C techniques *I had a good time too* I'm planning another Conference for Geneva soon, getting to be known as a good conference organizer so it's time to stop

She went on to boast to Havelock of speaking to nearly twenty thousand people in various places in the two weeks since her return, and spending eight nights in a row on sleepers shuttling from town to town "I'm getting so I like to sleep on trains So, like Johnny Walker, I'm still going strong"

She had a laugh when the *Review* ran a humorous story by Heywood Broun describing his visit to a home for unmarried mothers to which many young women came back regularly year after year A social worker he spoke to explained, "We try to rehabilitate them but in certain cases we fail over and over again" "Why," asked Broun, "don't you think it would be a good idea to give these unmarried mothers contraceptive information so they wouldn't be such steady patients?" "Oh," answered the worker, "that wouldn't be moral"

As for Margaret's biography, once Hugh had refused to do it, Margaret decided to write it herself She made copious notes, then engaged Rackham Holt to do the actual writing, though it was signed predictably "By Margaret Sanger" Not knowing it was in preparation, Ellis had been approached by Dutton to do a book that would be about her and the entire subject of birth control He declined, commenting to Margaret on October 21

Such a book is badly needed, and it is very nice indeed that I should be thought of in connection with it But I have written them to say that with my increasing years and diminishing

strength, I cannot. Even if I could, the really important part of the whole story can only be told by you. By simply telling your own experiences it would be fascinating material. The dry matter-of-fact history of the movement does not seem to me important, and might be rather dull for the ordinary reader.

Margaret was modest with few people. Havelock was one. She replied that she could tell about her personal role in the struggle, but was neither "learned nor scientific enough to do more." It was an admission she would seldom make again, except to Dr. Robert Latou Dickinson. It seems both Havelock and Dickinson were men of such compelling character they elicited from Margaret a kind of humility she would never reveal to others.