

BACKGROUND

SOME lives drift here and there like reeds in a stream, depending on changing currents for their activity. Others are like swimmers knowing the depth of the water. Each stroke helps them onward to a definite objective.

In one of the earlier years of my lecturing for birth control, some one came to me and asked me how long it had taken me to prepare my lecture. About fourteen years! I replied without hesitation.

As I look back upon my life, I see that every part of it was a preparation for the next. The most trivial of incidents fits into the larger pattern like a mosaic in a preconceived design. It seems to me that every person with whom I came into contact left an impression, or instilled into my life an influence that definitely formed a part of this design.

It becomes clearer and clearer to me that it has always been the depth of my belief, my faith, or my love that was the mainspring of my behavior. When once I believed in doing a thing, nothing could prevent my doing it.

This characteristic was born in me. I see it expressing itself strongly in the decisive actions of my childhood. If, as the psychologists insist, the pattern of our lives is set for us at the age of three, then surely it is worth while to review those years when the determining influences were outlining the larger patterns of life.

I

Mother bore eleven children, she died at forty-eight. My father lived until he was eighty. Her name was Purcell. His was Higgins.

Mother was straight as an arrow, with head well set on sloping shoulders. Her eyes were far apart, gray green, flecked with amber, her wavy hair was black, her skin white and spotless. She was never stout, nor ever inclined to stoutness.

She had a *selfless courage*, the kind that prompted her to get up in the night to fetch a glass of water for feverish children, going, without a light, to the kitchen pump so that the water would be cooler and fresher for parched lips. Her adventures into the kitchen at night were often startling enough to thwart a less courageous woman. On one occasion she stumbled over a man sprawled out on the floor, a tramp who had come through the unlocked kitchen door. Father had principles against private property and locked doors, and when he was the last one to bed the doors were left unlocked.

When Mother realized there was a sleeping tramp on the floor, she ran back to the bedroom, awakened Father with the news, and told him he must get up and put the man out. Father turned over on his side, listened to the complaint, and sleepily said, "Oh, let him alone. The poor devil needs sleep, like the rest of us."

Mother, fearless and independent, went back alone into the kitchen for a lamp, intending to oust the intruder. The tramp was gone. He had opened the window and escaped.

This was in Corning, New York, where I came into this world, one of eleven children, and the sixth born

Corning is known for the manufacture of glass, the fame of which has gone far for beauty of design and texture. Huge factories lined the flats bordering on the river. Hundreds of men and women, girls and boys, worked there. Three generations have toiled their lives away making lamp chimneys, electric bulbs and other articles for the nation's daily needs. The city is in the Chemung Valley, with hills extending far up to Steuben County to the Lake District. The city is divided by the river, and in my memory the workers and the poor people of the factory lived on the flats near the river or near the factory, while the owners of the factories and people of wealth lived on the hills away from the railroads and factories. I noticed, too, that the people down below, the factory people, had large families, many children, while those on the hills had few.

Very early in my childhood I associated poverty, toil, unemployment, drunkenness, cruelty, quarreling, fighting, debts, jails with large families.

The people who lived on the hilltops owned their homes, had few children, dressed them well, and kept their houses and their yards clean and tidy. Mothers of the hills played croquet and tennis with their husbands in the evening. They walked hand in hand with their children through the streets to shop for suitable clothing. They were young looking mothers, with pretty, clean dresses, and they smelled of perfume. I often watched them at play as I looked through the gates in passing. I was often invited to spend Saturday afternoon with children on the hill, played games with them, told them fairy tales and invented stories for their amusement.

Mother expected a man to be the guardian of his home, but Father never was that. Mother's courage was physical. She it was who always routed the tramps, chicken thieves, the burglars and the prowlers. She it was who faced the school teachers who whipped her children, and gave them a piece of her mind. She separated fighting men, fighting boys and

fighting dogs She entered all combats fearlessly when her own precious ones were in danger or involved

Father, on the contrary, never bothered his head about physical fights—unless it might be a dog fight, his Irish sportsmanship cropped out then He, however, was fearless in mental battles, and it was from him I learned the value of freedom of speech and personal liberty He fought for free libraries, free education, free books in the public schools, and freedom of the mind from dogma and cant He came from Ireland and was descended from a long line of fighting, poetic ancestors, some from the north, some from the south of that shamrock land He was of medium build with fair, freckled skin, reddish hair, blue eyes set close together, a massive, shapely head, long upper lip and a mouth expressing generosity, wit and humor In the Civil War he fought under Sherman, enlisting at seventeen, and at the end was honorably discharged He was a philosopher, a rebel, an artist He made a living by chiseling angels and saints out of huge blocks of marble or granite for tombstones in cemeteries

The Catholics were his best patrons, but he did not agree with Catholicism He resented its clutch upon the human mind, its intolerance of reason, its abject subservience to Rome He argued and debated on the side of reason, and influenced other men to resent the interference of the Church with progress of the mind His friends were the artisans of the community—cabinet makers, shoemakers, masons, carpenters—and teachers, doctors and priests Together they met and talked often and long into the night

Books were few and scarce In our own house we had the Bible, a History of the World, a book on phrenology (Fuller's), Aesop's Fables, Gulliver's Travels, a medical book mainly about physiology, Tom Moore's Lalla Rookh, and the latest book on the shelf was Henry George's Progress and Poverty

Father joined the Knights of Labor, and his anti Catholic attitude did not make for his popularity in a community

mainly Irish About this time came Bob Ingersoll's ringing challenge to dogmas and creeds, and Father organized a meeting one Sunday afternoon for the orator When the hour came to open the hall, the crowd outside howled and cheered, but the doors did not open The only hall in the town was owned by the Catholic priest as private property, and while Father had rented and paid for the use of it, when the reverend father learned the speaker was Ingersoll he barred the doors

The waiting crowd was divided, some serious minded who came to hear and learn, others who came to denounce Then began a free for all fight The hoodlums pelted the leaders with tomatoes, apples and cabbage stumps Father and Mr Ingersoll led the way through the side streets to the outskirts of the town, announcing that the meeting would take place in the woods an hour later This woodland was near our own house, and I was thrilled to see Father standing up to speak and introduce the famous orator Father held me by the hand as he walked proudly through the howling mob to the woods on the outskirts of the newly made city I felt proud, too

From that day on the Catholic priest was his enemy No more angels to be carved out of stone or granite, if the priest had anything to say about it We were known, from this time on, as children of the Devil, atheists and heretics Catholic children called us names and made faces as they passed our house The fight of the fathers extended to the younger generation

This all affected the earnings of the breadwinner Truth, freedom to express his ideas, freedom to hear new ideas were challenged by the fear of hunger The aged priest of the community called to see my mother, and begged her to use her influence with Father to refrain from his evil ways He implored her to send her children to his church and to the parochial school and to stand firm against the intrusion of atheism and godlessness Mother must have suffered from the conflict Before her marriage she had gone regularly to

church, but association with Father, a freethinker, carried her away, and she never attended the Roman Catholic church services again

Father was constantly discussing religion and challenging creed and dogmas I often sat in and listened to the discussions, it seemed to me my father always had the best of every argument

One night about this time when my sister and I were dutifully saying our prayers, we knelt together on the floor and repeated the Lord's Prayer When we had finished we climbed on Father's chair to kiss him goodnight, and he said fondly

What was that I heard you saying about bread?

Why, Father, that was in the Lord's Prayer Give us this day our daily bread

Who were you talking to? he parried

To God, I replied

Is God a baker? he asked

I was shocked, dumbfounded Nevertheless I rallied to the attack and replied as best I could, doubtless influenced by conversations I had heard

No, of course not, I said It means the rain, the sunshine and all the things to make the wheat, which makes the bread

Well, well! he replied, much amused, so that's the idea Then why don't you say that? Always say what you mean, my daughter, it is much better

The effect of that brief dialogue was devastating I could not pray in the same old way I began to question every sentence which I had previously taken for granted I began to reason for myself and it was disturbing But my father had taught me to think

Father would sit for hours during the day and far into the night talking to anyone who wished to listen These lengthy discussions took him away from his own work, which had been growing less since the Ingersoll episode and continued to shrink for the rest of his life During those stormy years of religious controversy his attitude was always one of

tolerance When we questioned him as to the church or Sunday school to which we should go, he suggested Try them all, but be chained to none Do your own thinking, he would repeat I liked the idea of trying all the churches and Sunday schools, and for a year or two I made the rounds of the community, especially at Christmas and Easter

I never liked to look at the picture of Jesus on the Cross I could not see what good it did to keep looking at him We could not help him, as he had been crucified long ago What then was the use of people kneeling before the pictures to see his suffering? Thus I reasoned To look at the statue of the Virgin Mary was more pleasant I thought she was beautiful, smiling, colorful It was the way I should like to look when I had a baby

At this period we lived in a district outside the city where fortunately we had plenty of space for our playground Slowly I began to reason about the difference in the lives of the children of the well-to-do and the children of the poor The former were allowed to talk freely to their parents and to elders They were free to romp and play wherever they chose, and seemed secure in their right to live and be just what they were In conduct they were open and unafraid They even smiled and talked to the policeman as they passed, and took possession of the best in life as a matter of course

We, the children of poorer parents, knew not where we belonged Everything that we desired most was forbidden Our childhood was one of longing for things that were always denied We were made to feel inferior to teachers, to elders, to all We were burdens, and dependent on others for our existence Every poor family was burdened with many children Whatever we wanted most to do was sure to be wrong Parents, teachers, ministers, policemen, all seemed to be watching to keep us from doing what we wanted to do most Our home life nevertheless was colored by the mutual love of our parents and by intellectual, rational, tolerant discussions, religious and political

II

Henry George's theories were creating a new sensation. Father became his champion and friend. He read aloud to us passages from *Progress and Poverty*. He laughed and rejoiced when he came upon a meaty sentence. He shared these with mother, who accepted them as fine, because he said he thought they were fine. I can see him sitting at home in the morning, reading and laughing and joking. For him, paternal duties did not exist. Though never very strong, Mother was always busy sewing, cleaning, doing this and that for the ever increasing family. I wondered at her patience and her love for him!

He wore spotless white shirts and collars. His trousers were always creased, his shoes clean and polished. I never saw him do any of these things for himself, but he got them done somehow. With his own earnings curtailed, the older children of the family had to go to work to help meet the rent, buy winter coal and pay grocery bills. We were all healthy and strong, vigorous and active. Our appetites were curtailed only through necessity. Yet there was an atmosphere in the home which reflected the love of our parents for each other which in some way made up for the lack of material comforts in our lives.

I never knew Father and Mother to quarrel. I've known her to be temporarily irritated at his generosity—as when he was asked to bring home a dozen bananas for supper and bought a whole bunch of six dozen and gave them all away to the children at school as they were playing at recess, at his easy going ways, his live and let live attitude towards tramps. These and many other things must have tried her very soul, but not one of us dared to utter a word of criticism or condemnation about her adored and adoring husband.

The nearest approach to the end of her tested loyalty and patience was when Father invited Henry George to come to town to address a group at a banquet in the leading hotel. There was coal to buy and ever growing debts and household



FATHER TEACHING WORKMEN NEW METHODS OF STONECUTTING



MOTHER



AT FOURTEEN

bills. Mother was growing frailer year by year. As far back as I can remember, she was always pregnant or nursing a baby. She took the responsibilities of feeding and clothing the family as her own, and managed on the combined income of three or four older children to keep the wolf from the door.

On this occasion, when Father went into her realm and took those earnings for a banquet to entertain fifty men whose children were well fed and clothed, her patience gave way. I do not know what happened between them, but I do know that he spent several days wooing back that smile and the light in those gray green eyes. He succeeded, as usual, and all went well to the time of her death.

I can never look back on my childhood with joy. We often get together, my brothers and sisters and I, and laugh about things that happened then, but I never desire to live it over again. It was a hard childhood, which compelled one to face the realities of life before one's time. When a family is large the various members are affected according to their place in the family. As I was the sixth child, I saw the older and younger groups almost as one sees two generations.

The only memory I have of any sex awakening or a consciousness of sex was when I was ill with typhoid fever. I could not have been more than eight or nine years of age. I was taken ill at school, three miles away. The teacher noticed my many requests to leave the room and asked me if I wished to go home. I hated to go home. I dreaded that long walk back in the cold. Nevertheless, home I went, arriving in the early afternoon. I can see the little figure huddled before the kitchen stove, shaking and freezing. Mother was busy preparing supper, but called my attention to my legs, red from the heat of the fire, saying, "If you're that cold you had better go to bed."

I remember nothing beyond going upstairs to a cold room and a colder bed until weeks later I awakened in the night. The wind was howling and the house was shaking from the blasts. It was pitch dark. I felt about me and knew I was in bed, in a soft, warm, feather bed—it was mother's bed.

I felt of the wall and knew I was in her room. Then I heard heavy breathing beside me. It was Father. I was terrified. I wanted to scream out to Mother to beg her to come and take him away. I could not move, I dared not move, fearing he might awaken and move toward me. I lived through agonies of fear in a few minutes. Then Father's breathing changed—he was about to awaken. I was petrified, but he only turned over on his other side with his back toward me, taking all the bed clothing with him. I was cold, I began to shiver, blackness and lights flickered in my brain, then I felt I was falling, falling—and knew no more.

The story afterwards told me was that I had been very sick. Father's good whisky was vomited up, so a doctor was called in only to pronounce the ailment as typhoid fever. I was unconscious with a raging fever, and was carried downstairs to Mother's own room. She had been up with me night after night as I grew worse, and now the date of the crisis was at hand. She was worn out with her heavy tasks. Father ordered her to bed upstairs, while he was supposed to watch. The night was cold, and Father decided to lie down on the bed with his clothes on, ready for any emergency. He fell fast asleep and did not awaken until he heard my groans and found me uncovered, crouched close to the cold wall. He never knew that I had gained consciousness that night nor that he had put such terror into my heart.

III

Mother's eleven children were all ten pounds and more when born. I used to hear her say with pride. Not one of them born with a blotch, mark or blemish. We had heard about new born babes in the neighborhood being born sick. I had horrible visions of little bodies with sores covering their scrawny frames, and was convinced that this was possible when I saw a sickly baby in the arms of a terrified woman whose drunken husband had thrown the wailing, naked infant into the snow. The child evidently had eczema, and whined night

and day The father was one of those ugly taciturn men who became frenzied at the realization of his wife's pregnancies She had had ten children, five of them living, and this eleventh was too much for the father's nerves

I remember having keen sympathy with that man! I could picture him returning home after a hard day's work to a household shrieking with the cries of that suffering baby They were all baffled at any effort to cure it or to stop its noise Desperate for want of sleep and quiet, his nerves overcame him, and out of the door into the snow the nuisance went!

While my first memory was one of adventurously wandering away from home and getting lost, my second had to do with the grown up world of mystery

Mother was ill I was then the youngest child The house was stilled, no one was allowed to talk above whispers I tried to go into the bedroom where Mother lay, but was carried kicking and screeching back into another room The other children were sent away from home, and I was sent to a neighbor's next door It was Sunday morning and the woman who was nursing Mother had gone to early mass to request that prayers be said for the dying mother of six children It was early and I wanted to see my mother I knew enough not to try the door again So, young as I was, I climbed on a box which I carried to the window in the yard, and peeked in under the shade which had been pulled down to within an inch of the bottom I saw the figure of a woman on the bed, white and still, her braided hair falling across each shoulder Beside the bed was a kneeling woman The door opened, and Father entered I knew then that Mother would not die

Father had been out of town, and doubtless a miscarriage had taken place But on Father's return he swept the mourning, praying women out of the house, and from that time on he was the only doctor the family ever had It was he who brought the babies into the world He nursed Mother through six weeks of pneumonia, he set and straightened a younger

brother's broken leg, he carried me through a serious case of typhoid fever, ivy poisoning, and all the ailments of childhood

His cure all was whisky— good whisky When a case of mumps turned into a large ugly abscess, he sterilized the blade of his jack knife over a flame, lanced the abscess and cleaned the wound with whisky, good whisky When my face was swollen with erysipelas, he was advised to paint it three times each day with tincture of iodine I was held firmly in place while this torture was inflicted, and then I jumped and ran, screaming and howling with pain, into the cellar, where I plunged my burning face into a pan of cool buttermilk until the pain subsided This went on for several days and I was growing thin and exhausted from the dreaded iodine Finally Father decided to abandon the treatment for good whisky, and I recovered

In our large family, the arrival of another baby was taken for granted Just as a new litter of puppies excited no unusual curiosity, so the cry of a new baby never seemed unexpected

The first time I saw a new born baby brother, I helped the nurse to weigh him He weighed fourteen and a half pounds The date of his birth, the hour and the weight went down in the family record in the Bible I remember how amazed I was that he was so big I helped to clear away the things, and felt more grown up than ever before The nurse took me into her confidence by telling me that Mother had had a terrible hard time Father was the doctor, as usual, and after a few weeks Mother was on her feet going about, frail though smiling showing off the bouncing red haired boy as the prize of all perfect babies

Sex knowledge was a natural part of life I had always known where babies came from My mother never discussed sex with us It was a curious twist of father's make up that, advanced as he was in his attitude toward economic and social questions, free trade and woman suffrage, he never knew a

thing about contraception until some years after Mother's death

My father was fond of dogs, as were my brothers. All were good shots, and hunting was part of our childhood life. My brothers had several dogs for fox and rabbit hunting. Father preferred bird dogs—English or Irish setters.

I remember one incident which occurred when I was about ten years old or even younger. I was playing on a nearby hillside, crowning myself with a wreath of leaves pinned together with thorns. While I was at play, a large white dog came up, sniffed at me, wagged his tail and seemed to want to belong. I knew enough about dogs to see that this was not a common ordinary dog, and I knew it was an English setter. My heart leaped with joy at the thought of taking that lovely dog home to Father. The dog had no collar, he had evidently been lost, so why could he not belong to me? He had one brown red spot on the back of his neck, and that gave me an idea. I took him to the barn, tied him to a hook, and painted several large brown red spots over his body. I fed him food that belonged to the other dogs for a day, and then led him forth to my father as a special present from me.

Father examined the dog carefully, put him through several tests, looked slyly at me out of the corner of his eyes, and to this day the look of admiration he threw me remains in my memory. Father went to the editor of the daily newspaper and reported his find, but no one ever claimed the dog. We called him Toss. He lived with us twelve years. The spots soon wore off, and he grew whiter as he grew older.

IV

There were times in my life, however, when an inner resolve or determination came counter to the other forces in me which, as I look back upon the years, I recognize could have easily wrecked and changed the whole course of my life. I wonder if I can remember these clearly enough to tell about them.

The first was when I was a very young girl, not more than eight years of age. Everyone in town was talking about the coming of a play, Uncle Tom's Cabin. There were to be two or three performances, one on Saturday afternoon. Every girl I knew or played with was going to that matinee on Saturday. It never occurred to me to ask my parents for such a luxury as money for a matinee. While ten cents was the price of admission, still ten cents could help buy bare necessities of which we were in need. Oh, how I longed to work, to earn my own money, to do something so that I could have a little money of my very own!

Saturday afternoon came. I said nothing, but kept my own counsel. I never said I could not go to the matinee. *I knew I would go!* My playmate and neighbor, a girl of my own age, called for me, and together we started off to the matinee, she with her ten cents, I with my Faith.

We arrived at the theater half an hour before the doors opened. We were packed close to the entrance. Hundreds of boys and girls, men and women crowded into the small space. I began to feel desperate, I had no ticket, I had no money. Near me I saw a woman open her purse and count her change. My head reeled. The idea came surging through me that here was the chance to seize that purse, take ten cents and get into that matinee! The purse was so near that it touched my arm. Suddenly the doors opened, the crowd pushed and shoved, and I was thrown headlong under the ropes and into the theater before I knew where I was. God be praised! No one bothered further about me. I took the first seat I could find. The girl I was with never knew I had neither ticket nor money, her ticket was taken up at the entrance while I miraculously escaped the rough hand of the doorkeeper.

But that night I lay awake trembling at the remembrance of the power which had seized me, the escape and the victory. I began to think of the stories of the devil and his temptations. I am sure I leaned towards prayer those days, especially

prayers of thanks But also I remembered I had had no joy in the play—I had scarcely seen or heard the actors My friend thrilled to the story of Uncle Tom and Little Eva, but my thoughts were full of my own escape and the possible punishment had I not been saved by the hand of God

When I look back on that day, I shudder to think what that escapade might have cost me Thousands of other children were in reformatories and jails for no greater crime I began to fear that power within myself which determined actions beyond my control It seemed at times as if there were two mes, usually together, but at times pulling apart I often talked to that other me and found her full of romance and daring She urged me on to venture and action She was intrepid, resourceful and very daring Sometimes she went too fast for the other me, as at the theatre I realized there was danger in her leadership Later I began to consider team work, and put myself through strenuous ordeals in order to strengthen the head me

I began to make myself do the things I dreaded most to do—to go upstairs alone to bed without a light, to go down into the cellar without singing, to get up on the rafters in the barn and jump down on the hay stack thirty or forty feet below When I had conquered all these dreaded feats, I felt more secure and stronger within myself There was, however, one thing I dreaded more than anything in life It was to walk on the ties of the railroad bridge which spanned the Chemung River Two or three years before I had been taken across this iron structure by my father and brother who often went there to fish in the river below I had been held by both hands as I made those steps and looked down from the dizzy heights into the water There was not only the danger of falling through the space between the ties, but the danger of meeting a train on the bridge which was so narrow that there was room only for the up and down trains to pass We had friends across the river on a large luxurious farm, but to get there we usually walked three miles in a

roundabout way across another wooden bridge for traffic and pedestrians I could not recall the experience of that perilous walk with my father and brother without feeling dizzy or faint

Now, however, as I began to strengthen my weaker me, I decided that this walk must be taken—and alone We were forbidden ever to go near that part of the town without an older member of the family Nevertheless I felt I must walk across that bridge I trembled with fear as I got near the place, but the more afraid I felt the more determined I was to make myself do it There was no turning back once I started across I did not know the schedule of the trains, but I did remember which was the side for the up trains and which for the down trains I can recall now how stolidly I put that left foot on the first tie, and with head up I started the venturesome walk which would make me faint if I tried it today I dared not look down at the water, I wanted terribly to see that my foot was placed firmly on the tie, but could not trust my head, so I kept on

When about a quarter of the way across, I heard the singing of the steel rails! I knew a train was speeding towards me! I could not see it because a curve in the road was just beyond the end of the bridge The singing grew stronger, and I crossed on one tie to the iron bars, deciding to hold fast there until the train went past, but suddenly around the curve the huge engine emerged, snorting, whistling like a cruel angry monster It came so quickly that I tried to hide behind the iron girder to protect myself from the force of its speed, when my foot slipped and I fell through the space, saved only by the fact that both arms had not been able to pass through, and there I was, left dangling on that bridge while the five-car passenger train of the Erie went rushing past All I thought of at the time was the hope that the engineer would not emit the sizzling steam as I had seen it done time after time when the trains whizzed past us at the station I bowed my head, shut my eyes, and prayed to the engineer

not to emit the steam. I was thankful when the train passed, but realized I was helpless to get up, as there was nothing to support the feet. There I hung, I do not know how long, until my terror subsided at the sight of a man, a friend of my father's, who was fishing on the bridge and who came to my rescue and pulled the fat, aching little body out of the hole. He gave me a scolding and asked if my father knew I was over there. He tried to set me toward home, advising me to go straight back.

I knew I never could go back home defeated. It was just as impossible to go back instead of forward as it was to stop breathing. Terrified though I was, and bruised and bleeding as well, the remainder of that journey across the bridge was somehow easier than the first part. When I stepped off the bridge I ran happily to the farm to see our friends, and yet refrained from telling them of the journey lest I get another scolding.

After this, I felt almost grown up. I did not talk about it, but something inside me had conquered something else.

I am certain my childhood days were filled with many other episodes, if not quite so dangerous at least as eventful. My father must have realized a certain quality in me for he often shared and disclosed unusual ideas for my youthful mind to conjure with.

For instance, when a younger brother, aged four, died, who had been named Henry George McGlyn after two of father's admiring friends, my mother's grief was inconsolable. It was the first death in the family, the only child she had lost of her ten living children. She was disconsolate. Father, who loved Mother dearly, was in despair to assuage her grief. He had worked all night over the child, steaming the room and bed, and finally had sent for the doctor. But the doctor arrived only to pronounce the child dead, a victim of pneumonia.

Mother's sorrow touched my father very deeply. Perhaps he felt himself to be somewhat to blame. Mother complained

that she had no picture of the lovely boy She spoke of the fine shape of his head, the wide, well set eyes, the firmness of mouth and chin, the classic contour of face, all of which would soon be wiped forever from her sight and perhaps her memory as well

Ever ingenious and resourceful, Father comforted her by the promise of a surprise The day after the burial he was constantly occupied in his studio When darkness fell and the children were sent off to bed, he took me affectionately by the hand and said he wanted me to stay up and help him on a piece of work he was about to do I gladly agreed, not knowing what he could be doing at that time of night About eleven o'clock we went forth into a pitch black darkness with a wheelbarrow full of tools and a bag of plaster of Paris We walked on and on for fully two miles to the cemetery where the little brother had been buried I was set to watch the gateway while Father dug with pick and shovel until the coffin was found It was then brought up, opened, and a cast made of the boy's head and shoulders!

I sat in that graveyard gateway shivering with cold and excitement No one had told me what was being done Father had not explained He just took it for granted that I understood I was told to run back to him and swing the lantern if I heard anyone coming The lighted lantern was hidden in the nearby bushes over a grave I never doubted my father's actions Whatever he was doing in secret was right and doubtless noble If there was a law against a man's digging up his own dead child, then the law was wrong and that was all there was to that

We walked back those long weary miles, arriving home in the early hours of the morning Nothing was said to Mother or to the others about that amazing night's work I was not told to keep silent, but I knew there was mystery in the air and it was no time to talk For two nights I worked with Father while he modelled that head I remember the queer feeling I had when I discovered some of the hair which had stuck in the plaster On the third day, just after supper, the

children were told they could come into the studio, and there we witnessed the uncovering and presentation of the plaster bust, a perfect likeness of the child, to my sobbing and grateful mother

V

During the early years of my childhood we lived on the outskirts of the city. Mother's health was not good, and, hearing that pure air was good for lung trouble, we had built a house among the pines.

Now at last we were to move away from the pine woods on the outskirts of the city. We were growing up. Mother's health was not getting better in the pine woods. The house we had built for six little children was far too small for older ones.

We were to move up on the hills, not in the same district with the pretty mothers and few children, but on the Western hills where there were likewise open spaces, neighbors, and we were to have a larger house. We moved. A new life began for us all. I had the first girl friend I had known intimately, and we confided together our innermost secrets. She was reticent, proud and Irish, I always marvelled at her poise. She read books and the fashion magazines, manicured her nails regularly, discounted romance, laughed and poked fun at the priests in their gowns, but went regularly to mass every Sunday. Together we attended the public school. Her home study was a serious matter. When that was necessary, no other work was required of her. In our house home study was impossible. There were always children to be put to bed, to be rocked to sleep, feet, knees and hands to be washed. Then the older members of the family used the warm living room to discuss their doings. How could lessons be learned in such an atmosphere? It was impossible. I kept up in my studies, but it was simply because I liked them and learned my lessons easily.

So I grew from childhood into girlhood—a strange, hard, barren life, materially speaking, but rich, colorful and abun-

dant in things of the spirit Ideas and opinions far beyond my mental concept clung to me I realized the force of opposition I intuitively knew that a price must be paid for honest thinking

I had been promoted to the highest grade in the grammar school The teacher was one of those self important persons who liked to get the laugh on others to keep it off herself

Someone had given me a new pair of gloves—nice soft ones, the first new pair I had ever worn They were hard to pull over the fingers, and yet I wanted to wear them I tarried outside and pulled and stretched them over the hands I walked into the school room about three minutes late The teacher glanced up and saw me walking leisurely into the classroom She made me the target for attention

Oho she called me by name, so it's you! Have you deigned to come to school this afternoon? I wonder at it Ah, new gloves!

She went on and on until I reached my seat and removed my gloves and sat waiting for her to stop She started off again, but before she got the next sentence out of her mouth I was off my seat and out of the door I had packed my books in a determination to leave school forever I walked straight home to Mother and announced that I was through with school, I d never go back again Here was a fixed determination, like the determination to attend the matinee several years before I knew that nothing on earth or in heaven could change me I d go to jail, I d go to work, I d starve and die, but back to that school and teacher I would never go It was so settled in my mind that I would not discuss the subject with any one—the cause of it all seemed too silly

The family became alarmed Mother was glad enough to have me at home for a while to help her with the thousand household cares I was capable, quiet, thorough and strong I could get through a surprising amount of work in no time A family council was called I was questioned as to my future Did I think I knew enough to do anything in life?

Did I think I had an education? Could any one get anywhere without one? Was I prepared to earn my living? How? When? Questions were hurled at me. Taunts and insinuations and threats of factory life were in the air. I did not care. I would not go back to that school. I had only a few months to finish, and then would be ready for high school. It made no difference if it had been but an hour—I would never go back.

VI

The outcome of it was the decision that I was to be sent away to boarding school at Claverack, New York. It took the place of high school and preparatory school. There one could prepare for Cornell College. Great rejoicing! A new world to discover! Claverack College and Hudson River Institute was one of the oldest co-educational schools in the country. It nestled in the Catskill Mountains, about three miles from the City of Hudson.

The principal of the school was Professor Arthur H. Flack, a man whose influence has spread over countless young lives. He made it possible for me to attend school by allowing me to work part time for my board. The family jointly paid the tuition, and my oldest sisters, Mary and Nan, gave me the necessary clothes and books and other requirements.

It was all so new and strange. The girls I met did not come up to the vision I had in my imagination. They seemed plain, uninteresting, regular, without flair, initiative or imagination. I was lonely and homesick, but I never wanted to return home. Within a few months I was in the thickest of school activities—dances, escapades, teas, long walks in forbidden lanes.

I spent three years at Claverack, three full and happy years. I was interested in social questions, I was ardent for suffrage, for woman's emancipation. A paper I wrote on Women's Rights was to be read in Chapel one Saturday morning. News of it spread about. Boys shouted at me in class, drew pictures of women smoking huge cigars, wearing trousers and men's

clothing I studied and wrote as I never had before I sent long letters to Father getting facts on woman suffrage, facts on woman's history Oh, what letters in reply! All about Helen of Troy, the battle of Nebuchadnezzar, Ruth, Cleopatra, Poppaea, famous queens, women authors, poets and mothers It was a great essay! I stole away to the cemetery and stood on the monuments over the graves and said every word aloud Again and again, each day I read and reread that speech in the quiet of the dead

After suffrage, I took up the silver question of William Jennings Bryan No one else seemed to know anything about it They were all for gold, so I took the other side and studied and worked on a debate I gradually became known as having advanced ideas, only grinds, or serious boys paid attention to me, but the girls came to me with all their sorrows and woes and love affairs In recitation and acting I excelled My teacher said I'd make a good actress, and that was all I needed to set acting as my goal

I went home on vacation and intimated I was going on the stage Shock and disapproval were evident Father pooh poohed the idea, but my sister Mary, the most saintlike woman who walked the earth, agreed with me as to my ability and said I should go to the dramatic school in New York as soon as I finished Claverack, she would apply at once to Charles Frohman and I should try as an understudy to Maude Adams Great hopes! Splendid aspirations! A wise sister!

Money was saved, application made, pictures taken in various poses with and without hats A return letter from the school management came, enclosing a form to be filled in with name, address, age, height, color of hair, eyes, and skin All went well, but I was asked to give the size of the legs, both right and left leg, not only the length but also the size of ankle, knee, calf and thigh!

I was left cold Enthusiasm for the stage vanished It was not that I did not know the size of my own legs I did Those were the days when cigarette pictures of actresses, plump and well formed, came in every pack We in the gymnasium

compared our legs and criticized our shapes and those of others. That was mutual and friendly and intimate. But to see that personal and intimate information go coldly down on paper and be sent off to strange men, to have your legs, ankles and hips valued as something apart from the owner of them was like cutting yourself in parts. I could not see what legs had to do with being a great actress. I had expected to have to account for the quality of my voice, for my ability to sing, to play, for grace, agility, character, morals, and for my experience in and ability to love. None of these qualities seemed important to managers who were to train one to become a second Maude Adams. I did not fill in the printed form, nor send the photographs. I just put them all away and turned my desires to more serious studies where brains, not legs, were to count.

Those years at school were full of interest and adolescent loves. Adolescent boys and girls (about 500) lived and studied together under one roof. The girls' rooms were separated from the boys' by the apartment which the principal and teachers occupied. We all shared the same dining room, and at each table sat both sexes in about equal number with two teachers besides, one at each end.

I look back on those years of adolescence with great interest. I think my experience was not very different from that of others at the same age.

I fell deeply and strangely in love with Esther, a girl whose beauty, form and loveliness was to be compared only to the statue of Venus. I had been at school only a few weeks and was just getting over a spell of homesickness. I started down the hall early one morning, and beheld the loveliest creature I ever saw in my life. She was getting water in a coffee pot. Her hair had fallen over her shoulders, she was slender as a lily, and seemed so unreal that I fled past her in fright. But I could not go far away. I heard her steps down the corridor and saw her enter a room by the stairs. That was enough. I know where she roomed, and I should find out who she was.

Esther held me fascinated for the entire year. I have never been so moved by beauty as I was by hers. Her body, her walk, the shape and set of her head, the movement of her lips, all, everything she said and did held me spellbound. I cried at night because I felt her loveliness to be something I could not reach. I felt separated from her, though we were constantly together. She was the virginal, chaste type of woman, though she was but a girl at the time. That she was a year older than I, may have accounted for the awe I felt towards her, but it was more than that. She and all that she was represented an entirely new world to me. She was the queen of this new world, the heroine of every book I had read come to life.

Her clothes fascinated me. Only once before had I seen such lovely clothes. I had seen two women on the street at home who wore bright, pretty dresses and carried colorful parasols. I stood admiring them as they passed by. I was yanked by the arm and pulled into a near by store and told not to look at those women as they were bad. Men laughed and nudged each other as they passed. I was told by one of the girls at home that they were bad because they let men kiss them for money. The association of color, brightness, decoration on women's attire reminded me of those bad women. Esther's dresses were the envy of every girl at school. She came from New York City, and had all the advantages of the newest models in fashion and taste of the metropolis.

Since my youthful crush on lovely Esther I have understood and sympathized with the youth who worships at the feet of his first love. I can understand what he feels in his adoration of this mysterious creature called girl. Esther and I were miles apart in everything—tradition, training, experience, looks, behavior—in everything but romance. There we touched hands and thereby bridged our lives. We understood each other, and finally grew to be life long friends.

While my love for Esther was the dominating thrill of my adolescent life, I nevertheless was unhappy in that love. It kept me from caring particularly for any one else. I did not

understand its depth nor its influence over me, but there it towered in its cruel majesty until Amelia came. I have often heard it said that a fifty-fifty love is ideal. I doubt that now I think it would become a platonic relationship and not love at all. Most happy loves are those capable of a different degree of intensity of love from the beloved. One must give and the other be able to receive.

Esther was beautiful but Amelia was attractive. She was shorter and younger than I but she had a mind and brain that could act, and her wit and keen sense of appreciation fired my Irish imagination. We were close pals, and had more in common than had Esther and I. Amelia's love for me strengthened and developed my individuality. Her loyalty and praise and admiration fed all the hungry spaces in my being. For two years we were inseparable. While we had rooms apart, we never kept to them. Amelia was an only child. She came of parents who boasted of kinship with that famous Puritan, Jonathan Edwards. She was a Methodist. The school at Claverack was a Methodist school, and Sundays were given over to the reading of the Bible.

Amelia got permission to study with me in my room. Each Sunday afternoon we occupied ourselves dutifully. I mended and darned my clothing while Amelia riddled the passages of the Bible with ridiculous epithets and exaggerations. She could advance witty and brilliant comments which would have made Bob Ingersoll rejoice, yet in all seriousness she attended services and sang psalms regularly and devotedly.

Some of the older girls carried on a whispering campaign about the affection and devotion Amelia showered on me. It did not worry us. We continued our friendship through the years. I gave my first son her family name.

There were other loves, crushes, affairs of the heart between boys and girls. I often laugh as I read the advice given by some authors on sex psychology and hygiene, especially when it refers to sex intimacies between girls in adolescence. In my humble opinion there are few, very few men besides Havelock Ellis who have the faintest idea, or could ever grasp

the real feeling which exists among adolescent girls. The depth of its chastity, the simplicity of its fulfillment are part of the girl's growth. Seldom does physical sex expression enter into the relation very, very seldom indeed. I have lived with girls for years, in all conditions and with all types, and only after I was well along in maturity did I come into contact with homosexual problems. Girls need each other's affection and love during adolescence as much as they need sunshine and air. Some reticent or demonstrative girls can express their emotions more freely and naturally with each other than they can with elders or with the opposite sex.

Many of the girls were engaged to the best beau on leaving school each year. Engagements were secret and whispered among us. The boy who had danced attendance on me was popular because he was fine, clean and honest. Though not officially engaged, we had a mutual understanding that we would be married.

VII

The following year I was summoned home by Father to attend Mother who had been growing thinner and frailer since the last baby was born. I then began to delve into books about nursing to gain information on the care of the sick.

Mother had grown very pale since I had last seen her. Her slender body shook with a racking cough leaving her weak and limp as a rag. Father carried her from room to room and devoted himself to her every wish and comfort. But her days were not long. It was a folk superstition that if a consumptive lived through the month of March he would live until November. She died on the thirty first of March, leaving Father desolate and inconsolable.

While Mother was alive Father gave little concern to the conduct of his children. He depended on her to understand and guide their morals. Now, however, he became frantic with anxiety and worry, mainly concerning his two young daughters, Ethel and Margaret. His whole attitude toward

life seemed suddenly to have changed. He was lonely for Mother, lonely for her love, and doubtless missed her ready appreciation of his own longings and misgivings. But to me he had become a tyrant and an unappreciative parent who had given us the world in which to roam and now suddenly wanted to put us behind prison bars.

We were not allowed to leave the house without his permission. We had to ask him if Tom, or Jack, or Bill—our boy friends—could spend the evening with us on the verandah. Often he said No without reason or explanation, and that was an end to it. After six months of this dog in the manger existence I got weary of his nagging and went with Sister and a friend to an open air concert. We knew that ten o'clock was the limit of open doors, and on the stroke of ten we were running with all our might towards home, but alas! we were a full block away.

When we arrived before the house, three minutes late, it was in utter darkness. The doors were closed, not a sight nor sound of a living creature anywhere. We banged and knocked upon the doors, first this one, then that. Finally a door was opened part way, Father looked out at us, reached out a hand and caught my sister's arm saying, "You are not to blame for this outrageous behavior. Come in." With that he pulled her into the house and shut the door.

I was left on the verandah in the dark. It was a chilly night in October. I was stunned by such a surprise. I did not know this monster father. I was less than sixteen years old, and was left out in the streets at night for being three minutes late!

Where was I to go? What *could* I do? I had no relatives, no cousins to whom I could go, and both of my elder sisters were out of the city. I was hurt beyond words at this treatment, but I knew that Father would not sleep a wink and would be frantic with worry in an hour's time. My first thought was to sit on the verandah steps and patiently wait for him to come out, which he was certain to do. Then it

began to get cold, I had no wrap and I knew it was dangerous to keep inactive, so I decided to take a walk and *think*

In those days it was not the custom for decent girls to roam the streets alone at night. In fact, to be seen alone after ten o'clock was almost an invitation for illicit solicitation. I knew this, but I was not afraid. I had always had faith in men's goodness, especially if they were sober. I walked and walked away from the house, wondering where I should go and what I should do. It was not only the question of this night, but of the morrow and the future. I thought of the younger children left motherless at home and unhappy with this new kind of father. I felt something should be done to protect them against him. I decided finally what to do. I went to the home of the friend who had been with me at the concert. She had no yet gone to bed, and her mother received me so hospitably that I shall bless her forevermore.

The next day I borrowed money from her mother and went to visit a friend in Elmira. In the meantime, Father, being alarmed to find me really gone when he came down to let me in, had dressed and gone out to search for me. He walked up and down the main street looking everywhere and asking everyone he knew if I had been seen.

He returned in the early hours of the morning to find me still absent. Then he sent word to my sister, who came and called a family council. I too had written her. I could not endure the thought of her possible anxiety over my disappearance.

After a few weeks' visit I was urged to return home, and Father and I had a long talk together. He told me frankly that he was worried over the number of beaux I was having, especially over one who he declared looked like a scoundrel. Father was sure that fellow means no good by you. The idea of sending letters *every* day and sometimes telegrams as well was not Father's way of wooing. It was too flattering, too sweeping. What could any one have to say in a letter *every* day? To his way of thinking, a decent man comes to the house and does his talking straight. He sits round with the

family and gets acquainted Poor Dad! There was no use to explain nor to argue Silence was the best weapon I used it

The adolescent egg was hatching I was no longer content to hear arguments on religion or politics I wanted a world of action I longed for romance, dancing, wooing, experience I felt I was strong enough to test all temptations I could endure all hardships—anything but to remain at home The boys, now men, who called to see me all seemed so dull, so provincial Their conversation was flat, small talk, gossip—smart, silly replies, foolish questions The thought of marriage was akin to suicide

Mentally I had developed beyond my age I knew more of current history and current topics, of up to-date politics, of the latest books, plays, actresses and actors, and people of note than did any of my associates

None of these could I discuss with Father He had never encouraged our reading fiction—love stories All non sense, he said Read to cultivate and uplift your mind Read what will benefit you in the battle of life

We borrowed books from the Free Library (the library he had championed and helped to establish fifteen years earlier), and read them in bed at night, hiding them under the mattress during the day Books like *Graustark*, *Prisoners of Hope*,

The Prisoner of Zenda, *The Three Musketeers* and all the favorites were forbidden fruit

One day I was waiting for the children to come in for lunch and was deeply buried in *David Harum* I did not hear Father enter the room I was convulsed with mirth, and gave out shouts of ill suppressed laughter Dad stood in the doorway looking like an Irish policeman I was the culprit caught in the trap I looked up at him, and suddenly the old love, the old feeling I had had for him flamed up anew I laughed and laughed I was not afraid, I did not care for his frowns nor his old silly notions I just knew that in his heart he was trying to guide his children and he was not using his own head nor heart as the guide My laughter broke the spell, it

was contagious. It was the first of its kind in that dreary, august household since Mother's death. I stood up and said

Oh Dad, *do* listen to this! and I read a passage from old Dave's philosophy. That was enough. The book could not be found for over a week, and Dad was seen off in his own room shaking with laughter over its pages. I noticed after that he began to look about for books with interest as if seeking for more of that nonsense.

Since Mother's death I had managed the finances and ordered the meals and paid the debts on our all too meagre income. There was nothing left for my clothing nor for any outside diversions. All that could be squeezed out by making this or that do had to go for shoes or necessities for the younger brothers. Mend, patch, sew as one would, there was a limit to the endurance of trousers, and new ones had to be purchased.

It was now six months after Mother's death. I had given up encouraging boys to see me. I had refused to marry the dullards of the town. I preferred to live in action. I began to study medical books borrowed from the library and from one of the general practitioners who was a liberal and a friend of the family. He was much amused at the interest displayed in so young a girl, and suggested I'd probably 'get over it'.

An invitation to visit Esther in New York City came in the spring. After a brief visit with the friend of my school days I decided to look about for some kind of work leading ultimately to medical school. Cornell College still called to me, but I could not bridge the gap between my life and the long journey fitting one for the medical profession.

Finally, through a friend of Esther's mother, I was accepted as a probationer in a small new hospital in Westchester County not far from New York City. My delight knew no bounds.

I was happy in the work, in the knowledge I was gaining, happy in the possibilities of the future, happy in the trust patients and doctors had in me. The work was trying because of the long hours. But those years of training now seem a period which tested character, integrity, nerve, patience and

endurance That training, severe as only it can be in a small hospital where the equipment is less modern than in the larger city hospitals, nevertheless equipped me to organize myself for the battle of life, and later became the background which gave support to the ordeals of motherhood It influenced tremendously the direction the birth control movement was to take and is taking