



HUGH'S NEW LOVER

In 1932, despite a forceful and greatly stepped-up campaign that caused hundreds of pro-birth-control letters to pour in, the "doctor's bill" died in a Senate committee. A Vermont Republican, Senator Warren Austin, cast the deciding "nay" vote, using the Depression as an argument. The President's Research Committee on Social Trends, Austin said, had discovered that a dip in the birthrate was taking place of its own accord because of the wider use of contraception. This was hurting labor, agriculture, and industry. Certified milk sales were down because there were fewer babies to drink them, jobs in the building trades were down because there was less demand for housing. What was needed to solve the Depression was a larger group of people, not a smaller one, in order to step up demand.

This kind of argument was new. Before, the birth-control debate had centered around individual well-being versus national morality. Defending morality, a woman had been called lazy or selfish when she didn't have a house full of children. Her health, pocketbook, even sanity, didn't matter, a houseful she must have, or "race suicide" would be the result.

Margaret answered Senator Austin and his colleagues by calling the members of Congress "boneheads, spineless and brainless." Anyone could see, she told them, that it was the huge number of people on relief that caused higher taxes and fewer jobs. And as to race suicide, the

middle and upper classes were still having as many children as before, while the poor were having the same number, if not more. And statistics showed that the birthrate among the unemployed was forty-eight percent higher than among those with jobs.

Congress slowly began listening. Even Monsignor Ryan of the National Catholic Welfare Council listened. Indeed, on April 15, 1932, Monsignor Ryan did an unprecedented thing. He conferred with Colonel J. J. Toy, a member of Margaret's staff, on the possibility of a compromise. In order to stop the bootleg sales of harmful contraceptives, Ryan said he might quietly support a doctor's bill. He would try to find a Catholic doctor who was willing to draft a bill acceptable to the Church, and after that, a Catholic lobbyist "to get the word around to the Catholic strength in the House and Senate to help get it passed." But Margaret refused even to listen to Colonel Toy's report. To her the Church was *THE ENEMY*, no matter what they proposed, and she couldn't work with them.

The golden moment of compromise lost, Margaret's bill was destined to die in committee again. But having gone as far as she had, she had no choice but to continue to fight on. In a letter to Hugh, she described her daily work:

Awaken 8 A M , rush to Senate Office building to meet important Senator at 9 15. Promptly Mr S arrives, Secretary reports so sorry but Senator is not in & left word last night he would not be at office because of sudden call to committee meeting. I look at my list of other Senators & go down the Marble halls to catch another, "too busy" "too busy"—"not today come again" "Not interested," etc , etc

I then go over to the Capitol at noon when Congress convenes & after roll call I send in my card & ask the Senator to see me for a moment, just to make a definite appointment. Sometimes I get one & sometimes I don't. After I listen to their loud talk from the gallery I come home to dictate dozens & dozens of letters to my Secty.

J N and I have our evenings together and read aloud or listen to the symphonies on the radio or go out to hear Paderewski or some of the famous ones who come here to play or sing. Not that I care at all for social doings, except that in this Capital city

one hears the gossip of the world as it reflects itself in the doings of the various embassies

Now there Mr Darling—this Sunday morning, so far, was given in communion to you Ship ahoy! J N comes to breakfast

In another letter to Hugh she let a different note creep in Recently he had told her he had taken several trips to Germany, and since he seldom traveled far from home, she guessed that it was because he had found another lover Though to herself she swore she didn't care, she gave herself away in a letter of January 31

Beloved of darlings, It's simply ages since I had your last letter

Germany! So you did go It was good for me to know that, after I had so positively said it was a mistake Good for my conceit, but better yet for you to go no matter on what You went, saw, conquered & behold, joy, faith, new hopes, visions A further expansion of your consciousness & love

I'd fly to Germany myself if I that I'd find for me what you found for you (Take that in the beak!) Jealous? pooh! I leave that to little people Look again on that photo (of me) that worldly, smart one & ask if she could be jealous! *Nine Nine*

Even this meager admission of jealousy was new to Margaret When she had sensed a new woman in Hugh's life before, she had exclaimed, "You're in love! Who's the lucky woman?" But in a few years much had changed Margaret was fifty-two now While her hazel eyes were as widely spaced as ever and her figure almost as good, her nose had begun to flare at the nostrils and her burnished hair to fade Besides, the constant congressional rejections were upsetting her deeply She needed reassurance and good company more than ever, it was all very well for her to tell Hugh she didn't care for sociability, she did And as for the idyllic domestic picture of J Noah sitting listening to symphonies with her or taking turns reading aloud, her granddaughter says these were pure imagination She may have liked to listen to good music, but J Noah had never been caught listening to music in his life, much less reading a book aloud He liked to eat, drink, gamble, ride, go to the races, play the stock market, and make love to his wife, his in-

terests stopped there But Hugh, whose wife Janet still played the piano beautifully, and whose daughter Bridget was already giving cello concerts, had to be impressed

She turned for comfort to old friends, answering Havelock's New Year's letter with

Your dear letter of New Years Eve came this morning & it is one of my dearest joys to know that you remember that evening when we sat in your kitchen at Brixton & saw the old 1914 go on its way and welcome in the New Year with a bottle of your famous Hock My years are too full & active to be normal anymore, but it's interesting to be alive & well

I leave tomorrow for West Va where I speak before the miners It will be interesting to me, because I know the conditions there are said to be as primitive as in Russia Our own internal financial worries and uncertainty occupies all our thoughts & discussion J N's affairs have struck rock bottom & only last week he lost his seat on the Stock Exchange which cost him \$650,000 *That is wiped out* It was from that his income came I try not to be depressed and cheerless—so here is my love to you

Margaret had once called her husband a "green-eyed monster" when he was closefisted Now he had reason to be She tried to be thrifty herself, staying a few days in a three-dollar hotel and describing humorously to J Noah how cold it was and how bad the stale rolls in the Continental breakfast tasted "Well, I thanked God for the coffee anyway Perhaps I'm spoiled dear But if I am it's your fault for making me fastidious "

After speaking to the miners she wrote Havelock of their troubles Most had been out of work for a year and were living in tents after being dispossessed from their shacks Yet the County Welfare Association "gave them a \$2 40 allowance for food no matter if their family consisted of four or ten No doctor, nurse or preacher comes near them besides " She had left for home feeling terribly upset, and gone straight to bed

In a later letter she told how, in Newark, where she was invited to speak by the president of the local medical society, her lecture was canceled when twenty Catholic doctors threatened to resign on the grounds that she was "merely a nurse " She offered to send Dickinson

instead, again the society refused saying now that contraception was "a moral, not a medical problem "

By the end of May, after months of lobbying, traveling, fighting for the right to speak and sometimes losing, Margaret's energy was depleted She took ill with one of her recurrent intestinal attacks, and asked Grant to come down to Washington from the university to see her After he left, she sent him a note of thanks saying,

It was really adorable of you to hop on that train and come straight to me when you knew I was ill

Of course Pater doubtless threw you sky high for extravagance! But just keep your head up and always come to me if ever I send word that I am ill I have a rising temperature again this morning but I would not have Pater know it, lest he come dashing down & make me worse

Just two months before, she added, she had intended to stop at Princeton on her way back from a lecture engagement in St Louis, but had decided not to because J Noah was about to go into the hospital for another operation, she thought she should go straight home to be with him instead Obviously, even though he often annoyed her, Margaret knew she owed her husband a great deal, and tried to give it At this point, she was trying as hard as she could

Slee's operation turned out to be minor, however, and he soon left for Woodstock, Vermont, to recuperate But once there, he started to worry again about both his health and his money He scolded Margaret on June 24 "Your three letters all received today *Airmail is a waste of postage to this place* " He begged her to take some time off and visit him at Woodstock, but Margaret refused because she wasn't well herself A medical checkup in Berlin after the Zurich conference had shown her to be suffering from arthritis of both sides of her legs, particularly of the left knee joint The doctor there advised her to take some injections and avoid standing whenever possible

Back in the States, she had another checkup and was advised to eat bland foods only Since she found it hard to stick to her new diet, she decided to go to a health spa where her meals would be rationed Knowing that Slee could deny her nothing where her health was concerned, she chose a spa in Marienbad, Czechoslovakia Before leaving New York she described her situation to Havelock

* * *

I have been ill This is the first day I am able to be up and about since May the 21st, the day following my two rebuttals and the oppositions hearings & our own I was seized with pain in the pit of my tummy (called the Solar plexus by some)

Two Dr 's summoned, only to shake their heads & say they did not know One said "Colic," another suggested gall bladder, but no symptoms to verify (the last) diagnosis Only codine or morphine gave temporary relief & the old demon came back again Then on Sunday a headache set in which was like being pounded with hammers inside me Not even codine helped that Finally Monday morning a temp of 103 settled the question of the best place to be & an ambulance arrived & I was taken to the Garfield Hospital All this happened in Wash I spent ten days in the hospital, being XRayed, analysed, tested inside & out The Surgeon decided it was gall bladder inflammation, but no operation necessary So I came up here & the headache only ceased two days ago I have a lovely girl-like figure as I only weigh 115 lbs (alas the strain & pain leaves wrinkles & a look far from girlish) Anyway I am recovering The Dr wants me to take four months rest away from work & *thinking* I'm not certain that is not a backhanded compliment and by the time this letter reaches you I may be on the Ocean en route to Marienbad I will go directly to Bremen on a one cabin or Tourist boat J N can not afford to send me, but if I go Tourist Class I think I can get through

I won't try to tell you about the Hearings They were stupendous The point is that the bill *nearly passed* So near that the opposition have doubled their activity Some people claim that my illness was the result of Catholic venom Marie Stopes would say they tried to kill her Anyway it was a glorious winter's work, heavenly in many ways I am a hundred years richer in experience & a million in knowledge Next time we will win!

By mid-July she was in Marienbad with Juliet, who was always glad for an excuse to go anywhere with her Another friend went along too, and they found accommodations in the house in which Goethe had lived, Margaret taking his room "His very own stove and clock (are) before me," she exulted to Havelock, "and his portrait and that of his last loves hanging high above me "

She went on to describe Marienbad

It's amusing to see crowds of grown up fat men & women walking around to music with green or blue or red glasses in their hands sucking water out of glass like babies on their bottles They are all so ugly looking & so hideous in shape I wonder God can make such monstrosities I do not know how long this cure will take It is my real opportunity to take a good rest, and I intend to do it as long as my money holds out I have no hope of a stopover in England which quite breaks my heart to think of The boat stopped at Plymouth & I remembered so keenly that trip from London when a wonderful & great man carried a sick lady's bag to Plymouth & waved her good bye as she sailed off to U S A in 1921 How long ago that seems!! I seem to have lived a million years since that year

Congress has not adjourned yet so I do not know what has become of our bill we were all so nearly exhausted with the heat, & hanging around & the various hearings, Etc that I began to want to kill one special Congressman from Vermont We spent all the money in 7 months which should have lasted a year so the staff had to take a two months' holiday Now we are in the hands of the gods

Do you hear from Hugh? I have had no letter in ages

Havelock hadn't heard much from Hugh either

I have occasional nice letters from Hugh when I write to him but not otherwise Just now, I hear incidentally that Eva Schumann, my German translator whom he mysteriously went out to Germany to see, is staying at the Sand Pit

At last Margaret knew the name of Hugh's new German friend In time she would learn that Eva Schumann was a professional translator who lived in Berlin and had done some translating for Ellis by correspondence She had managed to get to England and lived for a while as a boarder at Sand Pit where she and Hugh had become lovers "(Eva) says life is quite easy and comfortable at Sand Pit," Ellis went on, "with no signs of 'hardship' except that Janet helps in washing up, which Eva must consider a hardship "

Even though Margaret knew that Hugh had a new lover, Havelock's confirmation gave her another jolt. She needed another operation on her throat and decided to have it done in Paris. She also decided to take the initiative and write to Hugh, referring in the letter to a former lover in the hope of making him jealous.

Paris is hot and as my last visit to Paris was with a man I adored in a big way I am suffering agonies from the memories of the past. He died in Paris after I went back to the U S A. Sometime I will tell you about him and his influence on my life.

Undoubtedly she was referring to Portet.
She wrote to Grant from the elegant Hotel Crillon.

Darling Granty I am in Paris and broke! So I came to the most exclusive hotel! I sent you a (birthday) cable, trusting it reaches you on time. Your birthdays bring back to me always how much you were wanted and loved before you came. So so long before! Also how dear Stuart was at the time, and how he too looked for your arrival. It's something to study in the future—how the wanted child differs, if he does, from the casually conceived and unwanted child.

She wrote to Ellis in the same spirit. "I am thrilled all the time by the things my boys do. I hope this maternal pride is not too old-fashioned."

Home again, Havelock wrote her a report on his "amazing Spanish pupil Hildegard who has started a magazine on Sexual Reform and published two books though she is only in her teens," and Margaret went back to work. Hugh still hadn't answered her letter. Finally, he sent a short note. She replied immediately, reminding him of the little "peck" on the cheek he had given her when she did stop in England for a quick visit on her way home and begging at least for a continuation of their friendship.

That letter of Oct. 28 Hugh dearest, was just what I needed the day it came. Yes, all that I have always said about your great mind & heart is true. And the poor little, weak, puny, sickly peck was true too alas. Anyway you are "free," I know what you mean.

Hugh, at least I have an idea you feel like I felt once when a very young girl I knew a man that a girl of seventeen thinks is the last word of manhood We played around together during a vacation The family did not like him & discouraged his attentions He knew it & resented it It was horrid I went back to school, but was unhappy No other man at school could come near being what I wanted him to be—only the lost one was right

Luckily, she didn't have time to dwell on the past, soon she was back in Washington lobbying and fund raising This, plus lecturing, gave her few free hours In a letter scribbled to Havelock, she said

All kinds of work could be done were it not for lack of funds, but the organization & movements that can survive during this depression must be worthy Spain would be the best place to hold another conference & if your amazing Hildegard could get up sufficient interest to write us to come to Barcelona or Madrid I'd get the money by hook or crook to hold it there It would be like thumbing one's nose at the Vatican

On Dec 5 I go out for a meeting every evening until Dec 11—then I finish until March After Christmas I go to Calif In the meantime I am running the Clinic at 17 W 16th St , also the one in Harlem for colored people, directing four workers in Wash D C & several in the field, besides trying to run a big house in the country on a much reduced income & keeping a husband from being lonely (Yet) I am "weller" that I've been in years

Maybe she was "weller" because, just when she needed him most as a rival to Hugh, a new man had come into her life