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**Title:** Alice Cogswell Bemis: A Sketch by a Friend

**Author:** Anonymous

**Release Date:** September 12, 2010 [EBook #33713]

**Language:** English

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## ***ALICE COGSWELL BEMIS***

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***A SKETCH BY A FRIEND***



*BOSTON*  
PRIVATELY PRINTED  
1920

***The Merrymount Press · Boston***



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## **ALICE COGSWELL BEMIS**

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Alice Cogswell Bemis came from a long line of good British stock. She was in the eighth generation from John Cogswell, who was born at Westbury Leigh, Wiltshire, in 1592. He was a man of standing and of considerable inherited property. Among the latter were "The Mylls," called "Ripond," situated in the parish of Fromen, Selwood, together with the homestead and certain personal property. He married Elizabeth Thompson, a daughter of the Vicar of Westbury parish. After twenty years of married life, during which they had lived in the family homestead and he had carried on his father's prosperous business, he decided to emigrate to America, and on May 23, 1625, leaving one married daughter in England, they embarked with their eight other children on the famous ship, *The Angel Gabriel*. We find no mention of a special reason for their leaving England, but it was probably the same that led many others of their type to begin life afresh in the new world; here the possibilities of the country to be developed were limitless, and doubtless these offered a better outlook for their children, whose welfare must have been uppermost in their thoughts and plans.

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The voyage of *The Angel Gabriel* and its wreck off Pemaquid, on the coast of Maine, in the frightful gale of August 15, 1625, are told in the graphic story of the Rev. Richard Mather, who was a passenger on the ship *James*, which sailed from England on the same day. The *James* lay at anchor off the Isles of Shoals while *The Angel Gabriel* was off Pemaquid. She was torn from her anchors and obliged to put to sea, but after two days' terrible battling with storm and wave, reached Boston harbor with "her sails rent in sunder, and split in pieces, as if they had been rotten rags." Of *The Angel Gabriel*, he says: "It was burst in pieces and cast away." Strong winds from the northeast and great tidal waves made it a total wreck. John Cogswell and all his family were washed ashore from the broken decks of their ship, but several others lost their lives. Some of the many valuable possessions they had brought with them never came to shore, but among the articles saved was a tent which gave good service at once; this Mr. Cogswell pitched for a temporary abiding place. As soon as possible he took passage for Boston, where he made a contract with the captain of a small bark to sail for Pemaquid and transport his family to Ipswich, Massachusetts, then a newly settled town.

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The settlers of Ipswich at once appreciated these newcomers, and the municipal records show that liberal grants of land were made to John Cogswell. Among them was one spoken of as "Three hundred acres of land at the further Chebokoe," which later was incorporated as a part of Essex. Here in 1636 their permanent home was built, and here, covering a period of over two hundred and fifty years, their descendants cultivated the land. The Cogswells had brought with them several farm and household servants, as well as valuable furniture, farming implements, and considerable money. A log house was soon built, but the boxes containing their many valuables were unopened until it was practicable for Mr. Cogswell to build a frame house. A description of

this remains, in which we are told that it stood back from the highway, and was approached through shrubbery and flowers. It is further said, that among the treasures which were taken into the new home from the boxes were several pieces of carved furniture, embroidered curtains, damask table linen, and much silver plate; that there was a Turkish carpet, an unusual treasure for those days, is well attested. Their descendants still treasure relics of their ancestors, such as articles of personal adornment, a quaint mirror, and an old clock.

John Cogswell was the third original settler in that part of Ipswich which is now Essex. His piety, his intelligence, and his comparative wealth gave him a leading position in the town and the church. His name is often seen in the records of Ipswich and always with the prefix "Mr.," which, in those days, was a title of honor given to only a few who were gentlemen of distinction. He died November 29, 1669, aged seventy-seven years. His funeral procession traversed a distance of five miles to the old North graveyard of the First Church, under an escort of armed men as a protection against a possible attack of Indians. Three years later the body of Mrs. Cogswell was laid beside her husband's. The record that remains of her is: "She was a woman of sterling qualities and dearly loved by all who knew her." Their son, William Cogswell, seems to have had many of his father's traits and was one of the most influential citizens of that period. To him was due the establishment of the parish and church and the building of the meeting-house; and when, according to the quaint custom of those days, the seats in the meeting-house were assigned, his wife was given the place by the minister's wife, a mark of greatest distinction. Two of his grandsons were men of note. Colonel Nathaniel Wade was an officer in the Revolutionary army and a personal friend of Washington and Lafayette. Another, the Rev. Abiel Holmes, father of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, was a graduate of Yale, and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Edinburgh. He was settled for many years over the First Church of Cambridge.



**Cogswell House, Ipswich, Mass.**

One of the deeds of land made to their children was to their son William "on the south side of Chebacco River." The variation in the spelling of this proper name is one of the many we find in early New England records. At the same time a dwelling at Chebacco Falls was given to Deacon Cornelius Waldo, who had married their daughter Hannah. In direct line of descent from these two, and in the sixth generation from the first Cogswell in America, was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Mrs. Bemis was in the eighth generation, through the son William, and from him also was descended Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the fifth generation. We cannot well follow here the descendants of the other children of John and Elizabeth Cogswell, but certain it is that in each of the generations to the present day we find many well-educated men and women of character, with a strong sense of their obligations as citizens, all doing good work for the world in various lines of activity. They have verified what one has written concerning John Cogswell and his family: "They were the first of the name to reach these shores; the lapse of two hundred and fifty years has given to them a numerous posterity, some of whom in each generation have lived in eventful periods, have risen to eminence, and fulfilled distinguished service in the history of the country."



With these rich inheritances as her birthright, with parents who enforced and strengthened in their children the principles that they themselves had been taught, Alice Cogswell was born in the family home of her parents, Daniel and Mary Davis Randall Cogswell, at Ipswich, on January 5, 1845. She was one of seven children, three of whom died very young, and of the seven only her sister Lucy survived her. The mother died when Alice was only four. Until the time of the father's death, when she was eighteen and her sister three years older, several different housekeepers were in charge of the home, and yet it appears that these two young girls very early and in a way most unusual for any so young, not only gave life and charm to the house, but directed and controlled all its activities to a great extent. A cousin who was very dear to Alice writes to her son of his memory of those days in the quiet country home at Ipswich, giving a charming picture that shows the spirit that prompted all her life to its end. He says: "Every one in Ipswich who remembers her would speak of her sweet, cheery and generous spirit. One of the very earliest of my childhood recollections is a little incident that occurred when I could not have been more than four or five years old. One day my mother let me go all by myself to Uncle Cogswell's to see Cousin Alice. Our homes were rather near together but it was to me then a journey of large proportions. At dinner I can remember that I sat next Cousin Alice in a chair with two big books to make it high enough. After dinner we went into the garden and picked a basket of pears which she gave me to take home. This little visit was like many others that followed and it is typical of all that she has done throughout a long and useful life. Though I was only a little fellow, I have a strong impression of an energetic, influential family, full of good deeds, and of a large house with well stocked cellars and larders that seemed to exist chiefly for the benefit of neighbors and friends. Lucy and Alice were beautiful young women. Their mother died when they were quite young, and while they were in their early 'teens' they were in charge of the Cogswell home. This they made most attractive. My boyhood impression is that they were always doing nice things for people—always sending their friends baskets from their larder. I have a wonderful impression of Uncle Cogswell's garden. As gardens go nowadays it may not have been unusual, but to me it was a rare spot. It contained choice varieties of currants, gooseberries, pears and cherries. There may have been some apple trees, but I have the feeling that apples were a trifle common to associate with his exotic varieties. From the time of my father's death, which occurred when I was eight years old, Cousin Alice seemed to assume a godmotherly interest in me and my career. Three evenings a week I went to the Lowell Institute, which kept me in town too late to go home to Ipswich, and she gave me a key to her home in Newton and had a room always ready for my use. She always took a generous interest in my work. Her moral support was everything to me. She made me feel that my profession was worthy and dignified." Many students whom she helped in later years would gladly give the same testimony of support and encouragement received from her.

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The sisters attended the Ipswich Seminary, one of the famous schools of New England in its day. Its principal, Mrs. Cowles, had an attractive personality, a cultivated mind, and great force of character. Her husband, Dr. Cowles, was a clergyman and a man of wide influence, though because of his blindness he was not in the active ministry for many years. In spite of this seemingly insurmountable obstacle he was a constant student, especially of Greek and Hebrew, and wrote much of value on the Old Testament. His presence added greatly to the household,

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whose refined and stimulating atmosphere seems to have made as strong an impression on the students as did the soundness of the teaching in the classroom. The two sisters, Lucy and Alice, took the entire course of study that the seminary offered. Alice graduated from it in 1864. Many of its pupils became women of large influence in the world, and carried from their life in the seminary a profound impression of the religious influences that had surrounded them there. Their own thought and their manner of life showed the lasting value of the emphasis that had been laid in the school on the supreme importance of right living and right thinking. Those who knew the sisters well recall the many times in after years when, as they mentioned some wise rule for life, they prefaced it with, "As Mrs. Cowles used to tell us," or "as Dr. Cowles said." One of Mrs. Cowles's daughters now living writes of Alice: "I remember that she was universally liked and loved." It was a happy school life and a happy girlhood for both of these sisters. Notwithstanding their great loss in having to grow to womanhood without their mother, a loss of which they were always conscious, they had great compensation in their close companionship with their father and with each other. Their father gave them the best of instruction in things spiritual, and unusual training in all practical matters, especially with regard to the value of money, how to care for it and how to spend it, and then gave them a much freer hand in the direction of many personal matters than most girls of their age were accustomed to have; this freedom they used wisely. One of them was once asked how they filled their days in times that often seem very dull and uninteresting to the modern girl with her round of engagements. The answer was, "We skated in winter and ran wild in summer." What was said in jest was far from being the literal truth, but it suggests the happy impression that their girlhood gave them of genuine freedom guided by the wise counsels of others and their own good sense.

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In June of 1864 Lucy Cogswell was married to Mr. George B. Roberts, and their house became home to Alice. Mr. Roberts afterward built the house on Craigie Street, Cambridge, in which they spent the rest of their lives. It was here that the two generations met often while the Bemis family lived in the east, and later when they came on from Colorado. The relation between the sisters had hitherto been a particularly close one, and was only strengthened by the happy new family ties that came to each. To those who loved these sisters and saw both come to a time when feebleness and physical restriction might have been before them, there can be only rejoicing that they were spared any added weakness of body, and that there was no clouding of their bright and active minds, no abatement of interest in the life about them as long as they were here. Mrs. Roberts had been in such delicate health for several years that it did not seem possible that she would outlive her sister, but only two months after their last parting, the great transition came to her also.

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We are given a charming glimpse into the first meeting between Mr. and Mrs. Bemis in some interesting reminiscences Mr. Bemis has recently written for his grandchildren. He had been settled in business in St. Louis for some years when Alice Cogswell, shortly after her sister's marriage, went there to visit a very dear aunt, "Aunt Lucy Smyth." The occasion of their meeting

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came through Mr. Bemis's first visit to Boston in 1865, which, in his own words, "resulted in an important occurrence." He met there a business connection, Mr. Zenas Cushing, who had become Alice Cogswell's guardian on the death of her father; knowing that Mr. Bemis was from St. Louis, Mr. Cushing gave him a letter of introduction to his ward and bespoke his interest in her and his help in any business advice she might need. Mr. Bemis tells his story thus: "Some three weeks after my return from Boston I gave myself the pleasure of calling one evening and presenting the letter. As I am writing these lines I can see 'Miss Cogswell' coming into the parlor where I was awaiting her. She was dressed in the fashion of the day, having on a silk dress with a very full skirt held out by a hoop-skirt of large dimensions. She met me cordially and asked me to be seated and we talked for an hour of my first trip to Boston, of her guardian and others. As I was leaving and closing the gate I heard myself saying that I might marry that girl if I could win her. It was not so-called 'love at first sight,' but it ripened into love with a few subsequent calls. I think it was a very fortunate circumstance that I met Alice Cogswell when I did." And very fortunate for many others did this union prove. The outward condition of their early lives was very different, but the two families from which they came were alike in the standards which they held for themselves and instilled into their children.

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The story of Mr. Bemis's early years is the familiar one of that type of western pioneer to whom the whole country is deeply indebted. He was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, on May 18, 1833, of parents who had all the best inheritance to give their children, but few material possessions. When he was an infant the family moved to a small village in Chemung County, New York, where his mother's brother, Henry Farwell, lived with his family. The relation between the two families was a close one, and five years later it was decided that they should move together to Illinois. Reports of its fertile soil and what it promised for the future had come back to them by the slow and uncertain mails. They knew that it offered more for themselves, and what was far more important to them, for their children, than they could ever have in their present surroundings. When they made the great change they knew well the dangers and difficulties that must be met on the journey when taken under the most favorable conditions. They knew, too, how these would be increased in their case, as they were taking so many young children, eight in all; but the courageous band to which they belonged were men and women of industry and personal integrity, with a strong sense of real values, who, having made their decision, took no reckoning of obstacles to the end before them.

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It was a long, difficult journey. In a pleasant sketch of this that Mr. Bemis has given, we have only the remembrance of such incidents as stay in the memory of a child. There is no mention of hardships. He recalls the covered wagon, but knows only from others of the slow journey to Buffalo, thence by boat to Detroit, and the continued journey to Chicago, then Fort Dearborn, where they did not remain for fear of being eaten by mosquitoes or of having fever and ague, and so camped at what is now Oak Park. Thence they moved on to Lighthouse Point, Ogle County, Illinois, where the Bemis family found a temporary lodging in a log cabin and the others lived in covered wagons until they had built a comfortable cabin for themselves.

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From the beginning of the making of the new home on the empty prairie, the children took their full share in the work it involved. Mr. Bemis has told us that he was doing from one-half to two-thirds of a man's work on the farm when he was twelve years old, the year in which his wife was born into the well-established life of a fine old New England town, rich for her in all the inheritances that seven generations gave; all the way before her made as smooth as love and ample means could make it.

At the age of nineteen Mr. Bemis left the farm and began his business career in Chicago as clerk to a shipping firm. After six years, with only his own savings for his capital, and helped by the loan of some machinery supplied by a cousin, he went to St. Louis and began the business which has borne his name for over sixty years, a name that is a synonym in all the business world for ability and integrity. His success did not come by accident, or by any so-called good fortune, but as the result of patience and perseverance, steadily following the principles and the rules he laid down for himself very early in life. He speaks with gratitude of the fact that he had to learn by force of circumstances "the blessedness of drudgery and the value of time and money in his long hours of work and in the closest practice of economy."

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We have seen how different were the outward circumstances of their early lives. In temperament also Mr. and Mrs. Bemis differed much; but in sympathy on all great matters, in their ideals of life, and their unflinching recognition of their own personal obligation and duty, they were always one. In the reminiscences he has written for his grandchildren, Mr. Bemis says: "Parents can lay the foundation for each child by their own life. They are giving daily examples by their actions and by word of mouth. If parents are living well-ordered and Christian lives, their children will be likely to follow their example. They will know nothing else. Good boys and girls make good men and women. An educated and scientific carpenter will hew and mortise the timbers to fit the keys that bind the frame to a complete and solid house, so that storm and winds pass it by unharmed. So with boys and girls; if their characters are moulded in truth, mortised and keyed together with obedience to God and man, when they become men and women they will withstand the environment of bad persons and escape unscathed. Hence their young lives, founded on the bedrock of Christian characters, are well qualified to work out their own destiny and make their lives whatever they will."

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Mr. and Mrs. Bemis were married at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George B. Roberts, in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, on November 21, 1866, and went directly to their new home in St. Louis. There the oldest son, Judson Cogswell, was born in December of the following year; and there they remained until they returned to Boston in 1870, when for business reasons it became necessary for Mr. Bemis to have his headquarters in that city. After the birth of the second son, Albert Farwell, they moved to Newton, Massachusetts, where their three other children were born: Maude, now Mrs. Reginald H. Parsons, Lucy Gardner, who lived less than three years, and Alice, now Mrs. Frederick M. P. Taylor. Three of these survived their mother and had long been established in their own homes before she left them. To the father and mother was given the great happiness of seeing each of these new households controlled by the same standards of right and the same sense of personal and civic responsibility on which they had built their own united lives.

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Mr. and Mrs. Bemis's home was in Newton for eleven years, and during that time it was the centre for the family connection in New England and for many friends. It was always rich in association for themselves and family, and was made rich in the same way for many others. Family cares that came upon Mrs. Bemis and the part she took in the life of the church and the community made the years spent there the most active of her life. After her removal to Colorado Springs, she showed in a practical and liberal form her interest in the First Congregational Church in that city, which the family attended, but she had such a strong sentiment about the church at Newton and the experiences that came to her while connected with it that she never removed her membership; its pastor, Dr. Calkins, and his wife were among her most valued friends.

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In 1881 a serious throat trouble developed, and Mrs. Bemis was taken south for the winter. She did not gain there, and the following year was sent to Colorado Springs. Slight hope was then given to her family of her living more than a few months, but the climate and the sunshine effected what had seemed impossible, and within a few years she was able to lead a comparatively normal life in the new home where she was happily settled. A house was rented for the family until 1885, when the one at 508 North Cascade Avenue was built. This was henceforth home to her and to all the family as long as she was there with her welcome for them, and it soon became a centre for a large number of friends who are rich in memories of the unfailing welcome and genuine hospitality so freely given them. These were not restricted to a limited number with tastes and outward circumstances that were comparatively alike, but were extended to a large circle that differed widely in both of these. The sincerity, genuineness, and simplicity of the lives of those that made this home created an atmosphere that was felt as soon as one entered it.

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Many of the younger generation both within and without the family circle will have enduring memories of that house. Alan Gregg recalled in a few words childhood memories that were common to many; writing from his post in France he said: "Mrs. Bemis's death was a great

surprise and shock, and the long time that elapsed between knowing of her illness and her death made me feel pretty far away. I remember her letting me play that music box to my heart's content, and the way she made Gregg laugh at an unexpected fall he took, instead of cry, better than anything else. She could also do nice things for you without spilling over into sentimentality."

Her grandchildren's recollections of her will be mostly in connection with events in their own homes, where her visits were looked for eagerly by those on the Atlantic coast and those on the Pacific, but happily some of them are old enough to remember and pass on to the others the impression made on them and on other children in the family connection, of the grandmother's great pleasure in being with them and her plans for their comfort and happiness. They recall the perfect housekeeping, where the wheels seemed to move easily and were always out of sight; the daintiness of all its appointments, which was shown too in the dress and personal adornments of her who made this home and of those who shared it with her. Here she welcomed many of her old friends and also new acquaintances with whom lasting friendships were formed; here the children gathered around them a fine group of congenial companions who became their lasting friends; here they grew to manhood and to womanhood; from thence they were all married, and hither they all returned many times, with wife, husbands, and their own sons and daughters for happy family reunions.

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In this home the saddest as well as the most joyful experiences of her life came to her. The former were borne with the calmness and strength shown only by those with great capacity for suffering and great power of self-control. The hardest trial that she had ever known was at a time when she had little physical strength to meet it. After a year with the family in Colorado, the eldest son, Judson, was sent to a manual training school at St. Louis, Missouri, where there were many family friends. He was a lad of much promise, a great reader, with varied gifts and tastes. He had a very social nature and a warm interest in people, was noble in character, and deep in his affections. The separation was very hard for his mother, but it was met with the unselfishness she always showed when her children's interests were to be considered. She herself chose it, as she wanted him to have this special kind of training that could not be found nearer home. In the second year of his absence he was taken suddenly ill with pneumonia. His parents were summoned at once, and his father arrived before his death, but his mother could not reach St. Louis till some hours later. The loss of the little daughter Lucy, who had died in Newton of scarlet fever, was still fresh in her memory when the new sorrow came. This was borne wonderfully, but it changed all life for her as nothing else ever did. In 1904 came the third break in the family circle, when Mrs. Parsons with her beautiful little girl, Alice Loraine, nearly three years old, the first granddaughter in the family, was visiting her grandparents in Colorado Springs. No child could have been more tenderly loved and cared for than she, but nothing could avert the fatal illness that developed soon after their arrival.

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During the years that followed her going west, Mrs. Bemis spent only one summer there. For several successive seasons she went with her children to Minnetonka in Minnesota; but it was not possible for Mr. Bemis to be with them there more than he was during the winter, because of its distance from Boston, and a happy change came to all when later Mrs. Bemis had gained enough to make it safe for her to spend some months of each year by the sea on Cape Ann, where the family had headquarters for many summers. Twice she went abroad with her children; first during the summer of 1891 and five years later for a year of study and extended travel for her daughters. Marjorie Gregg, who knew her well, recalling her many journeys, says: "Few not loving travel for its own sake could or would have taken so many long journeys. The trips east in the spring and back to Colorado in the autumn became a habit, and she carried them out with precision and determination that did not ignore discomforts; she saw these, felt them and mentioned them, but never feared or regarded them. She planned and packed and made all arrangements without confusion or mistakes; never 'took it out' on other people, but refused help even in late years. It would be impossible to count up the miles travelled, the time spent on Pullman cars, the trunks packed—all not because of *Wanderlust*, curiosity, or restlessness, but for love of family—that she and her children might be with their father half of each year and that she might keep close to her sister and nieces, whose relation to 'Aunt Alice' was as close as if the two families had lived in the same town. Later Grandpa and Grandma Bemis journeyed together indefatigably."

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When Mr. Bemis laid aside many of the details of his business, they chose Lake Mohonk, New York, for their summer home, and the last seven summers of her life were spent very happily there; so happily, that each year they engaged the same rooms for the following season and said they meant to do this as long as they lived. It became a real home to them. Mr. and Mrs. Smiley, wonderful host and hostess to all, were soon their warm personal friends, and many pleasant acquaintances with guests were renewed each year. Among their most valued friends there was Dr. Faunce, president of Brown University, who conducted the Sunday services year after year. They considered his sermons as among the best and most helpful they ever heard, and after each season thought and talked much of them, always looking forward to the coming of the summer Sundays, their brightest days at Mohonk. Here every condition met their tastes and their needs; the great beauty of the place itself, the quiet and peace of the house, the wise and unusual way in which it is ordered, all combined to give them an ideal residence for the summer. The fact that young people of a fine type were always there added much to Mrs. Bemis's pleasure. She enjoyed

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watching their sports and their life in the open. Her windows overlooked the lake, and she sat there hour after hour watching the parties coming and going in boats and climbing the hills. Her delight in the beauties of the whole picture before her, than which there are few to compare with it the world over, grew steadily with each day there. Just before leaving Mohonk for the last time, she wrote to a young cousin: "I wish I could transport you all here. I have always said that I would like to live on a beautiful estate and have no care of it; and here I have been for seven summers and no place by any possibility could be finer. Mr. Smiley did not spoil nature but kept its wonderful beauty and added to it."

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During the last years they were together, Mr. and Mrs. Bemis made several interesting trips to California and to Seattle, to be with their daughter, Mrs. Parsons. The mere recital of all these journeyings may give the impression that the life in Colorado Springs was a very broken one, but it did not seem so to her friends there, for at each return it was resumed so quickly and so quietly that they think of it rather as continuous. No friend and no interest she had in any work that helped on the general welfare was ever ignored or forgotten by her wherever she might be.

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Probably there has never been any one in Colorado Springs with so many enforced absences and the same limitations of strength who has done as much as she in enriching individual lives with friendship and the community life with sympathy and generous material aid. Nothing that she counted a duty sat lightly on her mind or conscience.

Miss Ellen T. Brinley, who was for many years a friend and neighbor of Mrs. Bemis, wrote shortly after her death: "She was a real New Englander of a type all too rare in these degenerate days. For many years she was not very strong, and yet she was one of the least self-indulgent people that ever lived. Wealth to her was not a reason for luxury and pleasure seeking, but an opportunity for helping others—with a lack of ostentation characteristic of her whole nature. She was truly a secret helper. That the young should have their chance in life and that the paths of the needy should be made more easy, became increasingly the object of her life. Colorado College and the Young Women's Christian Association were the two organizations in Colorado Springs whose welfare she had most at heart, and for them she was constantly devising liberal things. In the wakeful hours of the night, she planned to relieve the sufferings of others, and her spirit of good will came from no weak sentimentality. She was a woman of good judgment, an incisive mind, and a strong character. She was a wonderfully loyal friend and her daily life centred in her own family circle, in a few personal friendships, and in the benevolence which was her avocation."



Even her closest friends knew but little of her constant and quiet deeds of kindness, and that rarely from her directly. It could never be said of her that she was "confidential with her left hand." From the recipients of her generosity more is known than could have been learned from her. Often with an apology lest she might seem to intrude, she learned if friends, and sometimes mere acquaintances and even strangers, needed assistance at a time when she knew an

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emergency had come to them, and often asked others to be the means of meeting such needs, not letting it be known whence the help came. "Just tell them you have it to give away," she would often say. Sometimes she gave to personal friends a check, asking that they spend it as they thought best in ministering to others.

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This was done for many years to some who were in close touch with the students of Colorado College. "Don't take the trouble to give an account of this," she would say, "only be sure that it goes where it is really needed." But when the account was rendered, she wanted to hear all that could be told of the circumstances of each one who had been helped, and often arranged that certain of these should have further assistance. To a number this was voluntarily continued during their professional studies. The following, from a letter to her son in 1908, shows her sympathetic understanding of the students whom she helped:

"I wonder if I told you that the suit that you left here I gave to Mrs. S—— for one of the college boys. The lining was greatly worn and so I pinned on an envelope with \$5.00 in it and she gave it to a very needy fellow who is working and attending college. She had a letter from him and from the mother. I am going to send her letter and some other letters from other boys to whom the President has given a little from time to time from a little that I gave him early in the winter. I want you to read them, for I don't think that any of us realize how brave these poor students are, and really they are the ones whom we hear of later; the rich men's sons fall short in some way."

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Mrs. Bemis was one of a group of women who, in the spring of 1889, organized the Women's Education Society of Colorado College. The resolutions passed by its executive board at the time of her death so adequately express her relation to the Society that they are here quoted in full:

"The Executive Board of the Women's Educational Society wishes to place on record its sense of irreparable loss in the passing of Alice Cogswell Bemis.

"Her association with the work of the Society has extended over a long period of years, and her part in it has always been characterized by fidelity to the purpose of the organization and keen discrimination in the execution of the trust. She brought to the problems confronting the Board rare insight and judgment, and her business acumen was invaluable.

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"Many students of Colorado College are personally indebted to her for the removal of obstacles in the way of the successful prosecution of their work in which her interest was vital and perennial. A story of genuine need never failed to elicit her assistance. Of her general constructive planning for the many-sided life of the young women, Bemis Hall and Cogswell Theatre are enduring evidence.

"The Board has lost a useful member, her friends a wise counselor, and philanthropic agencies a generous helper to whom worthy cause or person never appealed in vain."

Another organization to which she contributed much pleasure and from which she received the same is the Art Club of Colorado Springs. A group of women whose personal relation to her was close and increasingly dear as the years passed, formed its membership. They met twice a month at each other's houses, read, and studied pictures, finding, as one says, "an alleviation not unwelcome in that life where tuberculosis and the gold fever of the early days alternately possessed the atmosphere." The Art Club owed much of its genuine life to Mrs. Bemis; her interest in art, her keenness to acquire and classify the knowledge that she loved, was as strong as her friendship and neighborliness. The utmost hospitality to invalid strangers was part and parcel of those Colorado Springs early days, and in goodness to obscure invalids and in lending a hand in hard times no one could tell the extent of her benefactions.

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All that Mrs. Bemis did will never be known, and what she gave was never told at the time unless it seemed best for obvious reasons that her identification with a good movement should be made public. The unsolicited gifts must have been manifold compared with those she gave in response to appeals. It was always easy to approach her for any good cause. If she gave, it was always with good will; if she declined to do so, a distinct reason for the refusal was stated; and she was as careful not to pauperize by giving as she was not to withhold where it was due, and was entirely free from the bitterness common to a certain type of persons who are wont to think that their generosity is being imposed upon. She often afforded amusement to her friends by the way in which she prefaced an offer of help with a seeming apology. She even seemed at times to call those who were working in a good cause to account because its pressing needs had not been met, and then met them herself.

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A notable instance of this was her gift of the gymnasium to the Young Women's Christian Association. When the present Association building was erected she gave generously to the building fund. A gymnasium was greatly needed then, but no money was available for it. A space was left on the lot that had been purchased in the hope that a building might be put there later. Very soon the growth of the work showed that no gymnasium adequate even for the present demands could be built on that limited space. The girls of the Association clamored for it and the members of the board, who even more than they knew how much it was needed, were heavy hearted. No one spoke of the situation to Mrs. Bemis until she herself broached it to one of the board in a tone that, to one who did not know her, might have seemed a reprimand. She prefaced what was on her mind thus: "I do not approve at all of your putting up a building on that small

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space. You ought to buy that lot to the north." The board member could but agree. The protest was again made, and the board member could only repeat her agreement, but knew from the manner of approach to the subject that something was back in Mrs. Bemis's mind that she would have to tell, though she wished it might be known without her telling it! And then it came. She would like to see that lot when no one would know that she was looking at it, and if it wasn't too much trouble, could it be arranged for her to do this? It was planned that she should go early one Sunday morning to the building, when very few were in the lower rooms. She looked out on the vacant space and said, "Don't you see *it will not do at all?*" Within twenty-four hours she asked some one to negotiate for the purchase of the lot at the north and gave it to the Association, adding a check that made possible the present beautiful gymnasium. She dismissed with no mistaken emphasis the proposal that this should bear her name. Her pleasure in the building was great, and in expressing this pleasure she always seemed only to be commending the Association for having it. Her part in it seemed nothing to her. "Others have had to do all the work," she would say if her gift was mentioned.

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When Bemis Hall, the main residence for girls at Colorado College, was being built, it was found that by excavating under the dining-room there would be space for a theatre, in which the students could give plays and various college meetings might be held. This was done, and the room was named Cogswell Theatre in her honor. It must be admitted that the latter was done under protest, although aided and abetted by some of her family. "What would my ancestors say to having a theatre bear their name!" she said, laughing. Among the memories of the past nine years to those who have enjoyed that little theatre, none is happier than that of seeing the faces of two very dear friends following each word and movement on the stage, laughing at times till the tears came, and giving over and over their entire approval of the existence of the theatre, with no further protest against its name. These two friends rarely missed seeing whatever was presented on that stage, though seldom tempted by public entertainments to give up their quiet evenings at home. Indeed, everything in that beautiful hall named for Mr. Bemis—whose generosity, to the college is there made known only in part—seemed to give them pleasure, and no one else will ever cross its threshold who can receive just the kind of welcome they always found awaiting them.

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While the number of organizations which Mrs. Bemis helped is not known, and it is impossible to mention those which for many years counted on her interest and liberal support, one must be noted as showing her abiding interest in all that related to her native town and the region about it. This is the Ipswich Historical Society, which was organized in 1890, and of which she was the first life member. On its twenty-fifth anniversary, in response to what was only a printed appeal, she sent the first substantial gift of money it received. Within a few months of her death, learning that a fireproof building for the Society had been proposed, she wrote to Mr. T. Franklin Waters, its president, asking for particulars of the plan under consideration, and on receipt of his reply sent a check for so large a proportion of the estimated cost that she was asked to consent to have the building named for her. Following a determination made long before that her gifts should not be made conspicuous in any way, she would not consent to this.

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Mrs. Bemis was as quick, open, and generous in her recognition of what others did along philanthropic lines as she was reticent concerning her own good deeds. This was especially noticeable in her attitude toward all the private and public benefactions of her husband and children. Her quiet satisfaction in these was beautiful to see. Her children received all sympathy and encouragement in every good work they undertook, but she never assumed the right to dictate in these matters or took any credit to herself for anything they did, not thinking of the power of her example and the life-long training she had given them.

Her recognition of all her husband's benefactions and her sympathy in his planning for them were unflinching. One of the most important and far reaching of these was in connection with a work along social lines in the town of Bemis, Tennessee, where his firm had built a cotton mill. From the inception of the town the need of this work was much in the thought of their son, who has since succeeded his father as president of their company, and whose practical interest in the betterment of all social relations, especially of those between the employer and the employed, is widely known. Together they carried out their ideals in the new town of Bemis. The operators were those known in the south as poor whites. The opening of the mill gave to these people an undreamed of opportunity to earn money. It also offered to them a great privilege and at the same time a possibility of great danger. The privilege was that of being able for the first time in their lives to command money and to use it so that it would make them better and happier; the danger was that they might use it so that moral deterioration would follow. Both these possibilities were foreseen in the first plans for the town, and provision was made for the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the people that would as far as possible avert the danger. A social worker was engaged to live as a friend among the people, and a church, school, and library were provided for them. Mrs. Bemis had much pleasure in following every step in the development of this work, while careful to disclaim any credit for its success, again not thinking what her encouragement and coöperation meant to both husband and son. But they and all her children pay her full tribute for the stimulus of example and for the sympathy shown in every good work to which they put their hands.

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This woman of many noble traits was especially endowed with the rare gift of loyal and understanding friendship. Her relation to kindred and personal friends brought to her and to them an unusual degree of happiness. This was so great a factor in her life that it may seem as if special mention of many of these friends should be made in even so brief a sketch as this. But they themselves will realize how impossible this would be because the circle to which they belong is so large. She was not blind to the failings of her friends, but was clear in her comprehension of their fundamental traits, and her love for them, her strong though often undemonstrative interest in them, never abated. While she added to their number many times during her stay in different places, no new friend or new interest ever took the place of an old one. Her generous heart had room for all whom she took to it.

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Her correspondence with friends was surprisingly large in view of the frequency of her letters to her own immediate circle; when the family became widely scattered this might easily have been made an excuse for dropping much of the general correspondence, but instead of that it grew as the circle of her interest widened. No one was neglected and all letters were written with her own hand. During the last years of her life much of her mail that was not personal became a distinct burden with its increasing appeals from all directions, but she conscientiously attended to it all herself. An abundance of good common sense helped her to ignore many of these, but any that could not be laid aside lightly she investigated in a way that took much time and strength.

Her outspoken nature and uncompromising mind often made her draw hard and fast lines in no unmistakable way as to conduct that met her approval or condemnation, but she asked no one to come up to any standard higher than she had laid down for herself. She wanted above all things to be just, and few people are so essentially just as she was. To quote a friend, "her judgment of character was clear, just, and vigorous."

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One fixed habit of her mind must not be overlooked: this was unwillingness to accept any help in whatever she could possibly do herself. Many friends thought this a failing and frequently told her so. They were wont to rebel against the fact that they could not serve her, while she was a past master in the art of serving others. Her swift motions and deft hands, impelled by her quick mind, would outwit half a dozen people who were looking for means by which to circumvent her. No amount of urging could lead her to agree to be waited upon if that could be avoided, and she often refused to accept ministrations at times when it seemed to others that they were necessary to her comfort. But even at such times she would withhold no service for another. Whatever mention the Recording Angel may make of this failing, it will be very brief compared with what is written of the countless deeds of love and of kindness for others with which she filled her days.

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Fortunately, many letters to the family and other friends have been kept. They are singularly like her; never diffuse, but with that rare and happy characteristic of telling concretely and clearly what was of most interest to those to whom they were written, and never letting irrelevant generalities take the place of matters of importance. In reading these letters consecutively we are struck by the naïve and unconscious way in which she reveals much of herself. They contain few allusions to her own discomforts, but abound in sympathy for any that have come to those to whom she is writing; they show how her happiness never depended on anything that she might obtain for herself, while she magnifies whatever others do for her. Social gatherings that brought old friends and new together she enjoyed in a simple, whole-hearted way; she cordially approved of fun and encouraged it by giving and taking it, but never seemed to seek diversion. Her happiness came from what was close at hand, especially in the simple every day gifts that are bestowed on us all. Among her papers is found this "Line of Cheer:"

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*"I love the air of hill and sea  
That puts its crispness into me.  
I love the smiling of the sky  
That sets its twinkle in mine eye.  
I love the vigor of the gale  
That lends me strength where mine doth fail.  
I love the golden light of day  
That makes my jaded spirit gay.  
I love the dark of night whose guest  
I find myself when I would rest.  
And gratitude doth hold me thrall  
Unto the Giver of them all."*

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A few sentences taken at random from the letters show that this expressed what was in her mind: "The day has been beautiful. You know this is the rainless season and the hills, as we came along, were all brown, no green grass anywhere, but the trees are beautiful with very full leafage, showing that the air is very moist.... I wish that you could see 'The Springs' now it is so very beautiful.... I have some dear little finches building in their evergreen trees. I think that there are several pairs. Tell Gregg that I can look from my chamber window directly into a robin's nest."

In one of her letters to her grandchildren she says: "I went down to the Young Women's Christian Association rooms yesterday afternoon to take tea and hear the report of those who have been raising money to support the work there. Some little girls were having their gymnastic lessons and were having a very jolly time. At last the leaves are all off of the trees and I think the little

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wayside flowers must have had their noses pinched last night by Jack Frost."

Her interest not only in the beauty of the world about her but in what others are doing to make it bring forth and bud for the good of mankind is shown over and over: "Alice is happy," she writes, "to have the weather warmer for her garden. She thinks that her vegetables have had too much hail and cold weather, but the last two days have been fine. The country here responds very quickly to showers, the trees and grass now are in perfection and the whole town is beautifully dressed. I have never seen it looking better notwithstanding the dandelions."

The family letters abound in allusions to the grandchildren and touch upon all the varied interests of her children; many were written directly to the grandchildren. It was beautiful to see the joy those little people brought to her, and it was characteristic of her that, never thinking of what might be considered as due her, she was surprised when a second grandchild was given her name.

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On March 5, 1909, she writes: "I was so pleased this morning to have a telegram about the new little girl, and you were fooling Farwell about the name; I can't believe that she is named already and for me. If she really has the name of Alice, I hope that she will be a better woman than I have been. I am crazy to see her and am wondering if she looks as little Faith did and has as much hair. Oh dear! the distance is tremendous sometimes. I do wish that I had a home nearer my family.

"What did 'Sister' say? What did Alan say and do?... My best love and congratulations to each. I am so glad to have another granddaughter."

Each one of the grandchildren had a special place in her thought and affections, and was beautiful to her. "The children are well and really pretty,—but not in pictures," she writes once.

The strength of her hands was largely used in knitting dainty garments for the children and their mothers. During her last summer she spoke of this to a friend, as if apologizing for not working solely for our soldiers, instead of indulging herself in doing what she did for her own, who "seemed to like what she made for them." This is the only self-indulgence that is mentioned in all the letters that have been read in preparing this sketch. Remembering how large were her gifts to war relief compared to what she ever spent for herself, one can think only with delight that she had the pleasure of weaving so many loving thoughts for those dearest to her into her last gifts to them.

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The following shows a tact that often wins where criticism would lose: "It was Maude's birthday yesterday ... two friends came to dinner. The second maid had the misfortune to fall down, or rather turn her ankle standing up, and she had to be put to bed. The cook is a good-natured girl and she thought that she could wait on the table. I did not think much of her ability, but thanked her, gave her a few instructions, and told her to put on a white waist and wear a good white apron. Well I was repaid for not showing any doubt to her, for she waited very well indeed, and all went merry as a *birthday* bell."

She does not hesitate to criticize herself, even to the point of placing herself in a ridiculous light, one of the hallmarks never found on small souls. For instance, she once wrote: "You will be interested in my yesterday afternoon exploits. I started to crochet a white hand-bag, like one that Mrs. S— is making, and after I had done quite a lot, I found a mistake away back and so went to work and took it out. Then I thought I would fill one of my fountain pens, and when I thought that I had been unusually expeditious and neat, I looked in the glass and found my best white waist splashed up with the ink. Wasn't I a very low-spirited woman! This morning I am trying to reduce the brilliant color of the spots by putting on salt and lemon and putting in the sun, but I know not if they will go, *but I consider them a disgrace to Alice Cogswell Bemis.*"

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The letters give glimpses of many personal gifts that were so well concealed from all except those to whom they were made. It is shown that these were not given impulsively, but were carefully thought out and almost invariably planned to meet what seemed to her a definite need. For example: "I have told Mrs. Gregg about my plan for a trip for Gregg and herself and offered to pay all the expense.... I will enclose a check which you can fill out as I have no idea how much it will cost. At any rate please use it and send Gregg away for a while; it will be a benefit to him to travel and be away from servants. Let him look after himself."

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She rarely gives advice, but frequently makes friendly suggestions backed by the material wherewithal necessary to carry them out. "I have been sorry to know that Gregg has been having so much cold; it came to me one night that perhaps it would do him good to take a trip down to Hampton. I remember that Mrs. B— had a son with General Armstrong at Hampton, teaching typesetting, and she went down to see him. She told me of some people who went down there every year to avoid the snows because they never had catarrhal troubles at Hampton. She said that it was a fine climate, so I wondered ... if it would not do Gregg good to go down there and live in the open air of that lovely region for several weeks."

In writing to her son in February, 1907, of the laying of the corner-stone of Bemis Hall, at Colorado College, she makes no allusion to the gift that made this building possible, and says only: "I suppose Gregg wrote you or Sister that I helped lay the corner-stone of the new hall yesterday morning. Mrs. S., one of the 1908 Class, and myself patted on the cement. Gregg remarked if Daddy and Alan had been there, there would have been a lot more put on. The wind was very chilly yesterday, but we were not there very long and we were fairly well wrapped."

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Mrs. Bemis had an attack of appendicitis while in Boston in the autumn of 1910, which made an immediate operation necessary. When she was able to be moved, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor took her to Asheville for the winter, as she was not strong enough for the longer trip to Colorado; but the weather there that year was very unfortunate for an invalid, and later they went to Atlantic City. Here Mr. Bemis joined them; he now was able to make business arrangements that relieved him of the many details he had long carried, and a new era in the family life was begun—the happiest of all.

From that time all enforced separations were over, and he was with his wife continuously wherever it was best for her to be. When, after a year, she was able to return to Colorado Springs, she was very happy to be again in her home, and the old life among friends was resumed as always, quickly and happily.

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Birthdays and wedding anniversaries were gala days in the family, especially Mr. Bemis's birthday, when there was always a large dinner party with intimate friends added to the family group. Fun and abounding cheer were invariably among the good things provided. As these days came around there was no abatement of interest in them and of cheerful outward observance.

For many years very definite plans were made by the children for the golden wedding of their father and mother, on November 21, 1916. That was to be the crowning day of all the family days, and though Mrs. Bemis sometimes protested against planning for it, saying that she couldn't expect to see that day, as it approached she took much pleasure in the plans her children made for it. They were all to come home, each bringing one or more of the grandchildren. Their mother was to have no care whatever in connection with the celebration. Mrs. Taylor, the only one whose home was in Colorado Springs, made arrangements to have the family dinner in her own house and later in the evening a reception for friends.

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The summer of 1916 was passed as usual at Mohonk, and was followed by the stay of some weeks in Boston that Mr. and Mrs. Bemis made each autumn. While there, Mrs. Bemis had a fall, which later proved to have serious effects. This was barely a month before the golden wedding, and though she tried to treat it lightly and took the journey to Colorado Springs, on arriving there she consulted her physician, who said that a surgical operation was necessary. She wanted to postpone it until after the golden wedding celebration, but he was not willing to risk any delay, and on November 16 she went through the ordeal. The convalescence was more rapid than the family had dared to hope, but they knew that the situation was still serious when the wedding day came. To them fell the delicate task of planning to observe it so that Mrs. Bemis would not know it was done with anxious hearts, and of making it only a time of rejoicing, and withal to do this in a way that would not tax her in the least.

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There was an early dinner for old and young, with one vacant place, in the family home. Letters, telegrams, and whatever else had been written for the occasion were read, and then all went to the hospital for a short call. Five grandchildren were there, representing each of the three families; with Mr. Bemis and their parents they entered the invalid's room in procession. Each child carried a long-stemmed golden chrysanthemum, the girls dressed in white with yellow ribbon bows on their hair, the boys wearing yellow neckties; the older ones each gave her a few words of greeting as cheerfully as if they had come with light hearts from a feast where there was no shadow. "Just like the Bemises," it was said.

She was able to listen to a number of letters and telegrams and to enjoy some of the flowers that had been sent in great abundance to the house. In writing of that day, one of her children says: "I shall never forget her face looking so thin and delicate but so beaming with happiness and the humorous twinkle of her eyes behind her spectacles. Grandpa walked at the head of the procession looking very proud and happy and making a great tramping and show at keeping time. Dorée Taylor's golden curls were like sunshine, and we were all so happy to think that in spite of all our fears Mama Bemis was still with us. How glad we all are that we had that happy time together!"

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All her good pluck and its continuance in the days that followed had its good result. At first the convalescence was surprisingly rapid, and in a few weeks she was able to leave the hospital and begin the climb back to her old strength. It was a trying winter, but a trip to California helped her much, so that when she reached Mohonk for her last stay there the gain was marked and she moved about with ease. One of her friends who spent the summer near her states that she spoke often of this gain, and showed her old cheer and interest in all that affected her friends and in the stirring events throughout the world and especially in the great war into which we had entered; and that she talked more often than was her wont of the inner life and of the inevitable change—the great adventure—and the revelations it would bring. She spoke as if she thought it might come to her in the near future, but always with a quiet acceptance of it as one experience in the continuous life.

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For one reason only she would have it delayed, that her husband might not have to take the rest of his journey alone. This wish was not fulfilled, for the transition came quickly. She was spared what would have been difficult for one with her independent spirit—a long time of physical dependence on others. On October 9 she left Boston with her husband for Colorado. A slight cold

which she had seemed better on reaching Chicago, but on arriving home it increased, and though she tried to ignore it for a day or two, she was obliged to call her physician. It soon proved very serious; double pneumonia developed rapidly, and on the 18th, with her husband and all her children around her, she passed peacefully and without pain into the fuller life.

A brief service was held in the First Congregational Church of Colorado Springs on the afternoon of the following day, and in the evening Mr. Bemis and all his family left for the east with the body which, on October 23, was laid in the Newton Cemetery beside those of her two children. The funeral was held at two o'clock on the afternoon of that day in the chapel of the Newton Cemetery. Friends and relatives from many directions were gathered there, and the chancel was filled with flowers sent from far and near.

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It was one of New England's most glorious autumn days. Though there was no wind, the bright leaves fell in abundance quietly and steadily in the warm sunshine.

The service was conducted by the Rev. James B. Gregg, D.D., for over thirty years a personal friend of the family, and bound to Mr. and Mrs. Bemis by a very close and tender tie in the marriage of their son to his daughter Faith. He was also their pastor in Colorado Springs for twenty-seven years. The service was very simple, consisting only of wisely chosen selections from the Bible, full of tenderness and of joy and faith in the eternal, followed by an uplifting and strengthening prayer that Dr. Gregg had written for that special service.

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This brief sketch of one into whose life came far more than the ordinary measure of happiness, and who had the heart and the will to bring all the happiness she could to others, is all too inadequate; the only justification for its existence lies in the hope that it may, in some degree, suggest to her children's children and to those who come after them, the personality that was so dear and so human to those who knew her, so unselfish and so thoughtful for others, so mindful of the fact that this life of ours is only a stewardship.

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