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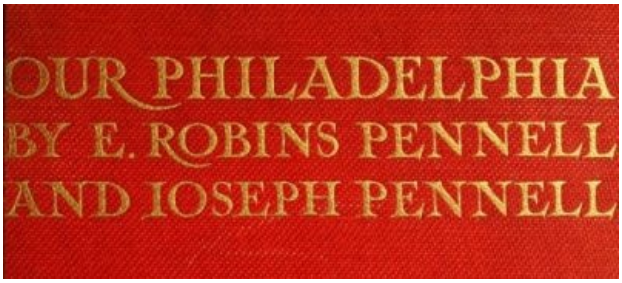

**LOOKING UP BROAD STREET
FROM SPRUCE STREET**

OUR PHILADELPHIA

DESCRIBED BY ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL
ILLUSTRATED WITH ONE HUNDRED & FIVE LITHOGRAPHS BY JOSEPH PENNELL

PHILADELPHIA AND LONDON
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PREFACE

To-day, when it is the American born in the Ghetto, or Syria, or some other remote part of the earth, whose recollections are prized, it may seem as if the following pages called for an apology. I have none to make. They were written simply for the pleasure of gathering together my old memories of a town that, as my native place, is dear to me and my new impressions of it after an absence of a quarter of a century. But now I have finished I add to this pleasure in my book the pleasant belief that it will have its value for others, if only for two reasons. In the first place, J.'s drawings which illustrate it are his record of the old Philadelphia that has passed and the new Philadelphia that is passing—a record that in a few years it will be impossible for anybody to make, so continually is Philadelphia changing. In the second, my story of Philadelphia, perfect or imperfect, may in as short a time be equally impossible for anybody to repeat, since I am one of those old-fashioned Americans, American by birth with many generations of American fore-fathers, who are rapidly becoming rare creatures among the hordes of new-fashioned Americans who were anything and everything else no longer than a year or a week or an hour ago.

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

3 ADELPHI TERRACE HOUSE, LONDON
May, 1914

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OUR PHILADELPHIA

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CHAPTER I: AN EXPLANATION

I

I think I have a right to call myself a Philadelphian, though I am not sure if Philadelphia is of the same opinion. I was born in Philadelphia, as my Father was before me, but my ancestors, having had the sense to emigrate to America in time to make me as American as an American can be, were then so inconsiderate as to waste a couple of centuries in Virginia and Maryland, and my

Grandfather was the first of the family to settle in a town where it is important, if you belong at all, to have belonged from the beginning. However, J.'s ancestors, with greater wisdom, became at the earliest available moment not only Philadelphians, but Philadelphia Friends, and how very much more that means Philadelphians know without my telling them. And so, as he does belong from the beginning and as I would have belonged had I had my choice, for I would rather be a Philadelphian than any other sort of American. I do not see why I cannot call myself one despite the blunder of my forefathers in so long calling themselves something else. [Pg 2]

I might hope that my affection alone for Philadelphia would give me the right, were I not Philadelphian enough to know that Philadelphia is, as it always was and always will be, cheerfully indifferent to whatever love its citizens may have to offer it. I can hardly suppose my claim for gratitude greater than that of its Founder or the long succession of Philadelphians between his time and mine who have loved it and been snubbed or bullied in return. Indeed, in the face of this Philadelphia indifference, my affection seems so superfluous that I often wonder why it should be so strong. But wise or foolish, there it is, strengthening with the years whether I will or no,—a deeper rooted sentiment than I thought I was capable of for the town with which the happiest memories of my childhood are associated, where the first irresponsible days of my youth were spent, which never ceased to be home to me during the more than a quarter of a century I lived away from it.

DELANCEY PLACE

Besides, Philadelphia attracts me apart from what it may stand for in memory or from the charm sentiment may lend to it. I love its beauty—the beauty of tranquil streets, of red brick houses with white marble steps, of pleasant green shade, of that peaceful look of the past Philadelphians cross the ocean to rave over in the little old dead towns of England and Holland—a beauty that is now fast disappearing. I love its character—the calm, the dignity, the reticence with which it has kept up through the centuries with the American pace, the airs of a demure country village with [Pg 5] which it has done the work and earned the money of a big bustling town, the cloistered seclusion with which it enjoys its luxury and hides its palaces behind its plain brick fronts—a character that also is fast going. I love its history, though I am no historian, for the little I know colours its beauty and accounts for its character.

II

It is not for nothing that I begin with this flourish of my birth certificate and public confession of love. I want to establish my right, first, to call myself a Philadelphian, and then, to talk about Philadelphia as freely as we only can talk about the places and the people and the things we belong to and care for. I would not dare to take such a liberty with Philadelphia if my references were not in order, for, as a Philadelphian, I appreciate the risk. Not that I have any idea of writing the history of Philadelphia. I hope I have the horror, said to be peculiar to all generous minds, of what are commonly called facts, and also the intelligence not to attempt what I know I cannot do. Another good reason is that the history has already been written more than once. Philadelphians, almost from their cave-dwelling period, have seemed conscious of the eye of posterity upon them. They had hardly landed on the banks of the Delaware before they began to [Pg 6] write alarmingly long letters which they preserved, and elaborate diaries which they kept with equal care. And the letter-writing, diary-keeping fever was so in the air that strangers in the town caught it: from Richard Castleman to John Adams, from John Adams to Charles Dickens, from Charles Dickens to Henry James, every visitor, with writing for profession or amusement, has had more or less to say about it—usually more. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania has gathered the old material together; our indispensable antiquary, John Watson, has gleaned the odds and ends left by the way; and no end of modern writers in Philadelphia have ransacked their stores of information: Dr. Weir Mitchell making novels out of them, Mr. Sydney Fisher and Miss Agnes Repplier, history; Mr. Hampton Carson using them as the basis of further research; Miss Anne

Hollingsworth Wharton resurrecting Colonial life and society and fashions from them, Mr. Eberlein and Mr. Lippincott, the genealogy of Colonial houses; other patriotic citizens helping themselves in one way or another; until, among them all, they have filled a large library and prepared a sufficiently formidable task for the historian of Philadelphia in generations to come without my adding to his burden.

III

It is an amusing library, as Philadelphians may believe now they are getting over the bad habit into which they had fallen of belittling their town, much in their town's fashion of belittling them. [Pg 9] I am afraid it was partly their fault if the rest of America fell into the same habit. As I recall my old feelings and attitude, it seems to me that in my day we must have been brought up to look down upon Philadelphia. The town surely cut a poor figure in my school books, and the purplest patches in Colonial history must have been there reserved for New England or New York, Virginia or the Carolinas, for any and every colony rather than the Province of Pennsylvania, or I would not have left school better posted in the legends of Powhatan and Pocahontas than in the life of William Penn, and more edified by the burning of witches and the tracking of Indians than by the struggles of Friends to give every man the liberty to go to Heaven his own way. The amiable contempt in which Philadelphians held William Penn revealed itself in their free-and-easy way of speaking of him, if they spoke of him at all, as Billy Penn, though Penn would have been the last to invite the familiarity. Probably few outside the Society of Friends could have said just what he had done for their town, or just what they owed to him. If I am not mistaken, the prevailing idea was that his chief greatness consisted in the cleverness with which he fooled the land out of the Indians for a handful of beads.

"PORTICO ROW" SPRUCE STREET

The present generation could not be so ignorant if it wanted to. The statue of Penn, in full-skirted coat and broad-brimmed hat, dominating Philadelphia from the ugly tower of the Public [Pg 10] Buildings, though it may not be a thing of beauty, at least suggests to Philadelphians that it would not have been put up there, the most conspicuous landmark from the streets and the surrounding country, if Penn had not been somebody, or done something, of some consequence. As for the rest of America, I doubt if it often comes so near to Philadelphia that it can see the statue. The last time I went to New York from London I met on the steamer a man from Michigan who had obviously been but a short time before a man from Cork, and who was so keen to stop in Philadelphia on his way West that I might have been astonished had I not heard so much of the miraculously rapid Americanization of the modern emigrant. Most people do not want to stop in Philadelphia unless they have business there, and he had none, and naturally I could not imagine any other motive except the desire to see the town which is of the greatest historic importance in the United States and which still possesses proofs of it. But the man from Michigan gave me to understand, and pretty quick too, that he did not know Philadelphia had a history and old buildings to prove it, and what was more, he did not care if it had. He guessed history wasn't in his line. What he wanted was to take the next train to Atlantic City; folks he knew had been there and said it was great. And I rather think this is the way most Americans, from America or from Cork, feel about Philadelphia. [Pg 11]

IV

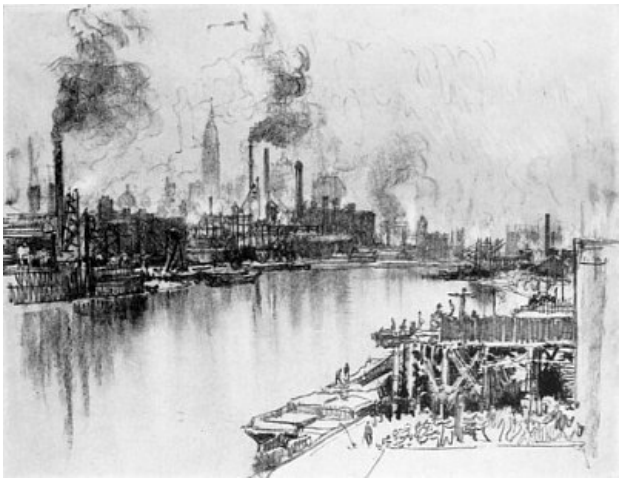
It is not my affair to enlighten them or anybody else. I have a more personal object in view. Philadelphia may mean to other people nothing at all—that is their loss; I am concerned entirely with what it means to me. In those wonderful Eighteen-Nineties, now written about with awe by the younger generation as if no less prehistoric than the period of the Renaissance, until it makes me feel a new Methusaleh to own that I lived and worked through them, we were always being

told that art should be the artist's record of nature seen through a temperament, criticism the critic's story of his adventures among the world's masterpieces, and though I am neither artist nor critic, though I am not sure what a temperament is, much less if I have one, still I fancy this expresses in a way the end I have set myself in writing about Philadelphia. For I should like, if I can, to record my personal impressions of the town I love and to give my adventures among the beautiful things, the humorous things, the tragic things it contains in more than ample measure. My interest is in my personal experiences, but these have been coloured by the history of Philadelphia since I have dabbled in it, and have become richer and more amusing. I have learned, with age and reading and travelling, that Philadelphia as it is cannot really be known without some knowledge of Philadelphia as it was: also that Philadelphia, both as it is and as it was, is worth knowing. Americans will wander to the ends of the earth to study the psychology— [Pg 12] as they call it of people they never could understand however hard they tried; they will shut themselves up in a remote town of Italy or Spain to master the secrets of its prehistoric past; they will squander months in the Bibliothèque Nationale or the British Museum to get at the true atmosphere of Paris or London; when, had they only stopped their journey at Broad Street Station in Philadelphia or, if they were Philadelphians, never taken the train out of it, they could have had all the psychology and secrets and atmosphere they could ask for, with much less trouble and expense.

I have never been to any town anywhere, and I have been to many in my time, that has more decided character than Philadelphia, or to any where this character is more difficult to understand if the clue is not got from the past. For instance, people talk about Philadelphia as if its one talent was for sleep, while the truth is, taking the sum of its achievements, no other American town has done so much hard work, no other has accomplished so much for the country. Impressed as we are by the fact, it would be impossible to account for the reputation if it were not known that the people who made Philadelphia presented the same puzzling contradiction in their own lives—the only people who ever understood how to be in the world and not of it.

ARCH STREET MEETING HOUSE

The usual alternative to not being of the world is to be in a cloister or to live like a hermit, to accept a role in common or to renounce social intercourse. But the Friends did not have to shut [Pg 15] themselves up to conquer worldliness, they did not have to renounce the world's work and its rewards. For "affluence of the world's goods," Isaac Norris, writing from Philadelphia, could felicitate Jonathan Dickinson, "knowing both thyself and dear wife have hearts and souls fit to use them." That was better than shirking temptation in a monk's cell or a philosopher's tub. If George Fox wore a leather suit, it was because he found it convenient, but William Penn, for whom it would have been highly inconvenient, had no scruple in dressing like other men of his position and wearing the blue ribbon of office. Nor because religion was freed from all unessential ornament, was the house stripped of comfort and luxury. I write about Friends with hesitation. I have been married to one now for many years and can realize the better therefore that none save Friends can write of themselves with authority. But I hope I am right in thinking, as I always have thought since I read Thomas Elwood's *Memoirs*, that their attitude is excellently explained in his account of his first visit to the Penningtons "after they were become Quakers" when, though he was astonished at the new gravity of their look and behaviour, he found Guli Springett amusing herself in the garden and the dinner "handsome." For the world's goods never being the end they were to the World's People, Friends were as undisturbed by their possession as by their absence and, as a consequence, could meet and accept life, whether its gifts were wealth and power or [Pg 16] poverty and obscurity, with the serenity few other men have found outside the cloister. Moreover, they could speak the truth, calling a spade a spade, or their enemy the scabbed sheep, or smooth silly man, or vile fellow, or inhuman monster, or villain infecting the air with a hellish stench, he no doubt was, and never for a moment lose their tempers. This serenity—this "still strength"—is as the poles apart from the phlegmatic, constitutional slowness of the Dutch in New York or, on the other hand, from the tranquillity Henry James traces in progressive descent from taste, tradition, and history, even from the philosopher's calm of achieved indifference, and Friends, having carried it to perfection in their own conduct, left it as a legacy to their town.



THE SCHUYLKILL SOUTH FROM CALLOWHILL STREET

The usual American town, when it hustles, lets nobody overlook the fact that it is hustling. But Philadelphia has done its work as calmly as the Friends have done theirs, never boasting of its prosperity, never shouting its success and riches from the house-top, and its dignified serenity has been mistaken for sleep. Whistler used to say that if the General does not tell the world he has won the battle, the world will never hear of it. The trouble with Philadelphia is that it has kept its triumph to itself. But we have got so far from the old Friends that no harm can be done if Philadelphians begin to interpret their town's serenity to a world capable of confusing it with drowsiness. If America is ready to forget, if for long Philadelphians were as ready, it is high time we should remember ourselves and remind America of the services Philadelphia has rendered to the country, and its good taste in rendering them with so little fuss that all the country has done in return is to laugh at Philadelphia as a back number.

[Pg 19]

V

Philadelphians have grown accustomed to the laugh. We have heard it since we were in our cradles. We are used to have other Americans come to our town and,—in the face of our factory chimneys smoking along the Schuylkill and our ship-building yards in full swing on the Delaware, and our locomotives pouring out over the world by I do not know how many thousands from the works in Broad Street, and our mills going at full pressure in the "Little England" of Kensington, in Frankford and Germantown,—in the face of our busy schools and hospitals and academies,—in the face of our stores and banks and charities,—that is, in the face of our industry, our learning, and our philanthropy that have given tips to the whole country,—see only our sleep-laden eyes and hear only our sluggish snores. We know the foolish stories they tell. We have heard many more times than we can count of the Bostonian who retires to Philadelphia for complete intellectual rest, and the New Yorker who when he has a day off comes to spend a week in Philadelphia, and the Philadelphian who goes to New York to eat the snails he cannot catch in his own back-yard. We have heard until we have it by heart that Philadelphia is a cemetery, and the road to it, the Road to Yesterday. We are so familiar with the venerable *cliché* that we can but wonder at its gift of eternal youth. Never was there a jest that wore so well with those who make it. The comic column is rarely complete without it, and it is forever cropping up where least expected. In the last American novel I opened Philadelphia was described as hanging on to the last strap of the last car to the sound of Gabriel's horn on Judgment Day; in the last American magazine story I read the Philadelphia heroine by her Philadelphia calm conquered the cowboys of the west, as Friends of old disarmed their judges in court. In the general Americanization of London, even the London papers have seized upon the slowness of Philadelphia as a joke for Londoners to roar at. Li Hung Chang couldn't visit Philadelphia without dozing through the ceremonies in his honour and noting the appropriateness of it in his diary. And so it goes on, the witticism to-day apparently as fresh as it was in the Stone Age from which it has come down to us.

[Pg 20]

FRIENDS' GRAVEYARD, GERMANTOWN

If Philadelphians laugh, that is another matter—every man has the right to laugh at himself. But we have outlived our old affectation of indifference to our town, I am not sure that we are not pushing our profession of pride in it too far to the other extreme. I remember the last time I was home I went to a public meeting called to talk about the world's waterways, and no Philadelphian present, from the Mayor down, could talk of anything but Philadelphia and its greatness. But [Pg 23] whatever may be our pose now, or next year, or the year after, there is always beneath it a substantial layer of affection, for we cannot help knowing, if nobody else does, what Philadelphia is and what Philadelphia has done. Certainly, it is because I know that I, for one, would so much rather be the Philadelphian I am, and my ancestors were not, than any other sort of American, that, as I have grown older, my love for my town has surprised me by its depth, and makes my confession of it now seem half pleasure, half duty.

CHAPTER II: A CHILD IN PHILADELPHIA [Pg 24]

I

If I made my first friendships from my perambulator, or trundling my hoop and skipping my rope, in Rittenhouse Square, as every Philadelphian should, they were interrupted and broken so soon that I have no memory of them.

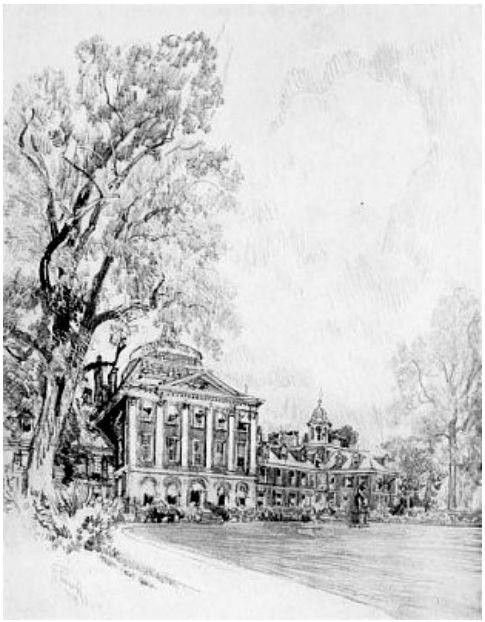
IN RITTENHOUSE SQUARE

It was my fate to be sent to boarding-school before I had time to lay in a store of the associations that are the common property of happier Philadelphians of my generation. I do not know if I was ever taken, as J. and other privileged children were, to the Pennsylvania Hospital on summer evenings to see William Penn step down from his pedestal when he heard the clock strike six, or to the Philadelphia Library to wait until Benjamin Franklin, hearing the same summons, left his high niche for a neighbouring saloon. I cannot recall the firemen's fights and the cries of negroes selling pop-corn and ice-cream through the streets that fill some Philadelphia reminiscences I have read. I cannot say if I ever went anywhere by the omnibus sleigh in winter, or to West Philadelphia by the stage at any time of the year. I never coasted down the hills of Germantown, I never skated on the Schuylkill. When my contemporaries compare notes of these and many more delightful things in the amazing, romantic, incredible Philadelphia they grew up in, it annoys me [Pg 27]

to find myself out of it all, sharing none of their recollections, save one and that the most trivial. For, from the vagueness of the remote past, no event emerges so clearly as the periodical visit of "Crazy Norah," a poor, harmless, half-witted wanderer, who wore a man's hat and top boots, with bits of ribbon scattered over her dress, and who, on her aimless rounds, drifted into all the Philadelphia kitchens to the fearful joy of the children; and my memory may be less of her personally than of much talk of her helped by her resemblance, or so I fancied, to a picture of Meg Merrilies in a collection of engravings of Walter Scott's heroines owned by an Uncle, and almost the first book I can remember.

II

But great as was my loss, I fancy my memories of old Philadelphia gain in vividness for being so few. One of the most vivid is of the interminable drive in the slow horse-car which was the longest part of the journey to and from my Convent school,—which is the longest part of any journey I ever made, not to be endured at the time but for the chanting over and over to myself of all the odds and ends of verse I had got by heart, from the dramas of *Little Miss Muffett* and *Little Jack Horner* to Poe's *Bells* and Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*—but in memory a drive to be rejoiced in, for nothing could have been more characteristic of Philadelphia as it was then. The Convent was in Torresdale on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the Pennsylvania Depot— [Pg 28] Philadelphia had as yet no Stations and Terminals—was in the distant, unknown quarter of Frankford. I believe it is used as a freight station now and I have sometimes thought that, for sentiment's sake, I should like to make a pilgrimage to it over the once well-travelled road. But the modern trolley has deserted the straight course of the unadventurous horse-car of my day and I doubt if ever again I could find my way back. The old horse-car went, without turn or twist, along Third Street. I started from the corner of Spruce, having got as far as that by the slower, more infrequent Spruce Street car, and after I had passed the fine old houses where Philadelphians—not aliens—lived, a good part of the route lay through a busy business section. But there has stayed with me as my chief impression of the endless street a sense of eternal calm. No matter how much solid work was being done, no matter how many fortunes were being made and unmade, it was always placid on the surface, uneventful and unruffled. The car, jingling along in leisurely fashion, was the one sign of animation.



THE PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL
FROM THE GROUNDS

Or often, in spring and summer, I went by boat, from—so false is memory—I cannot say what wharf, up the Delaware. This was a pleasanter journey and every bit as leisurely and as characteristic in its way of Philadelphia life. For though I might catch the early afternoon boat, it was sure to be full of business men returning from their offices to their houses on the river. [Pg 31] Philadelphians did not wait for the Main Line to be invented to settle in the suburbs. They have always had a fancy for the near country ever since Penn lived in state at Pennsbury, and Logan at Stenton; ever since Bartram planted his garden on the banks of the Schuylkill, and Arnold brought Peggy Shippen as his bride to Mount Pleasant; ever since all the Colonial country houses we are so proud of were built. I have the haziest memory of the places where the boat stopped between Philadelphia and Torresdale and of the people who got out there. But I cannot help remembering Torresdale for it was as prominent a stopping-place in my journey through youth as it is in the journey up the Delaware. The Convent was my home for years, and I had many friends in the houses down by the riverside and scattered over the near country. Their names are among the most familiar in my youthful recollections: the Macalisters, the Grants—one of my brothers named after the father—the Hopkins—another of my brothers marrying in the family—the Fishers, Keatings, Steadmans, Kings, Bories, Whelans. It was not often I could go or come without meeting somebody I knew on board. I am a cockney myself, I love the town, but I can understand that Philadelphians whose homes were in the country, especially if that country lay along the shores of the Delaware, liked to get back early enough to profit by it; that, busy and full

of affairs as they might be, they not only liked but managed to, shows how far hustling was from the old Philadelphia scheme of things. Nowadays the motor brings the country into town and town into the country. But the miles between town and country were then lengthened into leagues by the leisurely boat and the leisurely horse-car which, as I look back, seem to set the pace of life in Philadelphia when I was young. [Pg 32]

III

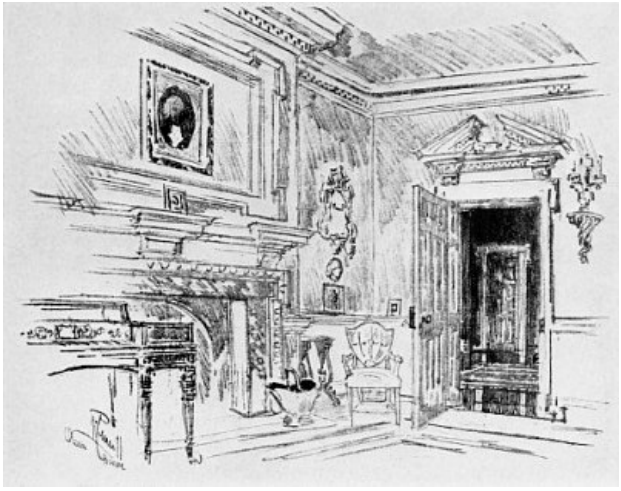
At first my holidays were spent mostly at the Convent. My Father, with the young widower's embarrassment when confronted by his motherless children, solved the problem the existence of my Sister and myself was to him by putting us where he knew we were safe and well out of his way. I do not blame him. What is a man to do when he finds himself with two little girls on his clumsy masculine hands? But the result was he had no house of his own to bring us to when the other girls hurried joyfully home at Christmas and Easter and for the long summer holiday. It hurt as I used to watch them walking briskly down the long path on the way to the station. And yet, I scored in the end, for Philadelphia was the more marvellous to me, visiting it rarely, than it could have been to children to whom it was an everyday affair.

"ELEVENTH AND SPRUCE"

For years my Grandfather's house was the scene of the occasional visit. He lived in Spruce Street above Eleventh—the typical Philadelphia Street, straight and narrow, on either side rows of red brick houses, each with white marble steps, white shutters below and green shutters above, and along the red brick pavement rows of trees which made Philadelphia the green country town of Penn's desire, but the Philadelphian's life a burden in the springtime before the coming of the sparrows. Philadelphia, as I think of it in the old days at the season when the leaves were growing green, is always heavy with the odour of the evil-smelling ailantus and full of measuring worms falling upon me from every tree. My fear of "Crazy Norah" is hardly less clear in my early memories than the terror these worms were to the dear fragile little Aunt who had cared for me in my first motherless years, and who still, during my holidays, kept a watchful eye on me to see that I put my "gums" on if I went out in the rain and that I had the money in my pocket to stop at Dexter's for a plate of ice-cream. I can recall as if it were yesterday, her shrieks one Easter Sunday when she came home from church and found a green horror on her new spring bonnet and another on her petticoat, and her miserable certainty all through the early Sunday dinner that many more were crawling over her somewhere. But, indeed, the Philadelphians of to-day can never know from what loathsome creatures the sparrows have delivered them. [Pg 35]

My Grandfather's house was as typical as the street—one of the quite modest four-story brick houses that were thought unseemly sky-scrapers and fire-traps when they were first built in Philadelphia. I can never go by the old house of many memories—for sale, alas! the last time I passed and still for sale according to the last news to reach me even as I correct my proofs—without seeing myself as I used to be, arriving from the Convent, small, plain, unbecomingly dressed and conscious of it, with my pretty, always-becomingly-dressed because nothing was unbecoming to her, not-in-the-least-shy Sister, both standing in the vestibule between the inevitable Philadelphia two front doors, the outer one as inevitably open all day long. And I see myself, when, in answer to our ring, the servant had opened the inner one as well, entering in a fresh access of shyness the wide lofty hall, with the front and back parlours to the right; Philadelphians had no drawing-rooms then but were content with parlours, as Penn had been who knew them by no other name. Compared to the rich Philadelphian's house to-day, my Grandfather's looks very unpretending, but when houses like it, with two big parlours separated by folding doors, first became the fashion in Philadelphia, they passed for palaces with Philadelphians who disapproved of display, and the "tradesmen" living soberly in them were rebuked for aspiring to the luxury of princes. I cannot imagine why, for the old Colonial houses are, many of them, as lofty and more spacious, though it was the simple spaciousness of my [Pg 36]

Grandfather's and the loftiness of its ceilings that gave it charm.



DRAWING ROOM AT CLIVEDEN

My Grandfather's two parlours, big as they were, would strike nobody to-day as palatial. It needs the glamour time throws over them for me to discover princely luxury in the rosewood and reps [Pg 39] masterpieces of a deplorable period with which they were furnished, or in their decoration of beaded cushions and worsted-work mats and tidies, the lavish gifts of a devoted family. But I cannot remember the parlours and forget the respect with which they once inspired me. I own to a lingering affection for their crowning touch of ugliness, an ottoman with a top of the fashionable Berlin work of the day—a white arum lily, done by the superior talent of the fancy store, on a red ground filled in by the industrious giver. It stood between the two front windows, so that we might have the additional rapture of seeing it a second time in the mirror which hung behind it. Opposite, between the two windows of the back parlour, was a "Rogers Group" on a blue stand; and a replica, with variations, of both the ottoman and the "Rogers Group" could have been found in every other Philadelphia front and back parlour. I recall also the three or four family portraits which I held in tremendous awe, however I may feel about them now; and the immensely high vases, unique creations that could not possibly have been designed for any purpose save to ornament the Philadelphia mantelpiece; and the transparent lamp-shade, decorated with pictures of cats and children and landscapes, that at night, when the gas was lit, helped to keep me awake until I could escape to bed; and the lustre chandeliers hanging from the ceiling—what joy when one of the long prisms came loose and I could capture it and, looking through it, walk across the parlours and up the stairs straight into the splendid dangers of [Pg 40] Rainbow Land!

I had no time for these splendours on my arrival, nor, fortunately for me, was I left long to the tortures of my shyness. At the end of the hall, facing me, was the wide flight of stairs leading to the upper stories, and on the first landing, at their turning just where a few more steps led beyond into the back-building dining-room, my Grandmother, in her white cap and purple ribbons, stood waiting. In my memory she and that landing are inseparable. Whenever the door bell rang, she was out there at the first sound, ready to say "Come right up, my dear!" to whichever one of her innumerable progeny it might he. To her right, filling an ample space in the windings of the back stairs, was the inexhaustible pantry which I knew, as well as she, we should presently visit together. Though there could not have been in Philadelphia or anywhere quite such another Grandmother, even if most Philadelphians feel precisely the same way about theirs, she was typical too, like the house and the street. She belonged to the generation of Philadelphia women who took to old age almost as soon as they were mothers, put on caps and large easy shoes, invented an elderly dress from which they never deviated for the rest of their lives, except to exchange cashmere for silk, the everyday cap for one of fine lace and wider ribbons, on occasions of ceremony, and who as promptly forgot the world outside of their household and [Pg 41] their family. I do not believe my Grandmother had an interest in anybody except her children, or in anything except their affairs; though this did not mean that she gave up society when it was to their advantage that she should not. In her stiff silks and costly caps, she presided at every dinner, reception, and party given at home, as conscientiously as, in her sables and demure velvet bonnet, she made and returned calls in the season.

My other memories are of comfortable, spacious rooms, good, solid, old-fashioned furniture, a few more old and some better-forgotten new family portraits on the walls, the engraving of Gilbert Stuart's Washington over the dining-room mantelpiece, the sofa or couch in almost every room for the Philadelphia nap before dinner, the two cheerful kitchens where, if the servants were amiable, I sometimes played, and, above all, the most enchanting back-yard that ever was or could be—we were not so elegant in those days as to call it a garden.

IV

Since it has been the fashion to revive everything old in Philadelphia, most Philadelphians are not happy until they have their garden, as their forefathers had, and very charming they often make it in the suburbs. But in town my admiration has been asked for gardens that would have been lost in my Grandfather's back-yard, and for a few meagre plants springing up about a cold paved

square that would have been condemned as weeds in his luxuriant flower beds. [Pg 42]

The kindly magnifying glasses of memory cannot convert the Spruce Street yard into a rival of Edward Shippen's garden in Second Street where the old chronicles say there were orchards and a herd of deer, or of Bartram's with its trees and plants collected from far and wide, or of any of the old Philadelphia gardens in the days when in Philadelphia no house, no public building, almost no church, could exist without a green space and great trees and many flowers about it, and when Philadelphians loved their gardens so well, and hated so to leave them, that there is the story of one at least who came back after death to haunt the shady walks and fragrant lawns that were fairer to her than the fairest Elysian Fields in the land beyond the grave. Much of the old beauty had gone before I was born, much was going as I grew from childhood to youth. My Uncle, Charles Godfrey Leland, has described the Philadelphia garden of his early years, "with vines twined over arbours, where the magnolia, honeysuckle and rose spread rich perfume of summer nights, and where the humming bird rested, and scarlet tanager, or oriole, with the yellow and blue bird flitted in sunshine or in shade." Though I go back to days before the sparrows had driven away not only the worms but all others of their own race, I recall no orioles and scarlet tanagers, no yellow and blue birds. Philadelphia's one magnolia tree stood in front of the old Dundas house at Broad and Walnut. [Pg 43]

All the same, my Grandfather's was a back-yard of enchantment. A narrow brick-paved path led past the kitchens; on one side, close to the wall dividing my Grandfather's yard from the next door neighbour's, was a border of roses and Johnny-jump-ups and shrubs—the shrubs my Grandmother used to pick for me, crush a little in her fingers, and tie up in a corner of my handkerchief, which was the Philadelphia way—the most effective way that ever was—to make them give out their sweetness. Beyond the kitchens, where the yard broadened into a large open space, the path enclosed, with a wider border of roses, two big grass plots which were shaded by fruit trees, all pink and white in the springtime. Wistaria hung in purple showers over the high walls. I am sure lilacs bloomed at the kitchen door, and a vine of Isabella grapes—the very name has an old Philadelphia flavour and fragrance—covered the verandah that ran across the entire second story of the back-building. If sometimes this delectable back-yard was cold and bare, in my memory it is more apt to be sweet and gay with roses, shrubs and Johnny-jump-ups,—summer and its pleasures oftener waiting on me there: probably because my visits to my Grandfather's were more frequent in the summer time. But I have vague memories of winter days, when the rose bushes were done up in straw, and wooden steps covered the marble in front, and ashes were strewn over the icy pavement, and snow was piled waist-high in the gutter. [Pg 44]

V

From the verandah there was a pleasant vista, up and down, of the same back-yards and the same back buildings, just as from the front windows there was a pleasant vista, up and down, of the same red-brick fronts, the same white marble steps, the same white and green shutters,—only one house daring upon originality, and this was Bennett's, the ready-made clothes man, whose unusually large garden filled the opposite corner of Eleventh and Spruce with big country-like trees over to which I looked from my bedroom window. As a child, instinctively I got to know that inside every house, within sight and beyond, I would find the same front and back parlours, the same back-building dining-room, the same number of bedrooms, the same engraving of George Washington over the dining-room mantelpiece, the same big red cedar chest in the third story hall and, in summer, the same parlours turned into cool grey cellars with the same matting on the floor, the same linen covers on the chairs, the same curtainless windows and carefully closed shutters, the same white gauze over mirrors and chandeliers—to light upon an item for gauze "to cover pictures and glass" in Washington's household accounts while he lived in Philadelphia is one of the things it is worth searching the old archives for.

BACK-YARDS, ST. PETER'S SPIRE

Instinctively, I got to know too that, in every one of these well-regulated interiors where there was a little girl, she must, like me, be striving to be neither seen nor heard all the long morning, [Pg 47] and sitting primly at the front window all the long afternoon, and that, if she ever played at home it was, like me, with measured steps and modulated voice: at all times cultivating the calm of manner expected of her when she, in her turn, would have just such a red brick house and just such a delectable back-yard of her own. Thus, while the long months at the Convent kept me busy cultivating every spiritual grace, during the occasional holiday at Eleventh and Spruce I was well drilled in the Philadelphia virtues.

CHAPTER III: A CHILD IN PHILADELPHIA—CONTINUED [Pg 48]

I

Naturally, I could not live in Spruce Street and not believe, as every Philadelphian should and once did, that no other kind of a house except the Spruce Street house was fit for a Philadelphian to live in. The Philadelphian, from infancy, was convinced by his surroundings and bringing-up that there was but one way of doing things decently and respectably and that was the Philadelphia way, nor can my prolonged exile relieve me from the sense of crime at times when I catch myself doing things not just as Philadelphians used to do them.

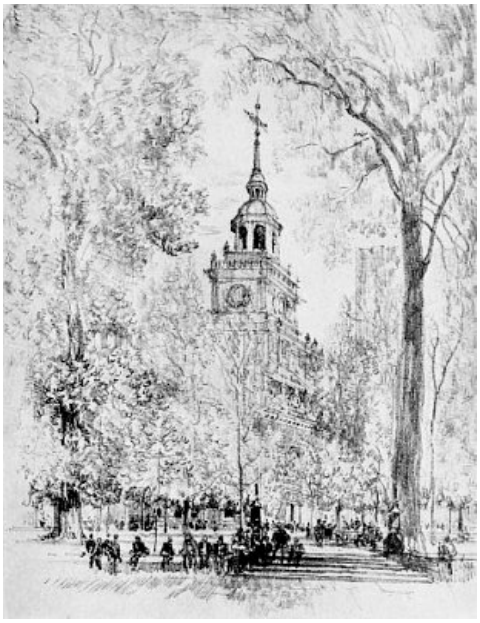
I was safe from any such crime in my Grandfather's house. All Philadelphia might have been let in without fear. Had skeletons been concealed in the capacious cupboards, they would have been of the approved Philadelphia pattern. My Grandfather was not at all of Montaigne's opinion that order in the management of life is sottish, but looked upon it rather as "Heaven's first law." His day's programme was the same as in every red brick house with white marble steps and a back-yard full of roses and shrubs and Johnny-jump-ups. Everything at Eleventh and Spruce was done according to the same Philadelphia rules at the same hour, from the washing of the family linen [Pg 49] on Monday, when Sunday's beef was eaten cold for dinner, to the washing of the front on Saturday morning, when Philadelphia streets from end to end were all mops and maids, rivers and lakes.

When my Grandfather, with his family on their knees around him, began the day by reading morning prayers in the back-building dining-room, he could have had the satisfaction of knowing that every other Philadelphia head of a family was engaged in the same edifying duty, but I hope, for every other Philadelphia family's sake, with a trifle less awe-inspiring solemnity. After being present once at my Grandfather's prayers, nobody needed to be assured that life was earnest.

He did not shed his solemnity when he rose from his knees, nor when he had finished his breakfast of scrapple and buckwheat cakes and left the breakfast table. He was as solemn in his progress through the streets to the Philadelphia Bank, at Fourth and Chestnut, of which he was President, and having said so much perhaps I might as well add his name, Thomas Robins, for in his day he was widely known and it is a satisfaction to remember, as widely appreciated both in and out of Philadelphia. His clothes were always of the most admirable cut and fit and of a fashion becoming to his years, he carried a substantial cane with a gold top, his stock was never laid aside for a frivolous modern cravat, his silk hat was as indispensable, and his slow walk had a dignity royalty might have envied. He was a handsome old man and a noticeable figure even in [Pg 50] Philadelphia streets at the hour when John Welsh from the corner, and Biddles and Cadwalladers and Whartons and Peppers and Lewises and a host of other handsome old Philadelphians with good Philadelphia names from the near neighborhood, were starting downtown in clothes as irreproachable and with a gait no less dignified. The foreigner's idea of the American is of a slouchy, free-and-easy man for ever cracking jokes. But slouchiness and jokes had no place in the dictionary or the deportment of my Grandfather and his contemporaries, at a period when Philadelphia supplied men like John Welsh for its country to send as representatives abroad and there carry on the traditions of Franklin and John Adams and Jefferson. My Father—Edward Robins—inherited more than his share of this old-fashioned Philadelphia manner, making a ceremony of the morning walk to his office and the Sunday walk to church. But it has been lost by younger generations, more's the pity. In memory I would not have my Grandfather a shade less solemn, though at the time his solemnity put me on anything but easy terms with him.

II

The respectful bang of the front door upon my Grandfather's dignified back after breakfast was the signal for the family to relax. The cloth was at once cleared, my Grandmother and my Aunts—like all Philadelphia mothers and daughters—brought their work-baskets into the dining-room [Pg 53] and sat and gossiped there until it was time for my Grandmother to go and see the butcher and the provision dealer, or for my Aunts to make those formal calls for which the morning then was the unpardonable hour.



INDEPENDENCE SQUARE AND THE STATE HOUSE

It seems to me, in looking back, as if my Grandmother could never have gone out of the house except on an errand to the provision man, such an important part did it play in her daily round of duties. She never went to market. That was not the Philadelphia woman's business, it was the Philadelphia man's. My Grandfather, at the time of which I write, must have grown too old for the task, which was no light one, for it meant getting up at unholy hours every Wednesday and every Saturday, leaving the rest of the family in their comfortable beds, and being back again in time for prayers and eight o'clock breakfast. I cannot say how this division of daily labour was brought about. The century before, a short time as things go in Philadelphia, it was the other way round and the young Philadelphia woman at her marketing was one of the sights strangers in the town were taken to see. But in my time it was so much the man's right that as a child I believed there was something essentially masculine in going to market, just as there was in making the mayonnaise for the salad at dinner. A Philadelphia man valued his salad too highly to trust its preparation to a woman. It was almost a shock to me when my Father allowed my motherly little [Pg 54] Aunt to relieve him of the responsibility in the Spruce Street house. And later on, when he re-married and again lived in a house of his own, and my Step-Mother made a mayonnaise quite equal to his or to any mere man's, not even to her would he shift the early marketing,—his presence in the Twelfth Street Market as essential on Wednesday and Saturday mornings as in the Stock Exchange every day—and his conscientiousness was the more astonishing as his genius was by no means for domesticity. Philadelphia women respected man's duties and rights in domestic, as in all, matters. I remember an elderly Philadelphian, who was stopping at Blossom's Hotel in Chester, where all Americans thirty years ago began their English tour, telling me the many sauces on the side table had looked so good she would have liked to try them and, on my asking her why in the world she had not, saying they had not been offered to her and she thought perhaps they were for the gentlemen. Only a Philadelphian among Americans could have given that answer.

Towards three o'clock in the Spruce Street house, my Grandmother would be found, her cap carefully removed, stretched full-length upon the sofa in the dining-room. The picture would not be complete if I left out my Father's rage because the dining-room was used for her before-dinner nap as for almost every purpose of domestic life by the women of the family. I have often wondered where he got such an un-Philadelphia idea. In every house where there was a [Pg 55] Grandmother, she was taking her nap at the same hour on the same sofa in the same dining-room. I could never see the harm. It was the most comfortable room in the house, without the isolation of the bedroom or the formality of the parlours.

At four, my Grandfather returned from his day's work, the family re-assembled, holding him in sufficient awe never to be late, and dinner was served. The hour was part of the leisurely life of Philadelphia as ordered in Spruce Street. Philadelphians had dined at four during a hundred years and more, and my Grandfather, who rarely condescended to the frivolity of change, continued to dine at four, as he continued to wear a stock, until the end of his life. It was no doubt because of the contrast with Convent fare that the dinner in my recollection remains the most wonderful and elaborate I have ever eaten, though I rack my brains in vain to recall any of its special features except the figs and prunes on the high dessert dishes, altogether the most luscious figs and prunes ever grown and dried, and the decanter at my Grandfather's place from which he dropped into his glass the few drops of brandy he drank with his water while everybody else drank their water undiluted. When friends came to dinner, I recall also the Philadelphia decanter of Madeira, though otherwise no greater ceremony. Dinner was always as solemn an affair in my Grandfather's house as morning prayers or any act of daily life over which he presided, the whole house, at all times when he left it, relapsing into dressing-gown and [Pg 56] slippered ease after the full-dress decorum his presence required of it.

The eight o'clock tea is a more definite function in my memory, perhaps because the hours of

waiting for it crept by so slowly. After dinner, the Aunts, my Father, the one Uncle who lived at home, vanished I never knew where, though no doubt Philadelphia supplied some amusement or occupation for the forlorn wreck four o'clock dinner made of the afternoon. But the interval was spent by my Grandfather and Grandmother at one of the front parlour windows, the old-fashioned Philadelphia afghan over their knees, their hands folded, while I, alone, my Sister having had the independence to vanish with the grown-ups, sat at the other, not daring to break the silence in which they looked out into the drowsy street for the people who seldom came and the events that never happened; nothing disturbing the calm of Spruce Street save the Sunday afternoon invasion of the colored people in their Sunday clothes from every near alley. It gives me a pang now to pass and see the window empty that once was always filled, in the hour before twilight, by those two dear grey heads.

III

As I grew a little older, I had the courage to bring a book to the window. It was there I read *The Lamplighter* which I confuse now with the memory of our own lamplighter making his rounds; [Pg 59] and *The Initials* with a haughty Hilda for heroine—she must have been haughty for all real heroines then were; and *Queechy* and *The Wide, Wide World* and *Faith Gartney's Girlhood*, against whose sentiment I am glad to say I revolted. And mixed up with these were Mrs. Southworth's *Lost Heiress* and the anonymous *Routledge*, light books for whose presence I cannot account in my Grandfather's serious house. Does anybody read *Routledge* now? Has anybody now ever heard of it? What trash it was, but, after the improving romances with a religious moral of the Convent Library, after Wiseman's edifying *Fabiola* and Newman's scholarly —beyond my years—*Callista*, how I revelled in it, with what a choking throat I galloped through the lovesick chapters! I could recite pages of it to myself to relieve the dreariness of those long drives in the Third Street car, or the long waiting in the dreary station. To this day I remember the last sentence—"with his arm around my waist and my face hidden on his shoulder, I told him of the love, folly and pride that had so long kept me from him." Could *Queechy*, could *Faith Gartney's Girlhood* have been more sentimental than that? I dare not look up the old books to see, lest their charm as well as their sentiment should fade in the light of a more critical age. Then Scott and Dickens, Miss Edgeworth, more often *Holiday House*, filled the hours before tea. After all, the old division of the day, the young generation would be ashamed to go back to, had its uses.

CHRIST CHURCH INTERIOR

[Pg 60]

IV

The tea, when announced, was worth waiting, or putting down the most entrancing book, for. Had I my way I would make Philadelphia dine again at four o'clock for the sake of the tea—of the frizzled beef that only Philadelphia ever frizzled to a turn, the smoked salmon that only Philadelphia ever smoked as an art, the Maryland biscuits that ought to be called Philadelphia biscuits for they were never half so good in their native land, the home-made preserves put up in that sunshiny kitchen where lilacs bloomed at the door. After all this long quarter of a century, the smell of beef frizzling would take me back to Eleventh and Spruce on a winter evening as straight as the fragrance of the flowering bean carries me to Pompeii in the early springtime, or of garlic to the little sunlit towns of Provence at any season of the year. The tea was a triumph of simplicity, but when there were guests it became a feast. As a rule, it was the meal to which the children and grandchildren who did not live in the Spruce Street house were invited, and loved best to be invited. For on these occasions my Grandmother could be relied upon to provide stewed oysters, the masterpiece of Margaret, her old grey-haired cook; and oyster croquettes from Augustine's—my Grandfather would as soon have begun the day without prayers as my Grandmother have given a feast without the help of Augustine, that caterer of colour who was for

years supreme in Philadelphia; brandy peaches that, like the preserves, had been put up at home, [Pg 61] the brandy poured in with unexpected lavishness for so temperate a household; and little round cakes with white icing on top—what dear little ghosts from out a far past they seemed when, after a quarter of a century in a land where people know nothing of the delights of little round cakes with white icing on top, I ate them again at Philadelphia feasts. If the solemn, dignified Grandfather at one end of the table kept our enjoyment within the bounds of ceremony, we felt no restraint with the little old Grandmother who beamed upon us from the other, as she poured out the tea and coffee with hands trembling so that, in her later years, the man servant,—usually coloured and not to Philadelphia as yet known as butler or footman,—always stood close by to catch the tea or coffee pot when it fell, which it never did.

V

I recall more formal family reunions, above all the Golden Wedding, as impressive as a court function, the two old people enthroned at the far end of the front parlour, the sons and daughters and grandchildren approaching in a solemn line—an embarrassed line when it came to the youngest, always shy in the awful presence of the Grandfather—and offering, each in turn, their gifts. We were by no means a remarkable family, to the unprejudiced we may have seemed a commonplace one, my forefathers evidently having decided that leaving England for America was [Pg 62] a feat remarkable enough to satisfy the ambitions of any one family and having then proceeded to rest comfortably on their respectable laurels, but we took each other with great seriousness. The oldest Aunt, who was married and lived in New York, received on her annual visit to Spruce Street the homage due to a Princess Royal, and no King or Emperor could have caused more of a flutter than my Grandfather when he honoured one of his children with a visit. Family anniversaries were scrupulously observed, the legend of family affection was kept up as conscientiously, whatever it cost us in discomfort, and there were times when we paid heavily. I would have run many miles to escape one Uncle who, when he met me in the street, would stop to ask how I was, and how we all were at home, and then would stand twisting his moustache in visible agony, trying to think what the affectionate intimacy between us that did not exist required him to say, while I thanked my stars that we were in the street and not in a house where he would have felt constrained to kiss me. We were horribly exact in this matter of kissing. There was a family legend of another Uncle from New York who once, when he came over for some family meeting, was so eager to do his duty by his nieces that he kissed not only all of them—no light task—but two or three neighbours' little girls into the bargain. I think, however, that every Philadelphia family took itself as seriously and that our scruples were not a monopoly brought with us from Virginia and Maryland. In a town where family names are handed down from [Pg 63] generation to generation, so that a family often will boast, as ours did, not only a "Jr." but a "3d," and lose no opportunity to let the world know it, family feeling is not likely to be allowed to wilt and die.

Every public holiday also was a family affair to be observed with the rigours of the family feast. Christmas for me, when I did not celebrate it at the Convent with Midnight Mass and a *Crèche* in the chapel and kind nuns trying to make me forget I had not gone home like other little girls, took me to the Spruce Street house in time to look on at the succession of Uncles and Aunts who dropped in on Christmas Eve and went away laden with bundles, and carrying in some safe pocket a collection of envelopes with a crisp new greenback in each, the sum varying from one hundred dollars to five according to the age of the child or grandchild whose name was on the envelope—my Grandfather gave with the fine patriarchal air he maintained in all family relations. The family appropriation of Thanksgiving Day and Washington's Birthday I did not grasp until after I left school, for while I was at the Convent they were both spent there, where they dwindled into insignificance compared to Reverend Mother's feast and its glories. As a rule, I must have been at the Convent as well for the Fourth of July, though I retain one jubilant vision of myself and a bag of torpedoes in the back-yard, solemnizing a little celebration among the roses. And I have larger visions of military parades in broiling sunshine and of the City Troop filling the [Pg 64] quiet streets with their gorgeousness which awed me long before the knowledge of their historic origin and uniform inspired me with reverence.

VI

Other duties and pleasures and observances that for most Philadelphia children were scattered through the interminable year, were crowded into my short holiday: visits to the dentist, to Dr. Hopkins, Dr. White's assistant, it being a test of Philadelphia respectability to have one's teeth seen to by Dr. White or one of his assistants or students, and the regular appointment was as much of obligation for me as Mass on Sunday; visits to the Academy of Fine Arts in the old Chestnut Street building, as I remember set back at the end of a court that made of it a place apart, a consecrated place which I entered with as little anticipation of amusement as St. Joseph's Church hidden in Willing's Alley, and was the more surprised therefore to be entertained, as I must have been, by Benjamin West, for of no other painter there have I the faintest recollection; visits to the Academy of Natural Sciences, where I liked the rows upon rows of stuffed birds, and the strange things in bottles, and the colossal skeletons that filled me with the same delicious shivers as the stories of afreets and genii in *The Arabian Nights*; visits to Fairmount Park, leagues away, houses left behind before it was reached, where the mysterious [Pg 67] machinery of the Waterworks was as terrifying as the skeletons, and I thought it much pleasanter outside under the blue sky; visits to the theatre—the most wonderful visits of all, for they took me out into the night that I knew only from stolen vigils in the Convent dormitory, or glimpses from

the Spruce Street windows. Romance was in the dimly-lit streets, in the stars above, in the town after dark, which I was warned I was never to brave alone until I can laugh now to think how terrified I was the first time I came home late by myself, in my terror jumping into a street-car and claiming the protection of a contemptuous young woman whom work had not allowed to draw a conventional line between day and night.

CLASSIC FAIRMOUNT

I have never got rid of that suggestion of romance, not so much in the theatre itself as in the going to it, and, to this day, a matinée in broad daylight will bring back a little of the old thrill. But nothing can bring back to any theatre the glitter, the brilliancy, the splendour of the old Chestnut, the old Walnut, the old Arch, then already dingy with age I have no doubt, but transfigured by my childhood's ecstasies in them. Nothing can persuade me that any plays have been, or could be, written to surpass in beauty, pathos and humour, *Solon Shingle*, and *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and *Our American Cousin*, and *The Black Crook*, and *Ours*, though I have forgotten all but their names; that in opera Clara Louise Kellogg ever had a rival; that in gaiety and wit *La Grande* [Pg 68] *Duchesse* and *La Belle Hélène* could be eclipsed; or that any actors could compete with Sothern and Booth and Mrs. Drew and the Davenports, and Charlotte Cushman as *Meg Merrilies*—there was a bit of good old melodramatic acting to make a small Convent girl's flesh creep! Shakespeare was redeemed by Booth from the dulness of the Convent reading-book and entered gloriously into my Convent life. For one happy winter, it was not I who led the long procession down to the refectory, though nobody could have suspected it, but the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, with, close behind me, in gloom absorbed, the Prince of Denmark, mistaken by the unknowing for the little girl, my friend, whose father, with more than the usual father's amiable endurance, had taken me with her and her sister to see the play of *Hamlet* during the Christmas holidays.

DOWN PINE STREET

The theatre has become part of the modern school course. If an actor like Forbes-Robertson gives a farewell performance of *Hamlet*, or a manager like Beerbohm Tree produces a patriotic melodrama, or the company from the Théâtre Français perform one of the rare classics that the young person may be taken to, I have seen a London theatre filled with school girls and boys. From what I hear I might imagine the theatre and the opera to be the most serious studies of

every Philadelphia school. At the Convent I should have envied the modern students could I have foreseen their liberty, but they have more reason to envy me. The gilt has been rubbed too soon [Pg 71] off their gingerbread, too soon has the tinsel of their theatre been tarnished. My Spartan training gave me a theatre that can never cease to be a Wonderland, just as it endowed me with a Philadelphia that will endure, until this world knows me no more, as a beautiful, peaceful town where roses bloom in the sunny back-yards, and people live with dignity behind the plain red brick fronts of its long, straight streets.

CHAPTER IV: AT THE CONVENT [Pg 72]

I

As the theatre, in my memory, still gives the crowning glory to my holiday in Philadelphia, so, in looking back, the brief holiday seems the spectacle, the romance, the supreme moment, of my early years. The scene of my every-day life was that Convent of the Sacred Heart at Torresdale which was the end of the interminable ride in the Third Street horse-car and the shorter ride in the Pennsylvania Railroad train.

The Philadelphian who did not live in the Convent would have seen it the other way round, for the Convent was unlike enough to Philadelphia to suggest the romance of the unusual. Only in one or two respects did it provide me with facts that every proper Philadelphian was brought up to know, and let me say again that because I had to find out the others—the more characteristically Philadelphia facts—for myself, I think they probably made a stronger impression upon me than upon the Philadelphian guiltless of ever straying, or of ever having been allowed to stray, from the approved Philadelphia path.

II

When the Ladies of the Sacred Heart decided to open a Convent in Philadelphia, an uncertain enterprise if it is considered how un-Catholic Philadelphia was, they began in a fairly modest way [Pg 73] by taking a large house at Torresdale, with lawns and gardens and woods and a great old-fashioned barn, the country seat of a Philadelphian whose name I have forgotten. It stood to the west of the railroad, at a discreet distance from the little cluster of houses by the riverside that alone meant Torresdale to the Philadelphians who lived in them.

The house, I can now see, was typical as I first knew it, the sort the Philadelphian built for himself in the suburbs at a period too removed from Colonial days for it to have the beauty of detail and historic interest of the Colonial house, and yet near enough to them for dignity of proportion and spaciousness to be desirable, if not essential to a Philadelphian's comfort. A wide, lofty hall ran from the front door to the back, on either side were two large airy rooms with space between for the broad main stairway, a noble structure, and the carefully concealed back stairway—half-way up which in my time was the little infirmary window where, at half past ten every morning, Sister Odille dispensed pills and powders to those in need of them. Along the entire front of the house was a broad porch,—the indispensable Philadelphia piazza—its roof supported by a row of substantial columns over which roses and honeysuckle clambered fragrantly and luxuriantly in the June sunshine. The house was painted a cheerful yellow that went well with the white of the woodwork about the windows and the porch: not a very beautiful type of house, but pleasant, substantial, luxurious, and making as little outward show of its luxury [Pg 74] as the plain red brick town house of the wealthy Philadelphian.

How comfortable a type of house it was to live in, I know from experience of another, not a school, within sight, a ten minutes' walk across the fields, and like it in design and arrangement and even colour, in everything except size,—which my Father took one summer: to me a most memorable summer as it was the first I spent outside the Convent limits from the beginning to the end of the long holiday. The jerry-builder had had no part in putting up the solid, well-constructed walls which stood firm against winter storms and winds, and were no less a protection from the torrid heat of a Philadelphia summer. But fashion can leave architecture no more alone than dress. Already, the newer group of houses down by the Delaware were built of the brown stone which, to my mind, dates the beginning of the Philadelphian's fall from architectural grace, the beginning of his distrust in William Penn's plans for his well-being and of his foolish hankering after the fleshpots of New York.

**LOUDOUN, MAIN STREET
GERMANTOWN**

The Convent, before I came to it, had been a victim to the brown stone fashion. With success, the pleasant old country house had grown too small for the school into which it had been converted, and a southern wing had been added: a long, low building with the Chapel at the far end, all built in brown stone and in a style that passed for Gothic and that a thousand times I could have wished based upon any other model. For the upper room in the wing, ambitiously christened by [Pg 77] somebody Gothic Hall, had a high pointed roof that made it an ice-house in winter and, for our sins, it was used as the Dormitory of the Sacred Heart where I slept. I can recall mornings when the water was frozen in our pitchers while the big stove, in the middle of the high-pitched room, burned red hot as if to mock at us as, with numbed fingers, we struggled to make our beds and wash ourselves and button and hook on our clothes. And the builders had so contrived that summer turned our fine Gothic Dormitory into a fiery furnace. How many June nights, contrary to all the rules, have I hung out of the little, horribly Gothic window at the head of my alcove, gasping in the warm darkness that was so sweet and stifling with the fragrance of the flowers in Madame Huguet's garden just below.

I had not been long at the Convent before another brown stone wing extended to the north and two stories were added to the main building which, for the sake of harmony, was now painted brown from top to bottom. In a niche on this new façade, a statue of the Sacred Heart was set, and all semblance to the old country house was gone, except for the broad porch without and the well-proportioned rooms within. But these, and later improvements, additions and alterations cannot make me forget the Convent as it was when I first came to it, growing up about the simple, solidly-built, spacious yellow house that was once the Philadelphian's ideal of suburban comfort and so like the house where I spent my most memorable summer, so like, save for the [Pg 78] size and the colour, my Great-Grandfather Ambrose White's old house on the Turnpike at Chestnut Hill, so like innumerable other country houses of the same date where I visited.

III

The Convent rule and discipline could not alter the changing of the seasons as Philadelphia ordered them. They might appear to us mainly regulated by feasts and fasts—All Saints and All Souls, the milestones on the road to Christmas; Lent and the month of St. Joseph heralding the approach of spring; the month of Mary and the month of the Sacred Heart, Ascension and Corpus-Christi, as ardent and splendid as the spring and summer days they graced. But, all the same, each season came laden with the pleasures held in common by all fortunate Philadelphia children who had the freedom of the country or the countrified suburbs.

The school year began with the fall, when any night might bring the first frost and the first tingle in the air—champagne to quicken the blood in a school girl's veins, and make the sitting still through the long study and class hours a torture. The woods shone with gold; the Virginia creeper flamed on the front porch; sickel pears fell, ripe and luscious, from the tree close to the Chapel where it was against the law to go and pick them up but where no law in the world could have barred the way; chestnuts and hickory nuts and the walnuts that stained my fingers black to [Pg 79] open offered a substantial dessert after as substantial a dinner as ever children were served with. But those were the joyful years when hunger never could be satisfied and digestion was equal to any surfeit of raw chestnuts—or raw turnips for that matter, if the season supplied no lighter dainties, or of next to anything that could be picked up and eaten. I know I drew the line only at the huge, white, oversweet mulberries strewing the grass by the swings in Mulberry Lane, that favourite scene of the war to the knife we waged under the name of Old Man and Bands, primitive games not to be outdone by the Tennis and Hockey of the more sophisticated modern school girl.

The minute the Refectory was left for the noonday hour of recreation on a brisk autumn day, there was a wild scamper to the woods where, just beyond the gate that led into them, the hoary old chestnut trees spread their shade and dropped their fruit on either side the hill between the Poisonous Valley, a thrill in its deadly name, and the graveyard, few crosses then in the green enclosure which now, alas! is too well filled. The shadow of death lay so lightly upon us that I recall to-day only the delicious rustle of eager feet through the fallen leaves, and the banging of stone upon stone as hickory nuts cracked between them, I feel only the delicious pricking of the chestnut burrs in the happy, hardened fingers of the school girl. And these, anyway, are memories I share with every Philadelphian who, as a child, wandered in the suburbs or the near [Pg 80] country when the woods were gold and scarlet, and the way through them was carpeted with leaves hiding rich stores of nuts for the seeker after treasure.

But no Philadelphia child in the shelter of her own house could know the meaning of the Philadelphia winter as I knew it in the Convent, half frozen in that airy dormitory of the Sacred Heart, shivering in shawl and hood through early Mass in the icy Chapel, still huddled in my shawl at my desk or scurrying as fast as discipline would wink at through the windy passages. The heating arrangements, somehow, never succeeded in coping with the extreme cold of a severe winter in the large rooms and halls of the new wings, and I must confess that we were often most miserably uncomfortable. I cannot but wonder what the pampered school girls of the present generation in the same Convent would say to such discomfort. But it did us no harm. Indeed, though I shiver at the memory, I am sure it did us good. We came out the healthier and hardier for it, much as the Englishman does from his cold house, the coldest in the world. The old conditions of a hardier life, that either killed or cured, did far more to make a vigorous people than all the new-fangled eugenics ever can.

If I had little of the comfort of the Philadelphia child in the Philadelphia house, I shared with him the outdoor pleasures which winter provided by way of compensation—the country white under snow for weeks and weeks, snowballs to be made and snow houses built, sliding to be had on the [Pg 81] frozen lake, and coasting down the long hill just beyond the gate into the woods, when there were sleds to coast on. And what excitement in the marvellous snow-storms that have vanished with other marvels of my youth—the storms that put the new blizzard to shame, when the snow drifts were mountains high, and it took all the men on the farm, with Big John at their head, to clear a way through the near paths and roads. I recall one storm in particular when my Father, who had been making his periodical visit to my Sister and myself, left the Convent at six, was snowed up in his train, and never reached the dingy Depot in Frankford until three the next morning, and when for days we got out of the house only for a solemn ten minutes' walk each noon on the wide front porch, where it was a shocking breach of discipline to be seen at all other times except on Thursday and Sunday, the Convent visiting days. Of the inspiriting rigours of a Philadelphia winter I was never in ignorance.

In the snow drifts and storms of winter Big John and his men were not more helpless than in the floods and slush that began with the first soft breath of the Philadelphia spring. Wearing our big shapeless overshoes, we waded through the puddles and jumped over the streams in the Convent paths and roads as, in town, Philadelphia children, with their "gums" on, jumped over the streams and waded through the puddles in the abominably paved streets. But then hope too began when the first spaces of green were uncovered by the melting snow. The first spring-beauty in the [Pg 82] sunny spaces of the woods, the first flowery frost in the orchard, the first blooming of the tulip trees, were among the great events of the year. And what joy now in the new hunt!—what treasure of spring-beauties everywhere in the woods as the sun grew warmer, of shyer, retired hepaticas, of white violets running wild in the swampy fields beyond the lake, of sweet trailing arbutus, of Jacks-in-the-pulpit flourishing best in the damp thickets of the Poisonous Valley into which I never wandered without a tremor not merely because it was a forbidden adventure, but because, though I passed through it unscathed, I had seen so often the horrible and unsightly red rash one whiff from over its bushes and trees could bring out on the faces and hands of my schoolmates with a skin more sensitive than mine. Games lost their charm in the spring sunshine and our one pleasure was in the hunt, no longer for chestnuts and walnuts and hickory nuts, but solely for flowers, bringing back great bunches wilting in our hot little hands, to place before the shrine that aroused the warmest fervours of our devotion or was tended by the nun of our special adoration.

ENTRANCE TO FAIRMOUNT AND THE WASHINGTON STATUE

And before we knew it, the spring-beauties and hepaticas and white violets and Jacks-in-the-pulpit disappeared from the woods, and the flowery frost from the orchard, and the great blossoms from the tulip trees, and summer was upon us—blazing summer when we lay perspiring on our little beds up there in Gothic Hall where a few months before we shivered and shook, perspiration streamed from our faces on our school books at the study hour, more a burden than [Pg 85] ever as we drooped and drowsed in the heat;—blazing summer when the fragrance of the roses hung heavy over Madame Huguet's garden and mingled with the too sweet fragrance of the honeysuckle about the columns of the porch and over every door;—blazing summer when all day long meadows and gardens and lawns swooned under the pitiless sunshine and we, who had braved the winter cold undismayed, never put as much as our noses out of doors until the hour of sunset;—blazing summer when for many years I saw the other girls going home, the gaiety of sea and mountain and change awaiting them, while my Sister and I stayed on, desolate at heart despite the efforts of the nuns to help us forget, feeling forlornly forsaken as we watched the green burnt up into brown and the summer flowers wilt and die, and the drought turn the roads to dust, and all Nature parched as we parched with it. The holiday dragged terribly and, reversing the usual order of things, I counted the days until school would begin again. However, at least I can say that I saw the Philadelphia summer in its full terrors as every Philadelphia child ever born, for whom wealth or chance opens no gate of escape, must see it and did see it of old.

And so for me in the Convent the seasons were the same as for the child in Philadelphia and its suburbs. And I learnt how cold Philadelphia can be, and how hot—if Penn, safe in England, was grateful for the greater nearness of his town to the sun, not a Philadelphian on the spot, [Pg 86] sweltering through its midsummer heat, has ever yet shared his gratitude. And I learnt how beautiful Philadelphia is as it grows mild again after winter has done its worst, or as it cools off in the friendlier autumn sun. And not to know these facts is not to know Philadelphia.

IV

In the Convent regulation of daily life lay the unconquerable difference. Philadelphia has its laws and traditions that guide the Philadelphian through every hour and duty of the day, and the Philadelphian, who from the cradle does not obey these traditions and laws, can never be quite as other Philadelphians. The Sacred Heart is a French order, and the nuns imported their laws and traditions from France, qualified, modified, perhaps, on the way, but still with an unmistakable foreign flavour and tendency that could not pass unquestioned in a town where the first article of faith is that everybody should do precisely what everybody else does.

I remember when the Rhodes scholars were first sent from America to Oxford a friend of mine professed serious concern for the future of the University should they introduce buckwheat cakes on Oxford breakfast tables. And, really, he was not as funny as he thought. A man is a good deal what his food makes him. The macaroni-fed Italian is not as the sausage-and-sauerkraut-fed German, nor the Hindu who thrives on rice as the Irishman bred upon potatoes. Never was a [Pg 87] town more concerned with the Question of Food than Philadelphia and I now see quite plainly that I, beginning my day at the Convent on coffee and rolls, could not have been as the correct Philadelphia child beginning the day in Philadelphia or the suburbs on scrapple and buckwheat cakes and maple syrup. Thus, the line of separation was drawn while I was still in short skirts with my hair cropped close.

The Convent day continued, as it began, with differences. I sat down at noon to the substantial French breakfast which at the Convent, as a partial concession to American ideals, became dinner. At half past three, like a little French girl, I had my *goûter*, for which even the French name was retained—how well I remember the big, napkin-lined basket, full of hunks of good

gingerbread, or big crackers, or sweet rolls, passed round by Sister Duffy, probably the most generous of all generous Irishwomen, who would have slipped an extra piece into every little hand if she could, but who was so shockingly cross-eyed that we got an idea of her as a disagreeable old thing, an ogress, always watching to see if we took more than our appointed share. Quite recently I argued it all out again with the few old Sisters left to greet me on my first and only visit to the Convent during thirty years and, purely for the sake of the sentiment of other days. I refused to believe them when they insisted that Sister Duffy, who now lies at peace in the little graveyard on the hillside in the woods, wasn't cross at all, but as tender as any Sister who [Pg 88] ever waited on hungry little girls! I would have given a great deal could she have come back, cross-eyes and all, with her big basket of gingerbread to make me feel at home again, as I could not in the Visitors' dining-room where my *goûter* was set out on a neatly spread table, even though on one side of me was "Marie" of *Our Convent Days*, my friend who had been Prince of Denmark in our Booth-stricken period, and on the other Miss Repplier, the chronicler of our childish adventures. It was the first time we three had sat there together since more years than I am willing to count, and I think we were too conscious that youth now was no longer of the company not to feel the sadness as keenly as the pleasure of the reunion in our old home.

Goûter, with its associations, has sent me wandering far from the daily routine which ended, in the matter of meals, with a supper of meat and potatoes and I hardly know what, at half past six, when little Philadelphia girls were probably just finishing their cambric tea and bread-and-butter, and even the buns from Dexter's when these had been added as a special treat or reward. How could we, upon so much heavier fare, have seen things, how could we have looked upon life, just as those other little girls did?

V

We did not play, any more than we ate, like the child in Philadelphia or its suburbs. One memory of our playtime I have common to all Philadelphia children of my generation: the memory of [Pg 91] Signor Blitz, on a more than usually blissful Reverend Mother's Feast, taking rabbits out of our hats and bowls of gold-fish out of his sleeve, and holding a long conversation with the immortal Bobby, the most prodigious puppet that ever conversed with any professional ventriloquist. But this was a rare ecstasy never repeated.

MAIN STREET, GERMANTOWN

What games the children in Rittenhouse Square and the Lanes of Germantown had, I cannot record, but of one thing I am sure: they did not go to the tune and the words of "*Sur le pont d'Avignon*," or "*Qu' est-ce qui passe ici si tard*," or "*Il était un avocat*." Nor, I fancy, were "*Malbrough s'en va-t'en guerre*" and "*Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot*," the songs heard in the Philadelphia nursery. Nor is it likely that "*C'est le mois de Marie*," which we sang as lustily all through May as the devout in France sing it in every church and every cathedral from one end of their land to the other, was the canticle of pious little Catholic children celebrating the month of Mary at St. Joseph's or St. Patrick's. Nor outside the Convent could the Bishop on his pastoral rounds have been welcomed with the "*Vive! Vive! Vive! Monseigneur au Sacré Coeur, Quel Bonheur!*" which, the title appropriately changed, was our form of welcome to every distinguished visitor. And, singing these songs and canticles, how could the associations and memories we were laying up for ourselves be the same as those of Philadelphia children whose ears and voices were trained on "Juanita" and "Listen to the Mocking Bird," or, it may be, [Pg 92] "Marching through Georgia" and "Way down upon the Swanee River"? These things may make subtle distinctions, but they are distinctions that can never be overcome or outgrown.

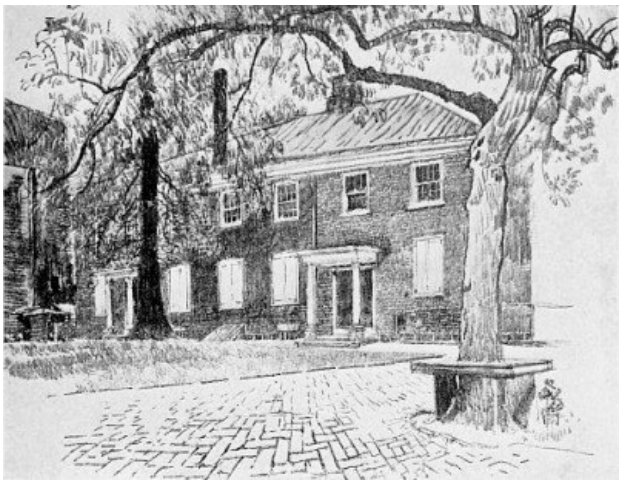
In study hours, as in playtime and at meals, we were seldom long out of this French atmosphere. French class was only shorter than English. If we were permitted to talk at breakfast, it was not at all that we might amuse ourselves, but that we might practise our French which did not amuse us in the least. Many of the nuns were French, often, it is true, French from Louisiana or Canada, but their English was not one bit more fluent on that account. Altogether, there was less of Philadelphia than of France in the discipline, the devotions, and the relaxations of the Convent.

VI

But, of all the differences, the most fundamental, I think, came from the fact that the Convent was a Convent and taught us to accept the conventual, the monastic interpretation of life. We were there in, not only a French, but a cloistered atmosphere—the atmosphere that Philadelphia least of all towns could understand. The Friends had attained to peace and unworldliness by staying in their own homes and fulfilling their duty as fathers and mothers of families, as men and women of business. But the nuns saw no way to achieve this end except by shutting [Pg 93] themselves out of the world and avoiding its temptations. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart are cloistered. They leave the Convent grounds only to journey from one of their houses to another, for care is taken that they do not, by staying over long in one school, form too strong an attachment to place or person. Where would be the use of being a nun if you were not made to understand the value of sacrifice? Their pupils are, for the time, as strictly cloistered. Not for us were the walks abroad by which most girls at boarding school keep up with the times—or get ahead of them. We were as closely confined to the Convent grounds as the nuns, except during the holidays or when a friend or relation begged for us a special outing. It was not a confinement depending on high stone walls and big gates with clanging iron chains and bars. But the wood fences running with the board walk above the railroad and about the woods and the fields and the gardens made us no less prisoners—willing and happy prisoners as we might be, and were. This gave us, or gave me at any rate, a curious idea of the Convent as a place entirely apart, a place that had nothing to do with the near town or the suburb in which it stood—a blessed oasis in the sad wilderness of the world.

There is no question that, as a result, I felt myself in anticipation a stranger in the wilderness into which I knew I must one day go from the oasis, and in which I used to imagine I should be as [Pg 94] much of an exile as the Children of Israel in the desert. Of course I was not quite that when the time came, but that for an interval I was convinced I must be explains how unlike in atmosphere the Convent was to Eleventh and Spruce.

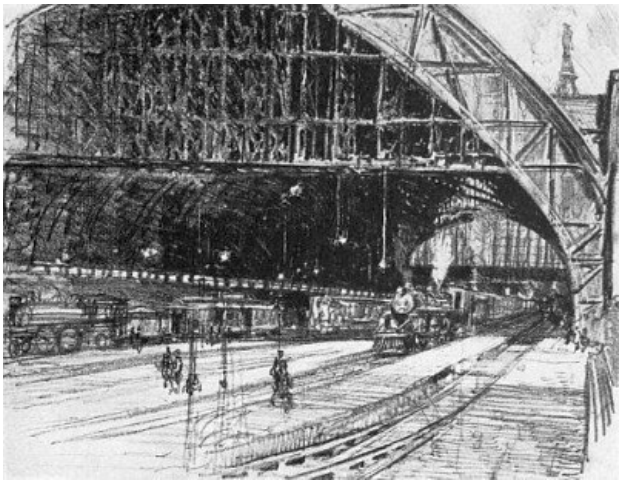
In all sorts of little ways I was confirmed in this belief by life and its duties at the Convent. For all that concerned me nearly, for all that was essential to existence here below, Philadelphia seemed to me as remote as Timbuctoo. I got insensibly to think of myself first not as a Philadelphian, not as an American, but as a "Child of the Sacred Heart,"—the first question under all circumstances was what I should do, not as a Philadelphian, but as a Child of the Sacred Heart.



ARCH STREET MEETING

I cannot say how much the mere name of the thing represented—the honour and the privilege—and there was not a girl who had been for any time a pupil who did not prize it as I did. And we were not given the chance to forget or belittle it. We were impressed with the importance of showing our appreciation of the distinction Providence had reserved for us—of showing it not merely by our increased faith and devotion, but by our bearing and conduct. We might be slack about our lessons. That was all right at a period when slackness prevailed in girls' schools and it was unfeminine, if not unladylike, to be too learned. But we were not let off from the diligent cultivation of our manners. Our faith and devotion were attended to in a daily half hour of religious instruction. But Sunday was not too holy a day for the Politeness Class that was held [Pg 97] every week as surely as Sunday came round, in which we were taught all the mysteries of a Deportment that might have given tips to the great Turveydrop himself,—how to sit, how to walk, how to carry ourselves under all circumstances, how to pick up a handkerchief a passer-by might drop—an unspeakable martyrdom of a class when each unfortunate student, in turn, went through her paces with the eyes of all the school upon her and to the sound of the stifled giggles of the boldest. We never met one of our mistresses in the corridors that we did not drop a laboured curtsey—a shy, deplorably awkward curtsey when I met the Reverend Mother, Mother Boudreau, a large, portly, dignified nun from Louisiana and a model of deportment, who inspired me with a respectful fear I never have had for any other mortal. We could not answer a plain "Yes" or "No" to our mistresses, but the "Madam" must always politely follow. "Remember" was a frequent warning, "remember that wherever, or with whom, you may be, to behave like children of the Sacred Heart!" A Child of the Sacred Heart, we were often told, should be known by her manners. And so impressed were we with this precept that I remember a half-witted, but harmless, elderly woman whom the nuns, in their goodness, had kept on as a "parlour boarder" after her school days were over, telling us solemnly that when she was in New York and went out shopping with her sister, the young men behind the counter at Stewart's would all look at her [Pg 98]

with admiring eyes and whisper to each other, "Is it not easy to see that Miss C. is a Child of the Sacred Heart?"



THE TRAIN SHED, BROAD STREET STATION

Seriously, the training did give something that nothing else could, and an admirable training it was for which girls to-day might exchange more than one brain-bewildering course at College and be none the worse for it. In my own case, I admit, I should not mind having had more of the other training, as it has turned out that my work in life is of the sort where a quick intelligence counts for more than an elegant deportment. But I can find no fault with the Convent for neglect. Girls then were not educated to work. If you had asked any girl anywhere what was woman's mission, she would have answered promptly—had she been truthful—"to find a husband as soon as possible;" if she were a Convent girl,—a Child of the Sacred Heart—she would have added, "or else to become a nun." Her own struggles to fit herself for any other career the inconsiderate Fates might drive her into, so far from doing her any harm, were the healthiest and most bracing of tonics. Granted an average mind, she could teach herself through necessity just the important things school could not teach her through a routine she didn't see the use of. She emerged from the ordeal not only heroically but successfully, which was more to the point. A young graduate from Bryn Mawr said to me some few days ago that when she looked at her mother and the women of her mother's generation and realized all they had accomplished without what is now [Pg 101] called education, she wondered whether the girls of her generation, who had the benefit of all the excess of education going, would or could accomplish more, or as much. To tell the truth, I wonder myself. But then it may be said that I, belonging to that older generation, am naturally prejudiced.

VII

There are moments when, reflecting on all I lost as a Philadelphian, I am half tempted to regret my long years of seclusion, busy about my soul and my manners, at the Convent. A year or so would not have much mattered one way or the other. I led, however, no other life save the Convent life until I was seventeen. I knew no other standpoint save the Convent standpoint.

But the temptation to regret flies as quickly as it comes. I loved the life too well at the time, I love it too well in the retrospect, to have wanted then, or to want now, to do without it. It was a happy life to live, though I would not have been a school girl had I not, with the school girl's joy in the morbid, liked nothing better than to pose as the unhappiest of mortals—to be a school girl was to be misunderstood I would have vowed, had I, in my safe oasis, ever heard the expression or had the knowledge to guess at its meaning. I loved every stone in the house, brown and ugly as every stone might be, I loved every tree in the woods whether or no it dropped pleasant things to [Pg 102] devour, I loved every hour of the day whatever might be its task. I had a quick memory, study was no great trouble to me, and I enjoyed every class and recitation. I enjoyed getting into mischief—I wore once only the Ribbon for Good Conduct—and I enjoyed being punished for it. In a word, I got a good deal out of my life, if it was not exactly what a girl was sent to school to get. And it is as happy a life to remember, with many picturesque graces and absurdities, joys and sorrows, that an uninterrupted existence at Eleventh and Spruce could not have given.

I have no desire to talk sentimental nonsense about my school days having been my happiest. That sort of talk is usually twaddle. It was not as school that I loved the Convent, though as school it had its unrivalled attractions; it was as home. When the time came to go from it I suffered that sharp pang felt by most girls on leaving home for school. I remember how I, who affected a sublime scorn for the cry-baby, blubbered like one myself when I was faced with the immediate prospect of life in Philadelphia. How well I recall my despair—how vividly I see the foolish scene I made in the empty Refectory, shadowy in the dusk of the June evening, where I was rehearsing the valedictory of the Graduating Class which I had been chosen to recite, and where, after the first few lines I broke down to my shame, and sniffled and gurgled and sobbed in the lap of the beloved mistress who was doing her best to comfort me, and also to keep me from [Pg 103] disgracing her, as I should have done by any such scene on the great day itself.

If the Convent stands for so much in my memory, it would be ungrateful to regret the years I

spent in it. The sole reason would be my loss, not as a student, but as a Philadelphian, for this loss was the price I paid. But the older I grow, the better I realize that to the loss I owe an immeasurable gain. For as a child I never got so accustomed to Philadelphia as not to see it at all. The thing we know too well is often the thing we see least clearly, or we should not need the philosopher to remind us that that is best which nearest lieth. All through my childhood and early youth I saw Philadelphia chiefly from the outside, and so saw it with more awe and wonder and lasting delight than those Philadelphians who, in childhood and early youth, saw it only from the inside,—too near for it to come together into the picture that tells.

CHAPTER V: TRANSITIONAL

[Pg 104]

I

And so it was with a great fear in my heart that, in the course of time and after I had learned as little as it was decent for Philadelphia girls to learn in the days before Bryn Mawr, I left the Convent altogether for Philadelphia. I can smile now in recalling the old fear, but it was no smiling matter at seventeen: a weeping matter rather, and many were the tears I shed in secret over the prospect before me. My holidays had not revealed Philadelphia to me as a place of evil and many dangers. But as I was to live there, it represented the world,—the sinful world, worse, the unknown world, to battle with whose temptations my life and training at the Convent had been the preparation.

ST PETER'S, INTERIOR

It added to the danger that sin could wear so peaceful an aspect and temptation keep so comfortably out of sight. During an interval, longer than I cared to have it, for I did not "come out" at once as a Philadelphia girl should and at the Convent I had made few Philadelphia friends, my personal knowledge of Philadelphia did not go much deeper than its house fronts. For the most part they bore the closest family resemblance to those of Eleventh and Spruce, with the same suggestion of order and repose in their well-washed marble steps and neatly-drawn blinds. [Pg 107] My Father had then moved to Third Street near Spruce, and there rented a red brick house, one-half, or one-third, the size of my Grandfather's, but very like it in every other way, to the roses in the tiny back-yard and to the daily family routine except that, with a courageous defiance of tradition I do not know how we came by, we dined at the new dinner hour of six and said our prayers in the privacy of our bedrooms. The Stock Exchange was only a minute away, and yet, at our end, Third Street had not lost its character as a respectable residential street. We had for neighbours old Miss Grelaud and the Bullitts and, round the corner in Fourth Street, the Wisters and Bories and Schaumbergs,—with what bated breath Philadelphia talked of the beauty and talents of Miss Emily Schaumberg, as she still was!—and many other Philadelphia families who had never lived anywhere else. Life went on as silently and placidly and regularly as at the Convent. I seemed merely to have exchanged one sort of monastic peace for another and the loudest sound I ever heard, the jingling of my old friend the horse-car, was not so loud as to disturb it.

If I walked up Spruce Street, or as far as Pine and up Pine, silence and peace enfolded me. Peace breathed, exuded from the red brick houses with their white marble steps, their white shutters below and green above, their pleasant line of trees shading the red brick pavement. The occasional brown stone front broke the uniformity with such brutal discord that I might have imagined the devil I knew was waiting for me somewhere lurked behind it, and have seen in its [Pg 108] pretentious aping of New York fashion the sin in which Philadelphia, as the Sinful World, must abound. I cannot say why it seemed to me, and still seems, so odious, for there were other

interruptions to the monotony I delighted in—the beautiful open spaces and great trees about the Pennsylvania Hospital and St. Peter's; the old Mint which, with its severe classical façade, seemed to reproach the frivolity of the Chestnut Street store windows on every side of it; General Paterson's square grey house with long high-walled garden at Thirteenth and Locust; the big yellow Dundas house at Broad and Walnut, with its green enclosure and the magnolia for whose blossoming I learnt to watch with the coming of spring; that other garden with wide-spreading trees opposite my Grandfather's at Eleventh and Spruce: old friends these quickly grew to be, kindly landmarks on the way when I took the walks that were so solitary in those early days, through streets where it was seldom I met anybody I knew, for the Convent had made me a good deal of a stranger in my native town,—where it was seldom, indeed, I met anybody at all.

II

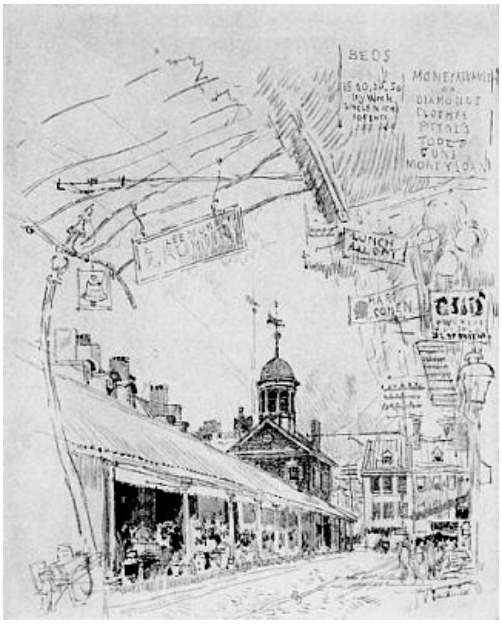
When I went out, I usually turned in the direction of Spruce and Pine, for to turn in the other, towards Walnut, was to be at once in the business part of the town where Philadelphia women preferred not to be seen, having no desire to bridge over the wide gulf of propriety that then [Pg 111] yawned between the sex and business. Except for the character of the buildings and the signs at the doors, I might not have been conscious of the embarrassing difference between this and my more familiar haunts. Bankers' and stock-brokers' offices were on every side, but the Third Street car did not jingle any louder as it passed, my way was not more crowded, peace still enveloped me. I gathered from my Father, who was a broker, that the Stock Exchange, when buying and selling had to be done on the spot and not by telephone as in our degenerate days, was now and then a scene of animation, and it might be of noise and disorder, more especially at Christmas, when a brisker business was done in penny whistles and trumpets than in stocks and shares. But the animation overflowed into Third Street only at moments of panic, to us welcome as moments of prosperity for they kept my Father busy—we thrived on panics—and then, once or twice, I saw staid Philadelphians come as near running as I ever knew them to in the open street.

THE PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL FROM PINE STREET

Now and then youth got the better of me and I sought adventure in the unadventurous monotony of Walnut Street where the lawyers had their offices, the courts not having as yet migrated up to Broad Street. It was usually lost in heavy legal slumber and if my intrusion was bold, at least nobody was about to resent it. Nor could there be a doubt of the eminent respectability into which I intruded. The recommendation to Philadelphia of its lawyers was not the high esteem in [Pg 112] which they were held throughout the country, but their social standing at home—family gave distinction to the law, not the law to family. Approved Philadelphia names adorned the signs at almost every office door and not for some years was the evil day to dawn when the well-known Philadelphia families who inherited the right of the law would be forced to fight for it with the alien and the Jew. For me, I think I am at an age when I may own that the irreproachable names on the signs were not the principal attraction. Sometimes, from one of the somnolent offices, a friendly figure would step into the somnolent street to lighten me on my way, and it was pleasanter to walk up Walnut in company than alone. When I went back the other day, after many years and many changes for Philadelphia and myself, I found most of the familiar signs gone, but at one door I was met by a welcome ghost—but, was it the ghost of that friendly figure or of my lonely youth grasping at romance or its shadow? How many years must pass, how many experiences be gone through, before a question like that can be asked!

If I followed Third Street beyond Walnut to Chestnut, I was in the region of great banks and trust companies and newspaper offices and the old State House and the courts. I had not had the experience, or the training, to realize what architectural monstrosities most of the new, big, heavy stone buildings were, nor the curiosity to investigate what went on inside of them, but after the quiet red brick houses they seemed to have business written all over them and the [Pg 113] street, compared to Spruce and Walnut, appeared to my unsophisticated eyes so thronged that I did not have to be told it was no place for me. It was plain that most women felt as I did, so careful were they to efface themselves. I remember meeting but few on Chestnut Street below Eighth until Mr. Childs began to devote his leisure moments and loose change to the innocent amusement of presenting a cup and saucer to every woman who would come to get it, and as

most women in Philadelphia, or out of it, are eager to grab anything they do not have to pay for, many visited him in the *Ledger* office at Sixth and Chestnut.



SECOND STREET MARKET

As I shrank from doing what no other woman did, and, as the business end of Chestnut Street did not offer me the same temptation as Walnut, I never got to know it well,—in fact I got to know it so little that my ignorance would seem extraordinary in anybody save a Philadelphian, and it remained as strange to me as the street of a foreign town. I could not have said just where my Grandfather's Bank was, not once during that period did I set my foot across the threshold of the State House, unwilling as I am to confess it. But perhaps I might as well make a full confession while I am about it, for the truth will have to come out sooner or later. Let me say then, disgraceful as I feel it to be, that though I spent two years at least in the Third Street house, with so much of the beauty of Philadelphia's beautiful past at my door, it was not until some time afterwards, when we had gone to live up at Thirteenth and Spruce, that I began to appreciate the [Pg 114] beauty as well as my folly in not having appreciated it sooner. St. Peter's Church and the Pennsylvania Hospital I could not ignore, many of my walks leading me past them. But I was several years older before I saw Christ Church, inside or out. The existence of the old Second Street Market was unknown to me; had I been asked I no doubt would have said that the Old Swedes Church was miles off; I was unconscious that I was surrounded by houses of Colonial date; I was blind to the meaning and dignity of great gables turned to the street, and stately Eighteenth Century doorways, and dormer windows, and old ironwork, and a patchwork of red and black brick; I was indifferent to the interest these things might have given to every step I took at a time when, too often, every step seemed forlornly barren of interest or its possibility. Into the old Philadelphia Library on Fifth Street I did penetrate once or twice, and once or twice sat in its quiet secluded alcoves dipping into musty volumes: a mere accident it must have been, my daily reading being provided for at the easy-going, friendly, pleasantly dingy, much more modern Mercantile Library in Tenth Street. But the memory of these visits, few as they were, is one of the strongest my Third Street days have left with me, and I think, or I hope, I must have felt the charm of the old town if I may not have realized that I did, for I can never look back to [Pg 117] myself as I was then without seeing it as the background to all my comings and goings—a background that lends colour to my colourless life.

III

I can understand my ignorance and blindness and indifference, if I cannot forgive them. All my long eleven years at the Convent I had had the virtue of obedience duly impressed upon me, and, though there custom led me easily into the temptation of disobedience, when I returned to Philadelphia I was at first too frightened and bewildered to defy Philadelphia's laws written and especially unwritten, for in these I was immediately concerned. I was the more bewildered because I had come away from the Convent comfortably convinced of my own importance, and it was disconcerting to discover that Philadelphia, so far from sharing the conviction, dismissed me as a person of no importance whatever. I had also my natural indolence and moral cowardice to reckon with. I have never been given to taking the initiative when I can avoid it and it is one of my great grievances that, good and thorough American as I am, I should have been denied my rightful share of American go. Anyway, I did not have to stay long in Philadelphia to learn for myself that the Philadelphia law of laws obliged every Philadelphian to do as every other Philadelphian did, and that every Philadelphian was too much occupied in evading what was not the thing in the present to bother to cultivate a sentiment for the past. Moreover, I had to [Pg 118] contend against what the Philadelphians love to call the Philadelphia inertia, while all the time they talk about it they keep giving substantial proofs of how little reason there is for the talk. The Philadelphia inertia only means that it is not good form in Philadelphia to betray emotion on any occasion or under any circumstance. The coolness, or indifference, of Philadelphians at moments and crises of great passion and excitement has always astonished the outsider. If you do not

understand the Philadelphia way, as I did not then, you take the Philadelphian's talk literally and believe the beautiful Philadelphia calm to be more than surface deep, as I did who had not the sense as yet to see that, even if this inertia was real, it was my business to get the better of it and to develop for myself the energy I imagined my town and its people to be without. I have often thought that the Philadelphia calm is a little like the London climate that either conquers you or leaves you the stronger for having conquered it.

IV

If one of Philadelphia's unwritten laws closed my eyes to what was most worth looking at when I took my walks abroad, another, no less stringent, limited those walks to a small section of the town. On the map Philadelphia might stretch over a vast area with the possibility of spreading indefinitely, but for social purposes it was shut in to the East and the West by the Delaware and the Schuylkill, to the North and the South by a single line of the old rhyming list of the streets: [Pg 119] "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine." I have not the antiquarian knowledge to say who drew that rigid line, or when what had been all right for Washington and Provosts of the University and no end of distinguished people became all wrong for ordinary mortals—I have heard the line ridiculed, but never explained. No geographical boundary has been, or could be, more arbitrary, but there it was, there it is, and the Philadelphian who crosses it risks his good name. Nor can the stranger, though unwarned, disregard it with impunity. I remember when I met Mrs. Alexander Gilchrist, the first friend I made in London, and she told me the number of the house away out North Twenty-second Street where she lived for two years in Philadelphia, I had a moment of Philadelphia uncertainty as to whether her literary distinction could outbalance her social indiscretion. Philadelphia never had a doubt, but was serenely unconscious of her presence during her two years there. And yet she had then edited and published, with the help of the Rossettis, her husband's *Life of Blake* which had brought her fame in England, and her up-town house must have been one of the most interesting to visit. Walt Whitman was a daily guest and few American men of letters passed through Philadelphia without finding their way to it. Philadelphia, however, would scruple going to Heaven were Heaven north of Market Street.

It is an absurd prejudice, but I am not sure if I have got rid of it now or if I ever shall get rid of it, [Pg 120] and when I was too young to see its absurdity I would as soon have questioned the infallibility of the Pope. It was decreed that nobody should go north of Market or south of Pine; therefore I must not go; the reason, probably, why I never went to Christ Church—a pew had not been in my family for generations to excuse my presence in North Second Street—why I never, even by accident, passed the Old Swedes or the Second Street Market. It was bad enough to cross the line when I could not help myself. I am amused now—though my sensitive youth found no amusement in it—when I think of my annoyance because my Great-Grandfather, on my Mother's side, old Ambrose White whose summer home was in Chestnut Hill, lived not many blocks from the Meeting House and the Christ Church Burial Ground where Franklin lies, in one of those fine old Arch Street houses in which Friends had lived for generations since there had been Arch Street houses to live in. Besides, Mass and Vespers in the Cathedral led me to Logan Square, to my dismay that religion should lead where it was as much as my reputation was worth to be met. I have wondered since if it was as compromising for the Philadelphian from north of Market Street to be found in Rittenhouse Square.

FOURTH AND ARCH STREETS MEETING HOUSE

Outwardly I could see no startling difference between the forbidden Philadelphia and my Philadelphia—"there is not such great odds, Brother Toby, betwixt good and evil as the world imagines," I might have said with Mr. Shandy had I known that Mr. Shandy said it or that there [Pg 123] was a Mr. Shandy to say anything so wise. The Philadelphia rows of red brick houses, white marble steps, white shutters below and green above, rows of trees shading them, were much the same north of Market Street and south of Pine, except that south of Pine the red brick houses shrank and the white marble and white shutters grew shabby, and north of Market their uniformity was more often broken by brown stone fronts which, together with the greater width of many of the streets, gave a richer and more prosperous air than we could boast down our way. But it was not for Philadelphians, of all people, to question why, and it must have been two or

three years later, when I was less awed by Philadelphia, that I went up town of my own free will and out of sheer defiance. I can remember the time when an innocent visit to so harmless a place as Girard College appeared to me in the light of outrageous daring. That is the way in my generation we were taught and learned our duty in Philadelphia.

My excursions to the suburbs, except to Torresdale, were few, which was my loss for no other town's suburbs are more beautiful, and they were not on Philadelphia's Index. Time and the alien had not yet driven the Philadelphian out to the Main Line as an alternative to "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine," but many had country houses there; Germantown was popular, Chestnut Hill and Torresdale were beyond reproach. My Father, however, who cultivated most of Philadelphia's prejudices, was unexpectedly heterodox in this particular. He could not stand the [Pg 124] suburbs—poor man, he came to spending suburban summers in the end—and of them all he held Germantown most sweepingly in disfavour. I cannot remember that he gave a reason for his dislike. It may be that its grey-stone houses offended him as an infidelity to Philadelphia's red brick austerity. But he could never speak of it with patience and from him I got the idea that it was the abyss of the undesirable. One of the biggest surprises of my life was, when I came to look at it with my own eyes, to find it as desirable a place as beauty and history can make.

V

The shopping I had not the money to do would have kept me within a more exclusive radius, for a shopping expedition restricted the Philadelphian who had any respect for herself to Chestnut Street between Eighth and Fifteenth. Probably I was almost the only Philadelphian who knew there were plenty of cheap stores in Second Street, but that I bought the first silk dress I ever possessed there was one of the little indiscretions I had the sense to keep to myself. A bargain in Eighth Street might be disclosed as a clever achievement, if not repeated too often. The old Philadelphia name and the historic record of Lippincott's, for generations among the most successful Philadelphia publishers, would have permitted a periodical excursion into Market Street, even if unlimited latitude, anyway, had not been granted to wholesale houses in the [Pg 125] choice of a street. The well-known reliability of Strawbridge and Clothier might warrant certain purchases up-town and a furniture dealer as reliable, whose name and address I regret have escaped me, sanction the housekeeper's penetrating still further north. But it was safer, everything considered, to keep to Chestnut Street, and on Chestnut Street to stores approved by long patronage—you were hall-marked "common" if you did not, and the wrong name on the inside of your hat or under the flap of your envelope might be your social undoing. The self-respecting Philadelphian would not have bought her needles and cotton anywhere save at Mustin's, her ribbons anywhere save at Allen's. She would have scorned the visiting card not engraved by Dreka. She would have gone exclusively to Bailey's or Caldwell's for her jewels and silver; to Darlington's or Homer and Colladay's for her gloves and dresses; to Sheppard's for her linen; to Porter and Coates, after Lippincott's, for her books; to Earle's for her pictures;—prints were such an exotic taste that Gebbie and Barrie could afford to hide in Walnut Street, and the collector of books such a rarity that Tenth, or was it Ninth? was as good as any other street for the old book store where I had so unpleasant an experience that I could not well forget it though I have forgotten its proprietor's name. A sign in the window said that old books were bought, and one day, my purse as usual empty but my heart full of hope, I carried there two black-bound, gilt- [Pg 126] edged French books of the kind nobody dreams of reading that I had brought home triumphantly as prizes from the Convent: but I and my poor treasures were dismissed with such contempt and ridicule that my spirit was broken and I could not summon up pluck to carry them to Leary's, in Ninth Street, who were more liberal even than Charles Lamb in their definition, and to whom anything printed and bound was a book to be bought and sold.

If hunger overtook the shopper, she would have eaten her oyster stew only at Jones's on Eleventh Street or Burns's on Fifteenth; or if the heat exhausted her, she would have cooled off on ice-cream only at Sautter's or Dexter's, on soda-water only at Wyeth's or Hubbell's. The hours for shopping were as circumscribed as the district. To be seen on Chestnut Street late in the afternoon, if not unpardonable, was certainly not quite the thing.

VI

Shopping without money had no charm and could never help to dispose of my interminable hours. The placid beauty of the shopless streets was of a kind to appeal more to age than youth. I wonder to this day at the time I allowed to pass before I shook off my respect for Philadelphia conventions sufficiently to relieve the dulness of my life by straying from the Philadelphia beaten track. The most daring break at first was a stroll on Sunday afternoon over to West Philadelphia and to Woodland's. Later, when, with a friend, I went on long tramps through the Park, by the [Pg 129] Wissahickon, to Chestnut Hill, it was looked upon as no less unladylike on our part than the new generation's cigarette and demand for the vote on theirs. But if I did my duty, I was sadly bored by it. Often I turned homeward with that cruel aching of the heart the young know so well, longing for something, anything, to happen on the way to interrupt, to disorganize, to shatter to pieces the daily routine of life. I still shrink from the sharp pain of those cool, splendid October days when Philadelphia was aglow and quiveringly alive, and with every breath of the brisk air came the desire to be up and away and doing—but away where in Philadelphia?—doing what in Philadelphia? I still shrink from the sharp pain of the first langourous days of spring when every Philadelphia back-yard was full of perfume and every Philadelphia street a golden green avenue leading direct to happiness could I have found the way along its bewildering straightness.

JOHNSON HOUSE, GERMANTOWN

If youth only knew! There was everywhere to go, everything to do, every happiness to claim. Philadelphia waited, the Promised Land of action and romance, had I not been hide-bound by Philadelphia conventions, absorbed in Philadelphia ideals, disdaining all others with the intolerance of my years. According to these conventions and ideals, there was but one adventure for the Philadelphia girl who had finished her education and arrived at the appointed age—the social adventure of coming out.

CHAPTER VI: THE SOCIAL ADVENTURE

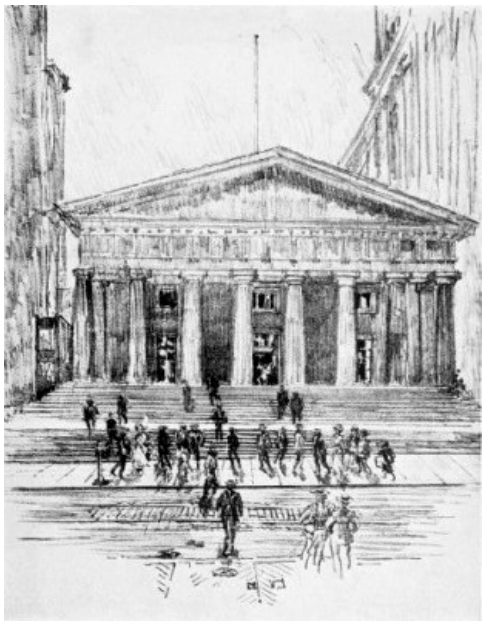
[Pg 130]

I

Let me say at once that I know no adventure is more important for the Philadelphian, and that mine was scarcely worth the name as these things go in Philadelphia.

It is the one adventure that should be roses all the way, but for me it was next to no roses at all. To begin with, I was poor. My Father had lost his money in the years of upheaval following the Civil War and had never got it back again. Nowadays this would not matter. A girl of seventeen, when she comes home from school, can turn round, find something to do, and support herself. She could in the old days too, if she was thrown on her own resources. I had friends no older than myself who taught, or were in the Mint—that harbour of refuge for the young or old Philadelphia lady in reduced circumstances. But my trouble was that I was not supposed to be thrown on my own resources. A Philadelphia father would have felt the social structure totter had he permitted his daughter to work as long as he was alive to work for her. When he had many daughters and luck went against him, the advantage of this attitude was less obvious to them than to him. Exemplary as was the theory, which I applaud my Father for acting up to since it happened to be his, it had its inconvenience when put into practice. To be guarded from the hardship of labour by the devoted father did not always put money into the daughter's pocket.

[Pg 133]



THE CUSTOMS HOUSE

Had I been more at home in Philadelphia, my poverty might not have stood so much in my light. A hundred years before Gouverneur Morris had praised Philadelphia, which in its respect for "virtuous poverty" he thought so much more generous than other capitals where social splendour

was indispensable, and in this the town had not changed. It was to Philadelphia's credit that a girl's social success did not depend on the length of her dressmaker's bill or the scale of her entertaining. More than one as poor as I would have a different story to tell. But I suffered from having had no social training or apprenticeship. The Convent had been concerned in preparing me for society in the next world, not in this, and I had stayed in the Convent too long to make the many friendships that do more than most things to launch a girl on her social career—too long, for that matter, to know what society meant.

It was a good thing that I did not know, did not realize what was ahead of me, that I allowed myself to be led like a Philadelphian to the slaughter, for a little experience of society is good for everybody. Unless men are to live like brutes—or like monks—they must establish some sort of social relations, and if the social game is played at all, it should be according to the rules. Nowhere are the rules so rigorous as in Philadelphia, nowhere in America based upon more inexorable, as well as dignified, traditions, and I do not doubt that because of the stumbling [Pg 134] blocks in my path, I learned more about them than the Philadelphia girl whose path was rose-strewn. Were history my mission, it would be amusing to trace these traditions to their source—first through the social life of the Friends who, however, are so exclusive that should this part of the story ever be told, whether as romance or history, it must come from the inside; and then, through the gaieties of the World's People who flatter themselves they are as exclusive, and who have the name for it, and whose exclusiveness is wholesale license compared to that of the Friends:—through the two distinct societies that have lived and flourished side by side ever since Philadelphia was. But my concern is solely with the gaieties as I, individually, shared in them. Now that I have outlived the discomforts of the experience, I can flatter myself that, in my small, insignificant fashion, I was helping to carry on old and fine traditions.

II

The most serious of these discomforts arose from the question of clothes, a terrifying question under the existing conditions in the Third Street house, involving more industrious dress-making upstairs in the third story front bedroom than I cared about, and a waste of energies that should have been directed into more profitable channels. I sewed badly and was conscious of it. At the Convent, except for the necessity of darning my stockings, I had been as free from this sort of [Pg 137] toiling as a lily of the field, and yet I too had gone arrayed, if hardly with the same conspicuous success, and, in my awkward hands, the white tarlatan—who wears tarlatan now?—and the cheap silk from Second Street, which composed my coming out trousseau, were not growing into such things of beauty as to reconcile me to my new task.

UNDER BROAD STREET STATION AT FIFTEENTH STREET

As unpleasant were the preliminary lessons in dancing forced upon me by my family when, in my pride of recent graduation with honours, it offended me to be thought by anybody in need of learning anything. One evening every week during a few months, two or three friends and cousins joined me in the Third Street parlour to be drilled into dancing shape for coming out by Madame Martin, the large, portly Frenchwoman who, in the same crinoline and heelless, sidelaced shoes, taught generations of Philadelphia children to dance. Even the Convent could not do without her, though there, to avoid the sinfulness of "round dances," we had, under her tuition, waltzed and polkaed hand in hand, a method which my family feared, if not corrected, might lead to my disgrace.

I seem rather a pathetic figure as I see myself obediently stitching and practising my steps without an idea of the true meaning and magnitude of the adventure I was getting ready for, or a chance of being set about it in the right way. That right way would have been for somebody to give a party or a dance or a reception especially for me to come out at. But nobody among my [Pg 138]

friends and relations was obliging enough to accept the responsibility, and at home my Father could not get so far as to think of it. He would have needed too disastrous a panic in Third Street to provide the money. Madame Martin's lessons were already an extravagance and when, on top of them, he had gone so far as to pay for my subscription to the Dancing Class, and, in a cabless town, for the carriage, fortunately shared with friends, to go to it in, he had done all his bank account allowed him to do to start me in life.

It would be as useful to explain that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west as to tell a Philadelphian that the Dancing Class to which I refer was not of the variety presided over by Madame Martin, but one to which Philadelphians went to make use of just such lessons as I had been struggling with for weeks. The origin of its name I never knew, I never asked, the Dancing Class being one of the Philadelphia institutions the Philadelphian took for granted: then, as it always had been and still is, I believe, a distinguished social function of the year. To belong to it was indispensable to the Philadelphian with social pretensions. It was held every other Monday, if I remember—to think I should have a doubt on a subject of such importance!-and the first of the series was given so early in the winter that with it the season may be said to have opened. Perhaps this fact helped my family to decide that it was at the Dancing Class I had best make my first appearance. [Pg 139]

III

Youth is brave out of sheer ignorance. When the moment came, it never occurred to me to hesitate or to consider the manner of my introduction to the world. I was content that my Brother should be my sole chaperon. I rather liked myself in my home-made white tarlatan, feeling very much dressed in my first low neck. I entertained no misgivings as to the fate awaiting me, imagining it as inevitable for a girl who was "out" to dance and have a good time as for a bird to fly once its wings were spread. If there were men to dance with, what more was needed?—it never having entered into my silly head that it was the girl's sad fate to have to wait for the man to ask her, and that sometimes the brute didn't.

I had to go no further than the dressing-room at the Natatorium, where the Dancing Class then met, to learn that society was not so simple as I thought. I have since been to many strange lands among many strange people, but never have I felt so much of a stranger as when I, a Philadelphian born, doing conscientiously what Philadelphia expected of me, was suddenly dropped down into the midst of a lot of Philadelphia girls engaged in the same duty. There was a freemasonry among them I could not help feeling right away—the freemasonry that went deeper than the chance of birth and the companionship of duty—the freemasonry that came from their all having grown up together since their perambulator days in Rittenhouse Square, having [Pg 140] learned to dance together, gone to children's parties together, studied at Miss Irwin's school together, spent the summer by the sea and in the mountains together, in a word, from their having done everything together until they were united by close bonds, the closer for being undefinable, that I, Convent bred, with not an idea, not a habit, not a point of view, in common with them, could not break through. I never have got quite over the feeling, though time has modified it. There is no loneliness like the loneliness in a crowd, doubly so if all the others in the crowd know each other. In the dressing-room that first evening it was so overwhelming to discover myself entirely out of it where I should have been entirely in, that, without the stay and support of my friend, of old the Prince of Denmark to my Ghost of Hamlet's Father, and her sister, who had come out under more favourable conditions, I do not think I could have gone a step further in the great social adventure.

As it was, with my heart in my boots, my hand trembling on my Brother's arm, to the music of Hassler's band, I entered the big bare hall of the Natatorium, and was out with no more fuss and with nobody particularly excited about it save myself.

THE PHILADELPHIA CLUB

Things were a little better once away from the dressing-room. My Brother was gay, had been out for two or three years, knew everybody. If he could not introduce me to the women he could introduce the men to me, and the freemasonry existing among them from their all having gone to [Pg 143] the Episcopal Academy and the University of Pennsylvania together, from their all having played cricket and baseball and football, or gone hunting together, from their all belonging to the same clubs, was not the kind from which I need suffer. Besides, those were the days when it was easy for the Philadelphia girl to get to know men, to make friends of them, without the Philadelphia gossip pouncing upon her and the Philadelphia father asking them their intentions—they could call upon her as often as they liked and the Philadelphia father would retreat from the front and back parlours, she could go out alone with them and the Philadelphia father would not interfere, knowing they had been brought up to see in themselves her protectors, especially appointed to look out for her. Some signs of change I might have discerned had I been observant. More than the five o'clock tea affectation was to come of the new coquetting with English fashions. Enough had already come for me to know that if my Brother now and then asked me to go to the theatre, it was not for the pleasure of my company, but because a girl he wanted to take would not accept if he did not provide a companion for the sake of the proprieties. I am sure the old Philadelphia way was the most sensible. Certainly it was the most helpful if you happened to be a girl coming out with next to no friends among the women in what ought to have been your own set, with no chaperon to see that you made them, and, at the Dancing Class, with no hostess to keep a protecting eye on you but, instead, patronesses too absorbed in their triumphs to notice the less [Pg 144] fortunate straggling far behind.

Well, anyway, if honesty forbids me to call myself a success, it is a satisfaction to remember that I did not have to play the wall-flower, which I would have thought the most terrible disaster that could befall me. To have to sit out the German alone would have been to sink to such depths of shame that I never afterwards could have held up my head. It was astonishing what mountains of despair we made of these social molehills! I can still see the sad faces of the girls in a row against the wall, with their air of announcing to all whom it might concern: "Here we are, at your service, come and rescue us!" But there was another dreadful custom that did give me away only too often. When a man asked a girl beforehand to dance the German, Philadelphia expected him to send her a bunch of roses: always the same roses—Boston buds, weren't they called?—and from Pennock's on Chestnut Street if he knew what was what. To take your place roseless was to proclaim that you had not been asked until the eleventh hour. It was not pleasant. However, if I went sometimes without the roses, I always had the partner. I had even moments of triumph as when, one dizzy evening before the assembled Dancing Class, I danced with Willie White.

It is not indiscreet to mention so great a person by name and, in doing so, not presuming to use it so familiarly—he was the Dancing Class, as far as I know, he had no other occupation; and his name was *Willie*, not *William*, not *Mr.* White. Willie, as Philadelphians said it, was a title of [Pg 145] honour, like the Cœur de Lion or the Petit Caporal bestowed upon other great men—the measure of the estimate in which social Philadelphia held him. Bean Nash in the Pump Room at Bath was no mightier power than Willie White in the Dancing Class at the Natatorium. He ruled it, and ruled it magnificently: an autocrat, a tyrant, under whose yoke social Philadelphia was eager to thrust its neck. What he said was law, whom he approved could enter, whom he objected to was without redress, his recognition of the Philadelphian's claims to admission was a social passport. He saw to everything, he led the German, and I do not suppose there was a girl who, at her first Dancing Class her first winter, did not, at her first chance, take him out in the German as her solemn initiation. That is how I came to enjoy my triumph, and I do not remember repeating it for he never condescended to take me out in return. But still, I can say that once I danced with Willie White at the Dancing Class—And did I once see Shelley plain?

IV

There were other powers, as I was made quickly to understand—not only the powers that all Biddles, Cadwalladers, Rushes, Ingersolls, Whartons, in a word all members of approved Philadelphia families were by Philadelphia right, but a few who had risen even higher than that splendid throng and were accepted as their leaders. It was not one of the most brilliant periods in [Pg 146] the social history of Philadelphia. Mrs. Rush had had no successor, no woman presided over what could have been given the name of Salon as she had. Even the Wistar parties, exclusively for men, discontinued during the upheaval of the Civil War, had not yet been revived. But, notwithstanding the comparative quiet and depression, there were a few shining social lights.

Had I been asked in the year of my coming out who was the greatest woman in the world, I should have answered, without hesitation, Mrs. Bowie. She, too, may be mentioned by name without indiscretion for she, too, has become historical. She was far from beautiful at the date to which I refer, she was no longer in her first youth, was inclined to stoutness and I fear had not learned how to fight it as women who would be in the fashion must learn to-day. She was not rich and the fact is worth recording, so characteristic is it of Philadelphia. The names of leaders of society in near New York usually had millions attached to them, those there allowed to lead paid a solid price for it in their entertaining. But Mrs. Bowie's power depended upon her personal fascination—with family of course to back it—which was said to be irresistible. And yet not to know her was to be unknown. Intimacy with her was to have arrived. At least a bowing acquaintance, an occasional invitation to her house, was essential to success or its dawning. She entertained modestly as far as I could gather from my experience,—as far as I can now depend on [Pg 147]

my memory—gave no balls, no big dinners; if there were select little dinners, I was too young and insignificant to hear of them. I never got farther than the afternoon tea to which everybody was invited once every winter, a comfortless crush in her small house, with next to nothing to eat and drink as things to eat and drink go according to the lavish Philadelphia standard. But that did not matter. Nothing mattered except to be there, to be seen there. I was tremendously pleased with myself the first time the distinction was mine, though of my presence in her house Mrs. Bowie was no doubt amiably unconscious. I never knew her to recognize me out of it, though I sometimes met her when she came informally to see one of my Aunts who was her friend, or to give me the smile at the Dancing Class that would have raised my drooping spirits. The only notice she ever spared me there was to express to my Brother—who naturally, brother-like, made me uncomfortable by reporting it to me—her opinion of my poor, unpretentious, home-made, Second Street silk as an example of the absurdity of a long train to dance in, which shows how completely she had forgotten who I was.

Her chief rival, if so exalted a personage could have a rival, was Mrs. Connor, from whom also a smile, a recognition, was equivalent to social promotion. Her fascination did not have to be explained. She was an unqualified beauty, though the vision I have retained is of beauty in high-necked blue velvet and chinchilla, which I could not have enjoyed at the Dancing Class or any [Pg 148] evening party. I realise as I write that in the details of Philadelphia's social history I would come out badly from too rigid an examination.

V

To Mrs. Connor's I was never asked with or without the crowd. But other houses were opened to me, other invitations came, for, if I had not friends, my family had. My white tarlatan and my Second Street silk had grown shabby before the winter was half over. At many parties I got to know what a delightful thing a Philadelphia party was, and if I had gone to one instead of many I should have known as well. Philadelphia had a standard for its parties as for everything, and to deviate from this standard, to attempt originality, to invent the "freak" entertainments of New York, would have been excessively bad form. The same card printed by Dreka requested the pleasure of your company to the same Philadelphia house—the Philadelphia hostess would not have stooped to invite you to the Continental or the Girard, the LaPierre House or the Colonnade, which were the Bellevue and the Ritz of my day—where you danced in the same spacious front and back parlours, with the same crash on the floor, to the same music by Hassler's band: where you ate the same Terrapin, Croquettes, Chicken Salad, Oysters, Boned Turkey, Ice cream, little round Cakes with white icing on top, and drank the same Fish-House Punch provided by the same Augustine; where the same Cotillon began at the same hour with the same figures and the [Pg 151] same favours and the same partners; where there was the same dressing-room in the second story front and the same Philadelphia girls who froze me on my arrival and on my departure. There was no getting away from the same people in Philadelphia. That was the worst of it. The town was big enough for a chance to meet different people in different houses every evening in the week, but by that arbitrary boundary of "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine," it has made itself socially into a village with the pettiness and limitations of village life. I have never wondered that Philadelphians are as cordial to strangers as everybody who ever came to Philadelphia knows them to be—that Philadelphia doors are as hospitable as Thackeray once described them. Philadelphians have reason to rejoice and make the most of it when occasionally they see a face they have not been seeing regularly at every party they have been to, and hear talk they have not listened to all their lives.

THE NEW RITZ-CARLTON; THE FINISHING TOUCHES
THE WALNUT STREET ADDITION HAS SINCE BEEN MADE

Sometimes it was to the afternoon reception the card engraved by Dreka invited me, and then again it was to meet the same people and—in the barbarous mode of the day—to eat the same

Croquettes, Chicken Salad, Terrapin, Boned Turkey, Ice-cream, and little round Cakes with white icing on top, and to drink the same Punch from Augustine's at five o'clock in the afternoon, and at least risk digestion in a good cause. But rarely did the card engraved by Dreka invite me to dinner, and I could not have been invited to anything I liked better. I have always thought dinner [Pg 152] the most civilized form of entertainment. It may have been an entertainment Philadelphia preferred to reserve for my elders, and, if I am not mistaken, the most formal dinners, or dinners with any pretence to being public, were then usually men's affairs, just as the Saturday Club, and the Wistar parties had been, and the Clover Club, and the Fish-House Club were: from them women being as religiously excluded as from the dinners of the City Companies in London, or from certain monasteries in Italy and the East. Indeed, as I look back, it seems to me that woman's social presence was correct only in private houses and at private gatherings. Nothing took away my breath so completely on going back to Philadelphia after my long absence as the Country Clubs where men and women now meet and share their amusements, if it was not the concession of a dining-room to women by a Club like the Union League that, of old, was in my esteem as essentially masculine as the Philadelphia Lady thought the sauces at Blossom's Hotel in Chester.

But there were plenty of other things to do which I did with less rather than more thoroughness. I paid midday visits, wondering why duty should have set me so irksome a task. I received with friends on New Year's Day—an amazing day when men paid off their social debts and made, at some houses, their one call of the year, joining together by twos and threes and fours to charter a carriage, or they would never have got through their round, armed with all their courage either [Pg 153] to refuse positively or to accept everywhere the glass of Madeira or Punch and the usual masterpiece from Augustine's. It was another barbarous custom, but an old Philadelphia custom, and Philadelphia has lost so many old customs that I could have wished this one spared. I went to the concerts of the Orpheus Club. I went to the Opera and the Theatre when I was asked, which was not often. I passed with the proper degree of self-consciousness the Philadelphia Club at Thirteenth and Walnut, the same row of faces always looking out over newspapers and magazines from the same row of windows. And I did a great many things that were pleasant and a great many more that were unpleasant, conscientiously rejecting nothing social I was told to do when the opportunity to do it came my way. But it all counted for nothing weighed in the balance with the one thing I did not do—I never went to the Assembly.

CHAPTER VII: THE SOCIAL ADVENTURE: THE ASSEMBLY [Pg 154]

I

I am too good a Philadelphian to begin to talk about the Assembly in the middle of a chapter. It holds a place apart in the social life of Philadelphia of which annually it is the supreme moment, and in my record of my experiences of this life, however imperfect, I can treat it with no less consideration. It must have a chapter apart.

To go to the Assembly was the one thing of all others I wanted to do, not only on the general principle that the thing one wants most is the thing one cannot have, but because to go to the Assembly was the thing of all others I ought to have done. There could be no question of that. You were not really out in Philadelphia if you did not go; only the Friends could afford not to. And Americans from other towns felt much the same way about it, they felt they were not anybody if they were not invited, and they moved heaven and earth for an invitation, and prized it, when received, as highly as a pedigree. A few honoured guests were always at the Assembly.

THE HALL, STENTON

Philadelphians who are not on the Assembly list may pretend to laugh at it, to despise it, to sneer at the snobbishness of people who endeavour to draw a social line in a country where everybody [Pg 157] is as good as everybody else and where those on the right side may look down but those on the wrong will not be induced to look up. And not one among those who laugh and sneer would not jump at the chance to get in, were it given them, at the risk of being transformed into snobs themselves. For the Assembly places the Philadelphian as nothing else can. It gives him what the German gets from his quarterings or the Briton from an invitation to Court. The Dancing Class had its high social standard, it required grandfathers as credentials before admission could be granted, the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania supplied no more authoritative assurance of Philadelphia respectability than its subscription list, but the Dancing Class was lax in its standard compared to the Assembly. I am not sure what was the number, what the quality, of ancestors the Assembly exacted, but I know that it was as inexorable in its exactions as the Council of Ten. It would have been easier for troops of camels to pass through the eye of a needle than for one Philadelphian north of Market Street to get through the Assembly door. I am told that matters are worse to-day when Philadelphia society has increased in numbers until new limits must be set to the Assembly lest it perish of its own unwieldiness. The applicants must produce not only forefathers but fathers and mothers on the list, and the Philadelphian whose name was there more than a century and a half ago cannot make good his rights if his parents [Pg 158] neglected to establish theirs. And to be refused is not merely humiliation, but humiliation with Philadelphia for witness, and the misery and shame that are the burden of the humiliated.

It is foolish, I admit, society is too light a matter to suffer for; it is cruel, for the social wound goes deep. But were it ten times more foolish, ten times more cruel, I would not have it otherwise. Philadelphians preserve their State House, their Colonial mansions and churches; why should they not be as careful of their Assembly, since it has as historic a background and as fine Colonial and Revolutionary traditions? They are proud of having their names among those who signed the Declaration of Independence; why should they not take equal—or greater—pride in figuring among the McCalls and Willings and Shippens and Sims and any number of others on the first Assembly lists, since these are earlier in date? Besides, to such an extremity have the changes of the last quarter of a century driven the Philadelphian that he must make a good fight for survival in his own town. When I think of how mere wealth is taking possession of "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine," how uptown is marrying into it, how the Jew and the alien are forcing their way in, I see in loyalty to the traditions of the Assembly of Philadelphian's strongest defence of the social rights which are his by inheritance. Should he let go, what would there be for him to catch on to again?

"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF"

It would be different if what Philadelphia was getting in exchange were finer, or as fine. But it is [Pg 161] not. The old exclusiveness, with its follies, was better, more amusing, than the new tendency to do away with everything that gave Philadelphia society its character. It was the charm and the strength of Philadelphia society that it had a character of its own and was not just like Boston or New York or Baltimore society. Nobody, however remote was their mission from social matters, could visit Philadelphia without being impressed by this difference, whether it was to discover, with John Adams, that Philadelphians had their particular way of being a happy, elegant, tranquil, polite people, or, with so unlikely an observer as Matthew Arnold, that "the leading families in Philadelphia were much thought of," and that Philadelphia names saying nothing to an Englishman said everything to every American. Who you were counted in Philadelphia, as what you knew in Boston, or what you were worth in New York, and there was not an American of old who did not accept the fact and respect it. Philadelphia society clung to the Philadelphia surface of tranquillity, of untroubled repose whatever might be going on beneath it, and in my time I

would not like to say how disturbing and agitating were the scandals and intrigues that were said to be going on. They were rarely made public. It was not in Philadelphia as in London where next to everybody you meet has been or is about to be divorced, though it might be that next to [Pg 162] everybody you met was not making it a practice to keep to the straight and narrow path, to be as innocent as everybody looked. Logan Square could have told tales, if the Divorce Court could not.

BED ROOM, STENTON, THE HOME OF JAMES LOGAN

But now Philadelphia has strayed from its characteristic exclusiveness; gone far to get rid of even the air of tranquillity. With the modern "Peggy Shippen" and "Sally Wister" alert to give away its affairs in the columns of the daily paper, it could not keep its secrets to itself if it wanted to. And it does not seem to want to—that is the saddest part of the whole sad transformation. It rather likes the world outside to know what it is doing and, worse, it takes that world as its model. Its aim apparently is to show that it can be as like every other town as two peas, so that, drinking tea to music at the Bellevue, dancing at the Ritz, lunching and dining and playing golf and polo at the Country Clubs, the visitor can comfortably forget he is not at home but in Philadelphia. The youth of Philadelphia have become eager to desert the Episcopal Academy and the University for Groton or St. Paul's, Harvard or Yale, in order that they may be trained to be not Philadelphians but, as they imagine, men of the world, forgetting the distinction there has hitherto been in being plain Philadelphians. At the moment when in far older towns of Europe people are striving to recover their character by reviving local costumes, language, and customs, Philadelphians are deliberately throwing theirs away with their old traditions. The Assembly is one of their few rare [Pg 165] possessions left, and strict as they are with it in one way, in another they are playing fast and loose with it, holding it, as if it were a mere modern dance, at a fashionable hotel.

II

If I now regret, as I do, never having gone to the Assembly, it is because of all that it represents, all that makes it a classic. But at the time, my regret, though as keen, was because of more personal reasons. I could have borne the historic side of my loss with equanimity, it was the social side of it that broke my heart. I have had many bad quarters of an hour in my life, but few as poignant as that which followed the appearance at our front door of the coloured man who distributed the cards for the Assembly—far too precious to be trusted to the post—and who came to leave one for my Brother. It was an injustice that oppressed me with a sense of my wrongs as a woman and might have set me window-smashing had window-smashing as a protest been invented. Why should the Assembly be so much easier for men? My Brother had but to put on the dress suit he had worn it did not matter how many years, and as he was, like every other American young man, at work and an independent person altogether—a millionaire I saw in him —the price of the card in an annual subscription was his affair and nobody else's. But, in my case the price was not my affair. I had not a cent to call my own, I was not at work, I was denied the right to work, and, the Assembly coming fairly late in the season, my white tarlatan and Second [Pg 166] Street silk showed wear and tear that unfitted them for the most important social function of the winter. Philadelphia women dressed simply, it is true; that used to be one of the ways the Quaker influence showed itself; they boasted then that their restraint in dress distinguished them from other American women. But simplicity does not mean cheapness or indifference. The Friends took infinite pains with their soft brown and silvery grey silks, with their delicate fichus and Canton shawls. The well-dressed Philadelphia woman knows what she has to pay for the elegance of her simplicity. And the Assembly has always called for the finest she could achieve, from the day when Franklin was made to feel the cost to him if his daughter was to have what she needed to go out "in decency" with the Washingtons in Philadelphia.

THE TUNNEL IN THE PARK

I had the common sense to understand my position and not to be misled by the poverty-stricken, but irresistible Nancies and Dollies who were enjoying a vogue in the novels of the day and who encircled empty bank accounts and big families with the halo of romance. To read about the struggles with poverty of the irresistible young heroine might be amusing, but I had no special use for them as a personal experience. It would have been preposterous for me to think for a moment that, without a decent gown, I could go to the Assembly and, to do myself justice, I did not think it. But by this time I knew what coming out and being out meant and, therefore, I [Pg 169] appreciated the social drawback it must be for me not to be able to go. It explained, as nothing hitherto had, how far I was from being caught up in the whirl, and it is only the whirl that keeps one going in society—that makes society a delightful profession, and I think I realized this truth better than the people so extravagantly in the Philadelphia whirl as to have no time to think about it. All that winter I never got to the point of being less concerned as to where the next invitation was to come from than as to how I was to accept all that did come. There is no use denying that I was disappointed and suffered from the disappointment. One pays a heavier price for the first foolish illusion lost than for all the others put together, no matter how serious they are.

III

When the season was over, I had as little hope of keeping up in other essential ways. If society then adjourned from Philadelphia because the heat made it impossible to stay at home, it was only to start a new Philadelphia on the porch of Howland's Hotel at Long Branch or, as it was just then beginning to do, at Bar Harbor and in the camps of the Adirondacks, or, above all, at Narragansett. "It may be accepted as an incontrovertible truth," Janvier says in one of his Philadelphia stories, "that a Philadelphian of a certain class who missed coming to the Pier for August would refuse to believe, for that year at least, in the alternation of the four seasons; while [Pg 170] an enforced absence from that damply delightful watering-place for two successive summers very probably would lead to a rejection of the entire Copernican system." If Philadelphians went abroad, which was much more exceptional then than now, it was to meet each other. I know hotels in London to-day where, if you go in the afternoon, it is just like an afternoon reception in Philadelphia, and hotels in Paris where at certain seasons you find nobody but Philadelphians talking Philadelphia, though the Philadelphian has not disappeared who does not want to travel because he finds Philadelphia good enough for him. And it has always been like that.

But I could not follow Philadelphia society in the summer time any more than I could go with it to the Assembly in the winter. I had reason to consider myself fortunate if I travelled as far as Mount Airy or Chestnut Hill out of the red brick oven Philadelphia used to be—is now and ever shall be!—from June to September. It was an event if I got off with the crowd—the linen-dustered, wilting-collared crowds; surely we are not so demoralized by the heat nowadays?—to Cape May or Atlantic City, to enjoy the land breeze blowing, from over the Jersey swamps, clouds of mosquitoes before it so that nobody could stir out of doors without gloves and a veil. These, however, were not the summer joys society demanded of me. The further I went into the social game, the less I got from it, and I had decided that for the poor it was not worth the candle at the [Pg 173] end of the first year, or was it the second? That I should be uncertain shows how little my heart was in the business of going out.

THE BOAT HOUSES ON THE SCHUYLKILL

I did not necessarily give up every amusement because I did not go out. In fact, I cannot recall a dance that amused me as much as many a boating party on the Schuylkill in the gold of the June afternoon, or many a walking party through the Park in the starlit summer night. There also remained, had I chosen, the staid entertainment of the women who, for one reason or other, had retired from the gayer round, and whose amusements consisted of more intimate receptions, teas, without number, sewing societies. And it was the period when Philadelphia was waking up to the charms of the higher education for women,—to the dissipations of "culture." I had friends who filled their time by studying for the examinations Harvard had at last condescended to allow them to pass, or try to pass; others found their sober recreation by qualifying themselves as teachers and teaching in a large society formed to impart learning by correspondence: all these women keeping their occupation to themselves as much as possible, not wishing to make a public scandal in Philadelphia which had not accustomed itself to the spectacle of women working unless compelled to;—all this quite outside of the University set, which must have existed, if I did not know it, as the Bryn Mawr set exists to-day, but which, as far as my experience went, was then never heard of except by the fortunate and privileged few who belonged to it. [Pg 174]

But this new amusement required effort, and experience had not made me in love with the amusement that had to be striven for, that had to be paid for by exertion of any kind. There was an interval when Philadelphia would have been searched in vain for another idler as confirmed as I. Having found nothing to do, I proceeded to do it with all my might. I stood in no need of the poet's command to lean and loaf at my ease, though I am afraid I leaned and loafed so well as to neglect the other half of his precept and to forget to invite my soul. To those years I now look back as to so much good time lost in a working life all too short at the best.

CHAPTER VIII: A QUESTION OF CREED [Pg 175]

I

I may not have understood at the time, but I must have been vaguely conscious that if so often I felt myself a stranger in my native town, it was not only because of the long years I had been shut up in boarding-school, but because that boarding-school happened to be a Convent.

There were schools in Philadelphia and schools out of it as useful as Rittenhouse Square in laying the foundation for profitable friendships. Miss Irwin's furnished almost as good social credentials as a Colonial Governor in the family. But a Philadelphia Convent did the other thing as successfully. It was not the Convent as a Convent that was objected to. In Paris, it could lend distinction: the fact that, at the mature age of six, I spent a year at Conflans, might have served me as a social asset. In Louisiana, or Maryland, a Philadelphia girl could see its door close upon her, and not despair of social salvation. Everything depended upon where the Convent was. In some places, it had a social standing, in others it had none, and Philadelphia was one of the others. In France, in Louisiana, in Maryland, to be a Catholic was to be at the top of the social scale, approved by society; in Pennsylvania, it was to be at the bottom, despised by society. [Pg 176]

This was another Philadelphia fact I accepted on faith. It was not until I began to think about Philadelphia that I saw how consistent Philadelphians were in their inconsistency. Their position in the matter was what their past had made it, and the inconsistency is in their greater liberality to-day. For Pennsylvania has never been Catholic, has never had an aristocratic Catholic tradition like England: to the Friends there, all the aristocracy of the traditional kind belongs. The people —the World's People—who rushed to Pennsylvania to secure for themselves the religious liberty William Penn offered indiscriminately to everybody, found they could not enjoy it if Catholics were to profit by it with them. They had not been there any time when, as one of the early Friends had the wit to see and to say, they "were surfeited with liberty," and the Friends, who refused to all sects alike the privilege of expressing their religious fervour in wood piles for witches and prison cells for heretics, could not succeed in depriving them of their healthy religious prejudice which, they might not have been able to explain why, concentrated itself upon

the Catholic. Episcopalians approved of a doctrine of freedom that meant they could build their own churches where they would. Presbyterians and Baptists objected so little to each other that, for a while, they could share the same pulpit. Moravians put up their monasteries where it suited them best. Mennonites took possession of Germantown. German mystics were allowed to search in peace for the Woman in White and wait hopefully for the Millennium on the banks of the [Pg 177] Wissahickon. Later on Whitefield set the whole town of Philadelphia to singing psalms, and Philadelphia refrained from interfering with what must have been an intolerable nuisance. Even Jews were welcome—their names are among early legislators and on early Assembly lists. Catholics, alone, they all agreed, had no right to any portion of Penn's gift, and popular opinion is often stronger than the law. Whatever ill will they had to spare from the Catholics, they reserved for the Friends to whom they owed everything—if Pennsylvania was "a dear Pennsylvania" to Penn, a good part of the blame lay with the "drunken crew of priests" and the "turbulent churchmen" whom he denounced in one of those letters to Logan, which are among the saddest ever written and published to the world.

After religious passions had run their course, the religious prejudice against the Catholic was handed down as social prejudice, which was all it was in my day when Philadelphians, who would question the social standing of a Catholic in Philadelphia simply because he was a Catholic, could accept him without question in the Catholic town of Baltimore or New Orleans simply because he was one. The Catholic continued to pay a heavy price socially for his religion in Philadelphia where it was not the thing to be a Catholic, where it never had been the thing, where it got to be less the thing as successive Irish emigrations crowded the Catholic churches. I fancy at the period of which I am writing Philadelphians, if asked, would have said that Catholicism was for [Pg 178] Irish servants—for the illiterate. I remember a book called *Kate Vincent* I used to read at a Protestant Uncle's, where it may purposely have been placed in my way. Does anybody else remember it?—a story of school life with a heroine of a school girl who, in the serene confidence of her sixteen or seventeen summers, refuted all the learned Doctors of the Church by convicting a poor little Irish slavey of ignorance for praying to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. I think I must have forgotten it with many foolish books for children read in my childhood had not Kate Vincent been so like Philadelphians in her calm superiority, though, fortunately, Philadelphians did not share her proselytising fervour. They went to the other extreme of lofty indifference and for them the Catholic churches in their town did not exist any more than the streets of little two-story houses south of Pine, a region into which they would not have thought of penetrating except to look up somebody who worked for them.

II

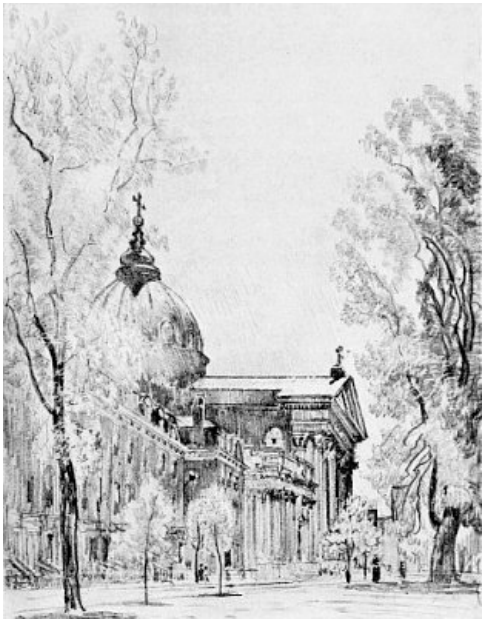
I might have learned as much during my holidays at my Grandfather's had I been given to reflection during my early years. My Father was a convert with the convert's proverbial ardour. He had been baptised in the Convent chapel with my Sister and myself—I was eight years old at the time—and many who were present declared it the most touching ceremony they had ever seen. However, to the family, who had not seen it, it was anything but touching. They were all [Pg 181] good members of the Episcopal Church and had been since they landed in Virginia; moreover, one of my Father's brothers was an Episcopal clergyman and Head Master of the Episcopal Academy, Philadelphia's bed-rock of religious respectability. The baptism was only conditional, for the Catholic Church baptizes conditionally those who have been baptized in any church before, but even so it must have been trying to them as a precaution insolently superfluous. I do not remember that anything was ever said, or suggested, or hinted. But there was an undercurrent of disapproval that, child as I was, I felt, though I could not have put it into words. One thing plain was that when we children went off to our church with my Father, we were going where nobody else in my Grandfather's house went, except the servants, and that, for some incomprehensible reason, it was rather an odd sort of thing for us to do, making us different from most people we knew in Philadelphia.

THE PULPIT, ST. PETER'S

Nor had I the chance to lose sight of this difference at the Convent. The education I was getting there, when not devoted to launching my soul into Paradise, was preparing me for the struggle against the temptations of the world which, from all I heard about it, I pictured as a horrible gulf of evil yawning at the Convent gate, ready to swallow me up the minute that gate shut behind me. To face it was an ordeal so alarming in anticipation that there was an interval when I convinced myself it would be infinitely safer, by becoming a nun, not to face it at all. If I stopped [Pg 182] to give the world a name, it was bound to be Philadelphia, the place in which I was destined to live upon leaving the Convent. I knew that it was Protestant, as we often prayed for the conversion of its people, I the harder because they included my relations who if not converted could, my catechism taught me, be saved only so as by the invincible ignorance with which I hardly felt it polite to credit them. To what other conclusion could I come, arguing logically, than that Philadelphia was the horrible gulf of evil yawning for me, and that in this gulf Protestants swarmed, scattering temptation along the path of the Catholic who walked alone among them?—an idea of Philadelphia that probably would have surprised nobody more than the nuns who were training me for my life of struggle in it.

The gulf of the world did not seem so evil once it swallowed me up, but that socially the Catholic walked in it alone, there could be no mistake. When eventually I left school and began going out on my modest scale, I could not fail to see that the people I met in church were not, as a rule, the people I met at the Dancing Class, or at parties, or at receptions, or on that abominable round of morning calls, and this was the more surprising because Philadelphians of the "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine" set were accustomed to meeting each other wherever they went. Except for the small group of those Philadelphia families of French descent with French names who were not descendants of the Huguenots, and here and there a convert like my Father, and an occasional [Pg 183] native Philadelphian who, unaccountably, had always been a Catholic, the congregation, whether I went to the Cathedral or St. John's, to St. Joseph's or St. Patrick's, was chiefly Irish, as also were the priests when they were not Italians.

Fashion sent the Philadelphian to the Episcopal Church. It could not have been otherwise in a town as true to tradition as Philadelphia had not ceased to be in my young days. No sooner had Episcopalians settled in Philadelphia than, by their greater grandeur of dress and manner, they showed the greater social aspirations they had brought with them from the other side—the Englishman's confidence in the social superiority of the Church of England to all religion outside of it. Presbyterians are said to have had a pretty fancy in matters of wigs and powdered and frizzled hair, which may also have been symbolic, for they followed a close fashionable second. Baptists and Methodists, on the contrary, affected to despise dress and, while I cannot say if the one fact has anything to do with the other, I knew fewer Baptists and Methodists than Catholics. By my time the belief that no one could be "a gentleman" outside the Church of England, or its American offshoot, was stronger than ever, and fashion required a pew at St. Mark's or Holy Trinity or St. James's, if ancient lineage did not claim one at St. Peter's or Christ Church; though old-fashioned people like my Grandfather and Grandmother might cling blamelessly to St. [Pg 184] Andrew's which was highly respectable, if not fashionable, and new-fashioned people might brave criticism with the Ritualists at St. Clement's. As for Catholics, a pew down at St. Joseph's in Willing's Alley or, worse still, up town at the Cathedral in Logan Square, put them out of the reckoning, at a hopeless disadvantage socially, however better off they might be for it spiritually. That the Cathedral was in Logan Square was in itself a social offence of a kind that society could not tolerate. At the correct churches every function, every meeting, every Sunday-school, every pious re-union, as well as every service, became a fashionable duty; and at the church door after service on Sunday, a man with whom one had danced the night before might be picked up to walk on Walnut Street with, which was a social observance only less indispensable than attendance at the Assembly and the Dancing Class.



THE CATHEDRAL, LOGAN

I recall the excitement of girls of my age, their feeling that they had got to the top of everything, the first time they took this sacramental walk, if not with a man which was the crowning glory, at least with a woman who was prominent, or successful, in society. But I believe I could count the times I joined in the Walnut Street procession on Sunday morning. As long as I lived in Third Street, my usual choice of a church lay between St. Joseph's, the Jesuit church in Willing's Alley with its air of retirement, and St. Mary's on Fourth Street, where the orphans used to come from Seventh and Spruce and sometimes sing an anthem that, for any save musical reasons, I [Pg 187] delighted in, and where we had a pew. After we moved from Third Street, our pew was at the Cathedral, more distinguished from the clerical standpoint, for there we sat under the Bishop. No matter which our church, High Mass was long: I could not have got to the appointed part of Walnut Street in time, had I found at the door the companion to go there with me. There was nothing to do but to walk home alone or sedately at my Father's side, and one's Father, however correct he might be under other circumstances, was not the right person for these occasions. On Sundays I could not conceal from myself that I was socially at a discount. The reflection that this was where I, as a Catholic, scored, should have consoled me, for if the Episcopalian was performing a social duty when he went to church, I, as a Catholic, was making a social sacrifice, and sacrifice of some sort is of the essence of religion.

III

If I could but have taken the trouble to be interested, it must also have occurred to me to wonder why St. Joseph's, where I went so often, was hidden in an obscure alley. In Philadelphia, the town of straight streets crossing each other at right angles, it is not easy for a building of the kind to keep out of sight. But not one man in a hundred, not one in a thousand, who, passing along Third Street, looked up Willing's Alley, dreamt for a minute that somewhere in that alley, embedded in a network of brokers' and railroad offices, carefully concealing every trace of itself, was a church [Pg 188] with a large congregation. Most churches in Philadelphia, as everywhere, like to display themselves prominently with an elaborate façade, or a lofty steeple, or a green enclosure, or a graveyard full of monuments. St. Peter's, close by, fills a whole block. Christ Church stands flush with the pavement. The simplest Meeting-House, by the beautiful trees that overshadow it or the high walls that enclose it or the bit of green at its door, will not let the passer-by forget it. But St. Joseph's, evidently, did not want to be seen, did not want to be remembered; evidently hesitated to show that its doors were wide and hospitably open to all the world in the beautiful fashion of the Catholic Church. There was something furtive about it, an air of mystery, it was almost as if one were keeping a clandestine appointment with religion when one turned from the street into the humble alley, and from the alley into the silence of the sanctuary.

CHRIST CHURCH, FROM SECOND STREET

Perhaps I thought less about this mysterious aloofness because, once in the church, I felt so much at home. I do not mind owning now, though I would not have owned it then for a good deal, that after my return from the Convent, I had the uncomfortable feeling of being a stranger not only in my town, but in my family. I had been in the Convent eleven years and until this day when I look back to my childhood, it is the Convent I remember as home. St. Joseph's seemed a part of the Convent, therefore of home, that had strayed into the town by mistake. In some ways it was [Pg 191] not like the Convent, greatly to my discomfort. The chapel there was dainty in detail, exquisitely kept, the altars fresh with flowers from the Convent garden, and for congregation the nuns and the girls modestly and demurely veiled. But nothing was dainty about St. Joseph's,—men are as untidy in running a church as in keeping a house—it was not well kept, the flowers were artificial and tawdry, and the congregation was largely made up of shabby old Irishwomen. The priests—Jesuits—were mostly Italian, with those unpleasant habits of Italian priests that are a shock to the

convent-bred American when she first goes to Italy. They had, however, the virtue of old friends, their faces were familiar, I had known them for years at the Convent which they had frequently visited and where, by special grace, they had refrained from some of the unpleasant habits that offended me at St. Joseph's.

There was Father de Maria, tall, thin, with a wonderful shock of white hair, a fine ascetic face and a kindly smile, not adapted to shine in children's society—too much of a scholar I fancied though I may have been wrong—and with an effect of severity which I do not think he meant, but which had kept me at a safe distance when he came to see us at Torresdale. But he had come, I could not remember the time when I had not known him, and that was in his favour.

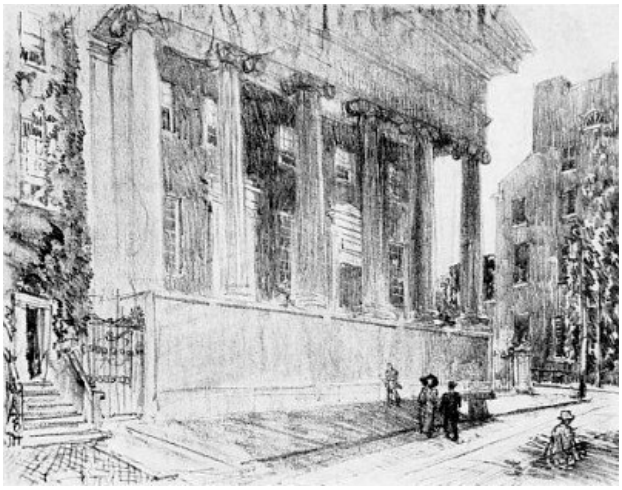
There was Father Ardea, a small, shrinking, dark man, from whom also it was more comfortable to keep at a safe distance, so little had he to say and such a trick of looking at you with an "Eh? [Pg 192] Eh?" of expectation, as if he relied upon you to supply the talk he had not at his own command. But I could have forgiven him worse, so pleasant a duty did he make of confession. His penances were light and his only comment was "Eh? Eh? my child? But you didn't mean it! You didn't mean it!" until I longed to accuse myself of the Seven Deadly Sins with the Unpardonable Sin thrown in, just to see if he would still assure me that I didn't mean it.

There was Father Bobbelin—our corruption I fancy of Barbelin—a Frenchman, short and fat, sandy-haired, with a round smiling face: the most welcome of all. He was always very snuffy, and always ready to hand round his snuff-box if talk languished when he went out to walk with us, which I liked better than Father Ardea's embarrassing "Eh? Eh?" It was to Father Bobbelin an inexhaustible joke, and the only other I knew him to venture upon resulted in so unheard-of a breach of discipline that ever after we saw less of him and his snuff-box. He was walking with us down Mulberry Avenue one afternoon, the little girls clustered about him as they were always sure to be, and the nun in charge a little behind with the bigger, more sedate girls. When we got to the end of the Avenue, the carriage gate leading straight out into the World was open as it had never been before, as it never was again. Father Bobbelin's fat shoulders shook with laughter. He opened the gate wider. "Now, children," he said, "here's your chance. Run for it!" And we did, we [Pg 193] ran as if for our lives, though no children could have loved their school better or wanted less to get away from it. One or two ran as far as the railroad, the most adventurous crossed it, and were making full tilt for the river before all were caught and brought back and sent to bed in disgrace. After that Father Bobbelin visited us only in our class-room.

And there were other priests whose names escape me, but not their home-like faces. Now and then Jesuits who gave Missions and who had conducted the retreats at the Convent, appeared at St. Joseph's,—Father Smarius, the huge Dutchman, so enormous they used to tell us at the Convent that he had never seen his feet for twenty years, who had baptized my Father and his family in the Convent chapel; and Father Boudreau, the silent, shy little Louisianian, whom I remember so well coming with Father Smarius one June day to bless, and sprinkle Holy Water over that big yellow and white house close to the Convent which my Father had taken for the summer; and Father Glackmeyer, and Father Coghlan, and with them others whose presence helped the more to fill St. Joseph's with the intimate convent atmosphere.

IV

These old friends and old associations took away from the uneasiness it might otherwise have given me to find the church, for which I had exchanged the Convent chapel, hidden up an alley as [Pg 194] if its existence were a sin. But overlook it as I might, this was the one important fact about St. Joseph's which, otherwise, had no particular interest. It did not count as architecture, it boasted of no beauty of decoration: an inconspicuous, commonplace building from every point of view, of which I consequently retain but the vaguest memory. As I write, I can see, as if it were before me, the Convent chapel, its every nook and corner, almost its every stone, this altar here, that picture there, the confessional in the screened-off space where visitors sat, the dark step close to the altar railing where I carried my wrongs and my sorrows. But try as I may, I cannot see St. Joseph's as it was, cannot see any detail, nothing save the general shabbiness and untidiness that shocked my convent-bred eyes. Could it have appealed by its beauty, like the old Cathedrals of Europe, or, for that matter, like the old churches of Philadelphia, no doubt I should be able to recall it as vividly as the Convent chapel. Because I cannot, because it impressed me so superficially, I regret the more that I had not the sense to appreciate the interest it borrowed from the romance of history and the beauty of suffering—the history of the Catholic religion in Philadelphia which I might have read in this careful hiding of its temple; the suffering of the scapegoat among churches, obliged to keep out of sight, atoning for their intolerance in a desert of secrecy, letting no man know where its prayers were said or its services held. Catholics had to practise their religion like criminals skulking from the law. Members of a Protestant church [Pg 197] might dispute among themselves to the point of blows, but they never thought of interfering with the members of any other church, except the Catholic, against which they could all cheerfully join. There were times when the Friends, most tolerant of men, were influenced by this general hostility, and I rather think the worst moment in Penn's life was when he was forced to protest against the scandal of the Mass in his town of Brotherly Love.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SEVENTH STREET AND WASHINGTON SQUARE

The marvel is that Catholics ventured out of their hiding-places as soon as they did. They had emerged so successfully by Revolutionary times that the stranger in Philadelphia could find his way to "the Romish chapel" and enjoy the luxury of knowing that he was not as these poor wretches who fingered their beads and chanted Latin not a word of which they understood. The Jesuits have the wisdom of their reputation. When they built their church the Colonies had for some years been the United States, and hatred was less outspoken, and persecution was more intermittent, but they believed discretion to be the better part of valour and the truest security in not challenging attack. That is why they built St. Joseph's in Willing's Alley where the visitor with a dramatic sense must be as thrilled by it as by the secret chapels and underground passages in old Elizabethan mansions and Scott's novels. Philadelphia gave the Jesuits a proof of their wisdom when, within a quarter of a century, Young America, in a playful moment, burnt down as [Pg 198] much as it could of St. Michael's and St. Augustine's; churches which had been built bravely and hopefully in open places. Young America believed in a healthy reminder to Catholics, that, if they had not been disturbed for some time, it was not because they did not deserve to be.

Philadelphia had got beyond the exciting stage of intolerance before I was born. There were no delicious tremors to be had when I heard Mass at St. Joseph's or went to Vespers at St. Mary's. There was no ear alert for a warning of the approach of the enemy, no eye strained for the first wisp of smoke or burst of flame. With churches and convents everywhere—convents intruding even upon Walnut Street and Rittenhouse Square—with a big Cathedral in town and a big Seminary at Villanova, Catholics were in a fair way to forget it had ever been as dangerous for them as for the early Christians to venture from their catacombs. Their religion had become a tame affair, holding out no prospect of the martyr's crown. Only the social prejudice survived, but it was the more bitter to fight because, whether the end was victory or defeat, it appeared so inglorious a struggle to be engaged in.

One good result there was of this social ostracism. I leave myself out of the argument. Religion, I have often heard it said, is a matter of temperament. As this story of my relations to Philadelphia seems to be resolving itself into a general confession, I must at least confess my certainty that I [Pg 199] have not and never had the necessary temperament, that, moreover, the necessary temperament is not to be had by any effort of will power, depending rather upon "the influence of the unknown powers." But I am not totally blind, nor was I in the old days when, many as were the things I did not see, my eyes were still open to the effect of social opposition on Catholics with the temperament. It made them more devout, at times more defiant. I know churches that are in themselves alone a reward for faith and fidelity—who would not be a Catholic in the dim religious light of Chartres Cathedral, or in the sombre splendours of Seville and Barcelona? But St. Joseph's and St. Mary's, St. Patrick's and St. John's gave no such reward, nor did the Cathedral in its far-away imitation of the Jesuit churches of Italy and France. In these arid, unemotional interiors, emotion could not kindle piety which, if not fed by more spiritual stuff, was bound to flicker and go out. This is why the Philadelphian who, in those unattractive churches and in spite of the social price paid, remained faithful, was the most devout Catholic I have ever met at home or in my wanderings.

V

For his spiritual welfare, it might have been better had the conditions remained as I knew them. But even at that period, the signs of weakening in the social barrier must have jumped to my eyes had I had eyes for the fine shades. Catholics among themselves had begun to put up social [Pg 200] barriers, so much further had Philadelphia travelled on the road to liberty.

Religiously, one of their churches was as good as another, but not socially. St. Mark's, from its superior Episcopal heights, might look down equally upon St. Patrick's and St. John's, but the Catholic with a pew at St. John's did not at all look upon the Catholic with a seat at St. Patrick's as on the same social level as himself. St. Patrick's name alone was sufficient to attract an Irish congregation, and the Irish who then flocked to Philadelphia were not the flower of Ireland's aristocracy. St. John's, by some unnamed right, claimed the Catholics of social pretensions—the

excellence of its music may have strengthened its claim. I know that my Father, who was a religious man, did not object to having the comfort of religion strengthened by the charms of Gounod's Mass well sung, and, at the last, he drifted from the Cathedral to St. John's.

OLD SWEDES' CHURCH

The Cathedral necessarily was above such distinctions, as a Cathedral should be, and it harboured an overflow from St. Patrick's and St. John's both. But it was the Cathedral, rather than St. John's, that did most to weaken the foundations of the social prejudice against the Catholic. The Bishop there was Bishop Wood, and Bishop Wood, like my Father a convert, was no Irish emigrant, no Italian missionary, but came from the same old family of Philadelphia Friends [Pg 203] as J. Some people think that Quakerism and Catholicism are more in sympathy with each other than with other creeds because neither recognizes any half way, each going to a logical extreme. Whether Bishop Wood thought so, I am far from sure, but he had himself gone from one extreme to the other when he became a Catholic, and the religious step had its social bearing. With his splendid presence and splendid voice, he must have added dignity to every service at the Cathedral, but he did more than that: in Philadelphia eyes he gave it the sanction of Philadelphia respectability. The Catholic was no longer quite without Philadelphia's social pale.

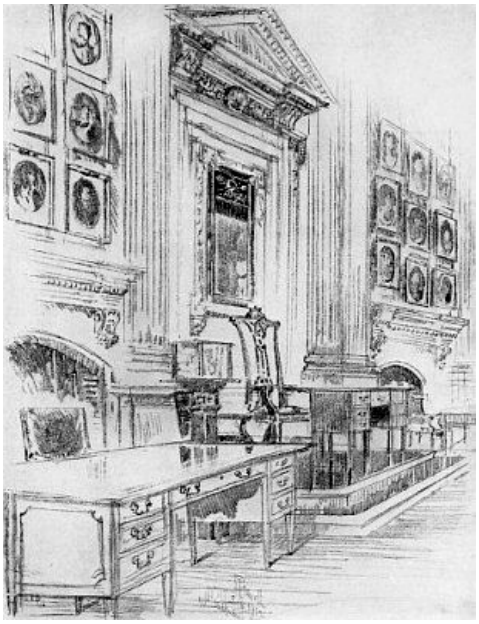
I had no opportunity, because of my long absence, to watch the gradual breakdown, but I saw that the barrier had fallen when I got back to Philadelphia. Never again will Philadelphia children think they are doing an odd thing when they go to Mass, never again need the Philadelphia girl fresh from the Convent fancy herself alone in the yawning gulf of evil that opens at the Convent gate. I should not be surprised if an eligible man from the Dancing Class or Assembly list can to-day be picked up at the door of more than one Catholic church for the Sunday Walk on Walnut Street. St. John's has risen, new and resplendent, if ugly, from its ashes; St. Patrick's has blossomed forth from its architectural insignificance into an imposing Romanesque structure. The Cathedral has been new swept and garnished—not so large perhaps as I once saw it, for I [Pg 204] have been to St. Paul's and St. Peter's and many a Jesuit church in the meanwhile, but more ornate, with altars and decorations that I knew not, and with Mr. Henry Thouron's design on one wall as a promise of further beauty to come. The difference confronted me at every step—and saddened me, though I could not deny that it meant improvement. But the change, as change, displeased me in a Philadelphia that ceases to be my Philadelphia when it ceases to preserve its old standards and prejudices as jealously as its old monuments. For the sake of the character I loved, I could wish Philadelphia as far as ever from hope of salvation by anything save its own invincible ignorance.

CHAPTER IX: THE FIRST AWAKENING [Pg 205]

I

I had been out, I do not remember how long, but long enough to confirm my belief in the Philadelphia way of doing things as the only way, when I found that Philadelphia was involved in an enterprise for which its history might give the reason but could furnish no precedent. To Philadelphians who were older than I, or who had been in Philadelphia while I was getting through the business of education at the Convent, the Centennial Exposition probably did not come as so great a surprise. Having since had experience of how these matters are ordered, I can understand that there must have been some years of leading up to it. But I seem to have heard of it first within no time of its opening, and just as I had got used to the idea that Philadelphia must go on for ever doing things as it always had done them, because to do them otherwise would not be right or proper.

The result was that, at the moment, I saw in the Centennial chiefly a violent upheaval shaking the universe to the foundations, with Philadelphia emerging, changed, transformed, unrecognizable, plunging head-foremost into new-fangled amusements, adding new duties to the Philadelphian's once all-sufficing duty of being a Philadelphian, inventing new attractions to draw to its drowsy streets people from the four quarters of the globe, and, more astounding, giving itself up to these innovations with zest. [Pg 206]



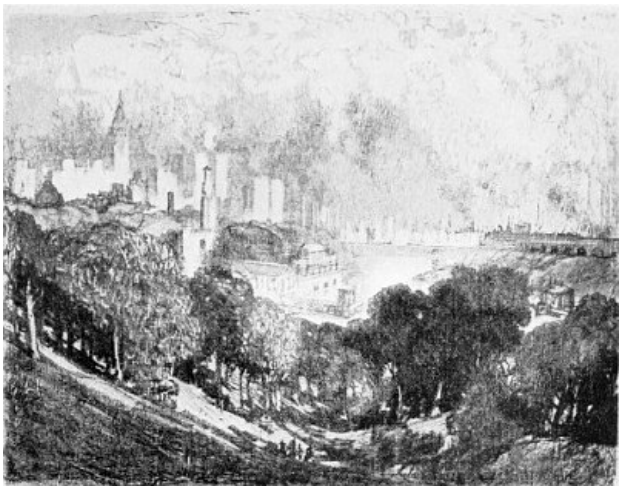
INDEPENDENCE HALL: THE ORIGINAL DESK ON WHICH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS SIGNED AND THE CHAIR USED BY THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, JOHN HANCOCK, IN 1776
(BOTH ON PLATFORM)

I looked on at the preparations,—as at most things, to my infinite boredom,—from outside: a perspective from which they appeared to me little more than a new form of social diversion. For they kept my gayer friends, who were well on the inside, busy going to Centennial balls at the Academy of Music in the Colonial dress which was as essential for admission as a Colonial name or a Colonial family tree, while I stayed at home and, seeing what lovely creatures powder and patches and paniers made of Philadelphia girls with no more pretence to good looks than I, felt a little as I did when the coloured dignitary rang at our front door with the Assembly card that was not for me. And between the balls, the same friends were immersed in Centennial Societies and Centennial Committees and Centennial Meetings and Centennial Subscriptions and Centennial Petitions, Philadelphia women for the first time admitted, and pining for admission, into public affairs; while I was so far apart from it all that I remember but one incident in connection with the Centennial orgy of work, and this as trivial as could be. When we moved into the Third Street house we had found in possession a cat who left us in no doubt of her disapproval of our intrusion, but who tolerated us because of the convenience of the ground floor windows from which to watch for her enemies among the dogs of the neighbourhood, and for the comfort of certain cupboards upstairs during the infancy of her kittens. She kept us at a respectful distance and we never ventured upon any liberties with her. Those of our friends who did, heedless of her growls, were sure to regret it. Our family doctor carried the marks of her teeth on his hand for many a day. It happened that once, when two Centennial canvassers called, she was the first to greet them and was unfavourably impressed by the voluminous furs in which they were wrapped. When I came downstairs she was holding the hall, her eyes flaming, her tail five times its natural size, and I understood the prudence of non-interference. The canvassers had retreated to the vestibule between the two front doors and, as I opened the inner door, another glance at the flaming eyes and indignant tail completed their defeat and they fled without explaining the object of their visit. I must indeed have been removed from the Centennial delirium and turmoil to have retained this absurd encounter as one of my most vivid memories. [Pg 209]

II

Upon the Centennial itself I looked at closer quarters. I was as removed from it officially, but not quite so penniless less and friendless as never to have the chance to visit it. Inexperienced and untravelled as I was, it opened for me vistas hitherto undreamed of and stirred my interest as nothing in Philadelphia had until then. As I recall it, that long summer is, as it was at the time, a bewildering jumble of first impressions and revelations—Philadelphia all chaos and confusion, functions and formalities, spectacles and sensations—buildings Philadelphia could not have conceived of in its sanity covering acres of its beautiful Park, a whole shanty town of huge hotels and cheap restaurants and side-shows sprung up on its outskirts—marvels in the buildings, amazing, foreign, unbelievable marvels, the Arabian Nights rolled into one—interminable drives in horribly crowded street-cars to reach them—lunches of Vienna rolls and Vienna coffee in Vienna cafés, as unlike Jones's on Eleventh Street or Burns's on Fifteenth as I could imagine—dinners in French restaurants that, after Belmont and Strawberry Mansion, struck me as typically Parisian though I do not suppose they were Parisian in the least—the flaring and glaring of [Pg 210]

millions of gas lamps under Philadelphia's tranquil skies—a delightful feeling of triumph that Philadelphia was the first American town to do what London had done, what Paris had done, and to do it so splendidly—burning heat, Philadelphia apparently bent on proving to the unhappy visitor what the native knew too well, that, when it has a mind to, it can be the most intolerably hot place in the world—sweltering, demoralized crowds—unexpected descents upon a household as quiet as ours of friends not seen for years and relations never heard of—brilliant autumn days—an atmosphere of activity, excitement and exultation that made it good to be alive and in the midst of Centennial celebrations without bothering to seek in them a more serious end than a season's amusement.



PHILADELPHIA FROM BELMONT

III

[Pg 213]

But, without bothering, I could not escape a dim perception that Philadelphia had not turned itself topsy-turvy to amuse me and the world. Things were in the air I could not get away from. The very words Centennial and Colonial were too new in my vocabulary not to start me thinking, little given as I was to thinking when I could save myself the trouble. And however lightly I might be inclined to take the whole affair, the rest of Philadelphia was so far from underestimating it that probably the younger generation, used to big International Expositions and having seen the wonders of the Centennial eclipsed in Paris and Chicago and St. Louis and its pleasures rivalled in an ordinary summer playground like Coney Island or Willow Grove, must wonder at the innocence of Philadelphia in making such a fuss over such an everyday affair. But in the Eighteen-Seventies the big International Exposition was not an everyday affair. Europe had held only one or two, America had held none, Philadelphia had to find out the way for itself, with the whole country watching, ready to jeer at the sleepy old town if it went wrong. As I look back, though I realize that the Centennial buildings were not architectural masterpieces—how could I help realising it with Memorial Hall still out there in the Park as reminder?—though I realise that Philadelphia prosperity did not date from the Centennial, that Philadelphians had not lived in a slough of inertia and ignorance until the Centennial pulled them out of it: all the same, I can see how fine an achievement it was, and how successful in jerking Philadelphians from their comfortable rut of indifference to everything going on outside of Philadelphia, or to whether there was an outside for things to go on in.

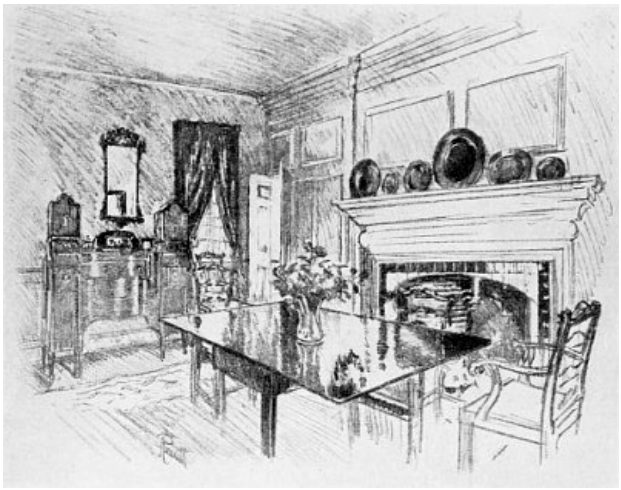
[Pg 214]

I know that I was conscious of the jerk in my little corner of the rut. The Centennial, for one thing, gave me my first object lesson in patriotism. There was no special training for the patriot when I was young—no school drilling, with flags, to national music. An American was an American, not a Russian Jew, a Slovak, or a Pole, and patriotism was supposed to follow as a matter of course. It did, but I fancy with many, as with me, after a passive, unintelligent sort of fashion. I knew about the Declaration of Independence, but had anybody asked for my opinion of it, I doubtless should have dismissed it as a dull page in a dull history book, a difficult passage to get by heart. But I could not go on thinking of it in that way when so remote an occasion as its hundredth birthday was sending Philadelphia off its head in this mad carnival of excitement. In little, as in big, matters I was constantly brought up against the fact that things did not exist simply because they were, but because something had been. An old time-worn story that amused the Philadelphian in its day is of the American from another town, who, after listening to much Philadelphia talk, interrupted to ask: "But what is a Biddle?" I am afraid I should have been puzzled to answer. For a Biddle was a Biddle, just as Spruce Street was Spruce Street, just as Philadelphia was Philadelphia. That had been enough in all conscience for the Philadelphian, but the Centennial would not let it be enough for me any longer.

[Pg 215]

My first hint that Philadelphia and Spruce Street and a Biddle needed a past to justify the esteem in which we held them, came from the spectacle of Mrs. Gillespie towering supreme above Philadelphians with far more familiar names than hers at every Centennial ball and in every Centennial Society, the central figure in the Centennial preparations and in the Centennial itself. I did not know her personally, but that made no difference. There was no blotting out her powerful presence, she pervaded the Centennial atmosphere. She remains in the foreground of my Centennial memories, a tall, gaunt woman, not especially gracious, apparently without a doubt of her right to her conspicuous position, ready to resent the effrontery of the sceptic who

challenged it had there been a sceptic so daring, anything but popular, and yet her rule accepted unquestioningly for no better reason than because she was the descendant of Benjamin Franklin, and I could not help knowing that she was his descendant, for nobody could mention her without dragging in his name. It revolutionized my ideas of school and school books, no less than of Philadelphia. I had learned the story of Benjamin Franklin and the kite, just as I had learned the story of George Washington and the cherry tree, and of General Marion and the sweet potatoes, [Pg 216] and other anecdotes of heroes invented to torment the young. And now here was Franklin turning out to be not merely the hero of an anecdote that bored every right-minded school-girl to death, but a person of such consequence that his descendant in the third or fourth generation had the right to lord it over Philadelphia. There was no getting away from that any more than there was from Mrs. Gillespie herself and, incidentally, it suggested a new reason for Biddles and Cadwalladers and Whartons and Morrises and Norrises and Logans and Philadelphia families with their names on the Assembly list. That they were the resplendent creatures Philadelphia thought them was not so elementary a fact as the shining of the sun in the heavens; they owed it to their ancestors just as Mrs. Gillespie owed her splendour to Franklin; and an ancestor immediately became the first necessity in Philadelphia.



THE DINING ROOM, STENTON

The man who is preoccupied with his ancestors has a terrible faculty of becoming a snob, and Philadelphians for a while concerned themselves with little else. They devoted every hour of leisure to the study of genealogy, they besieged the Historical Society in search of inconsiderate ancestors who had neglected to make conspicuous figures of themselves and so had to be hunted up, they left no stone unturned to prove their Colonial descent. It must have been this period that my Brother, Grant Robins, irritated with our forefathers for their mistake in settling in Virginia half a century before there was a Philadelphia to settle in and then making a half-way halt in [Pg 219] Maryland, hurried down to the Eastern Shore to get together what material he could to keep us in countenance in the town of my Grandfather's adoption. It was soothing to find more than one Robins among the earliest settlers of Virginia and mixed up with Virginia affairs at an agreeably early date. But what wouldn't I have given to see our name in a little square on one of the early maps of the City of Philadelphia as I have since seen J.'s? And the interest in ancestors spread, and no Englishman could ever have been so eager to prove that he came over with the Conqueror as every American was to show that he dated back to William Penn, or the first Virginia Company, or the Dutch, or the Mayflower; no Order of Merit or Legion of Honour could have conferred more glory on an American than a Colonial Governor in the family; no aristocracy was more exclusive than the American founded on the new societies of Colonial Dames and Sons and Daughters of Pennsylvania and of every other State.

It was preposterous, I grant, in a country whose first article of faith is that all men are born equal, but Americans could have stood a more severe attack of snobbishness in those days, the prevailing attitude of Americans at home being not much less irreverent than that of the Innocents Abroad. In Philadelphia it was not so much irreverence as indifference. The habit of Philadelphians to depreciate their town and themselves, inordinate as, actually, was their pride in both, had not been thrown off. Why they ever got into the habit remains to me and to every [Pg 220] Philadelphian a problem. Some think it was because the rest of the country depreciated them; some attribute it to Quaker influence, though how and why they cannot say; and some see in it the result of the Philadelphia exclusiveness that reduces the social life of Philadelphia to one small group in one small section of the town so that it is as small as village life, and has the village love of scandal, the village preoccupation with petty gossip, the little things at the front door blotting out the big things beyond. A more plausible reason is that Philadelphians were so innately sure of themselves—so sure that Philadelphia was *the* town and Philadelphians *the* aristocracy of the world—that they could afford to be indifferent. But whatever the cause, this indifference, this depreciation, was worse than a blunder, it was a loss in a town with a past so well worth looking into and being proud of and taking care of.

A few Philadelphians had interested themselves in their past, otherwise the Historical Society would not have existed, but they were distressingly few. I can honestly say that up to the time of the Centennial it had never entered into my mind that the past in Philadelphia had a value for every Philadelphian and that it was every Philadelphian's duty to help preserve any record that

might survive of it—that the State House, the old churches, the old streets where I took my daily walks were a possession Philadelphia should do its best not to part with—and I was such a mere [Pg 221] re-echo of Philadelphia ideas and prejudices that I know most Philadelphians were as ignorant and as heedless. But almost the first effort of the new Dames and Sons and Daughters was to protect the old architecture, the outward sign and symbol of age and the aristocracy of age, and they made so much noise in doing so that even I heard it, even I became conscious of a research as keen for a past, or a genealogy in the familiar streets and the familiar buildings as in the archives of Historical Societies.

If the Centennial had done no more for Philadelphia than to put Philadelphians to this work, it would have done enough. But it did do more. The pride of family, dismissed by many as pure snobbishness, awoke the sort of patriotism that Philadelphia, with all America, was most in need of if the real American was not to be swept away before the hordes of aliens beginning then to invade his country. In my opinion, the Colonial Dames, for all their follies, are doing far more to keep up the right American spirit than the flaunting of the stars and stripes in the alien's face and the lavishing upon him of the Government's paternal attention. The question is how long they can avoid the pitfall of exaggeration.

IV

If there was one thing in those days I knew less of than the past in Philadelphia, it was the present outside of it. Of my own country my knowledge was limited to an occasional trip to New [Pg 222] York, an occasional visit to Richmond and Annapolis, an occasional summer month in Cape May and Atlantic City. Travelling is not for the poor. Rich Philadelphians travelled more, but from no keen desire to see their native land. The end of the journey was usually a social function in Washington or Baltimore, in New York or Boston, upon which their presence conferred distinction, though they would rather have dispensed with it than let it interfere with the always more important social functions at home. Or else the heat of summer drove them to those seashore and mountain resorts where they could count upon being with other Philadelphians, and the winter cold sent them in Lent to Florida, when it began to be possible to carry all Philadelphia there with them.

DOWN THE AISLE AT CHRIST CHURCH

My knowledge of the rest of the world was more limited. I had been in France, but when I was such a child that I remembered little of it except the nuns in the Convent at Paris where I went to school, and the Garden of the Tuileries I looked across to from the Hotel Meurice. Nor had going abroad as yet been made a habit in Philadelphia. There was nothing against the Philadelphian going who chose to and who had the money. It defied no social law. On the contrary, it was to his social credit, though not indispensable as the Grand Tour was to the Englishman in the Eighteenth Century. I remember when my Grandfather followed the correct tourist route through England, France, and Switzerland, his children considered it an event of sufficient importance to [Pg 225] be commemorated by printing, for family circulation, an elaborately got up volume of the eminently commonplace letters he had written home—a tribute, it is due to him to add, that met with his great astonishment and complete disapproval. I can recall my admiration for those of my friends who made the journey and my regret that I had made it when I was too young to get any glory out of it; also, my delight in the trumpery little alabaster figures from Naples and carved wood from Geneva and filigree jewellery from the Rue de Rivoli they brought me back from their journey: the wholesale distribution of presents on his return being the heavy tax the traveller abroad paid for the distinction of having crossed the Atlantic—a tax, I believe, that has sensibly been done away with since the Philadelphian's discovery of the German Bath, the London season, and the economy of Europe as reasons for going abroad every summer.

I was scarcely more familiar with the foreigner than with his country. Philadelphia had Irish in plenty, as many Germans as beer saloons, or so I gathered from the names over the saloon doors, and enough Italians to sell it fruit and black its boots at street corners. But otherwise, beyond a rare Chinaman with a pigtail and a rarer Englishman on tour, the foreigner was seldom seen in Philadelphia streets or in Philadelphia parlours. In early days Philadelphia had been the first place the distinguished foreigner in the country made for. It was the most important town and, [Pg 226] for a time, the capital. But after Washington claimed the diplomat and New York strode ahead in commerce and size and shipping, Philadelphia was too near each for the traveller to stop on his way between them, unless he was an actor, a lecturer, or somebody who could make money out of Philadelphia.

I feel sorry for the sophisticated young Philadelphian of to-day who cannot know the emotion that was mine when, of a sudden, the Centennial dumped down "abroad" right into Philadelphia, and the foreigner was rampant. The modern youth saunters into a World's Fair as casually as into a Market Street or Sixth Avenue Department Store, but never had the monotony of my life been broken by an experience so extraordinary as when the easy-going street-car carried me out of my world of red brick into the heart of England, and France, and Germany, and Italy, and Spain, and China, and Japan, where I rubbed elbows with yellow Orientals in brilliant silks, and with soldiers in amazing uniforms—I who had seen our sober United States soldiers only on parade—and with people who, if they wore ordinary clothes, spoke all the languages under the sun. It was extraordinary even to meet so many Americans who were not Philadelphians, all talking American with to me a foreign accent, extraordinary to see such familiar things as china, glass, silks, stuffs, furniture, carpets, transformed into the unfamiliar, unlike anything I had ever seen in Chestnut Street windows or on Chestnut Street counters, so extraordinary that the most [Pg 227] insignificant details magnified themselves into miracles, to the mere froth on top of the cup of Vienna coffee, to the fatuous song of a little Frenchman in a side-show, so that to this day, if I could turn a tune, I could still sing the "Ah! Ah! Nicolas!" of its foolish refrain.

V

Travelling, I should have seen all the Centennial had to show and a thousand times more, but slowly and by degrees, losing the sense of the miraculous with each new marvel. The Centennial came as one comprehensive revelation—overwhelming evidence that the Philadelphia way was not the only way. And this I think was a good thing for me, just as for Philadelphia it was a healthy stimulus. But the Centennial did not give me a new belief in exchange for the old; it did nothing to alter my life, nothing to turn my sluggish ambition into active channels. And big as it was, it was not as big as Philadelphia thought. I do believe that Philadelphians who had helped to make it the splendid success it proved, looked upon it as no less epoch-making than the Declaration of Independence which it commemorated. But epoch-making as it unquestionably was, it was not so epoch-making as all that. For some years Philadelphians had a way of saying "before" and "after" the Centennial, much as Southerners used to talk of "before" and "after" the War: with the difference that for Philadelphians all the good dated from "after." But [Pg 228] manufacturing and commerce had been heard of "before." Cramp's shipyard did not wait for its first commission until the Centennial, neither did Baldwin's Locomotive Works, nor the factories in Kensington; Philadelphia was not so dead commercially that it was out of mere compliment important railroads made it the chief centre on their route. All large International Expositions are bound to do good by the increased knowledge that comes with them of what the world is producing and by the incentive this knowledge is to competition, and as the Centennial was the first held in America it probably accomplished more for the country than those that followed. But I do not have to be an authority on manufacture and commerce to see that they flourished before the Centennial; I have learned enough about art since to know that its existence was not first revealed to Philadelphia by the Centennial. The Exhibition had an influence on art which I am far from undervaluing. Its galleries of paintings and prints, drawings and sculptures, were an aid in innumerable ways to artists and students who previously had had no facilities for seeing a representative collection. It threw light on the arts of design for the manufacturer. But we knew a thing or two about beauty down in Philadelphia before 1876, though beauty was a subject to which we had ceased to pay much attention, and from the Centennial we borrowed too many tastes and standards that did not belong to us. It set Philadelphia talking an appalling lot of [Pg 231] rubbish about art, and the new affectation of interest was more deplorable than the old frank indifference.

THE BRIDGE ACROSS MARKET STREET FROM BROAD STREET STATION

I was as ignorant of art as the child unborn, but not more ignorant than the average Philadelphian. The old obligatory visits to the Academy had made but a fleeting impression and I never repeated them when the obligation rested solely with me. I had never met an artist, never been in a studio. The result was that the Art Galleries at the Centennial left me as blank and bewildered as the Hall of Machinery. Of all the paintings, the one I remembered was Luke Fildes's picture of a milkmaid which I could not forget because, in a glaring, plush-framed chromo-lithograph, it reappeared promptly in Philadelphia dining-and bedrooms, the most popular picture of the Centennial—a popularity in which I can discern no signs of grace. Nor can I discern them in the Eastlake craze, in the sacrifice of reps and rosewood to Morris and of Berlin work to crewels, in the outbreak of spinning-wheels and milking-stools and cat's tails and Japanese fans in the old simple, dignified Philadelphia parlour; in the nightmare of wall-papers with dadoes going half-way up the wall and friezes coming halfway down, and every square inch crammed full of pattern; in the pretence and excess of decoration that made the early Victorian ornament, we had all begun to abuse, a delight to the eye in its innocent unpretentiousness. And if to the Centennial we owe the multiplication of our art schools, how many more artists have come out of them, how much more work that counts? [Pg 232]

However, the good done by the Centennial is not to be sought in the solid profits and losses that can be weighed in a practical balance. It went deeper. Philadelphia was the better for being impressed with the reason of its own importance which it had taken on faith, and for being reminded that the world outside of Philadelphia was not a howling wilderness. I, individually, gained by the widening of my horizon and the stirring of my interest. But the Centennial did not teach me how to think about, or use, what I had learned from it. When it was at an end, I returned placidly to my occupation of doing nothing.

CHAPTER X: THE MIRACLE OF WORK [Pg 233]

I

In the story of my life in Philadelphia, and my love for the town which grew with my knowledge of it, my beginning to work was more than an awakening: it was an important crisis. For work first made me know Philadelphia as it is under the surface of calm and the beauty of age, first made me realize how much it offers besides the social adventure.

Personally, the Centennial had left me where it found me. It had amused me vastly, but it had inspired me with no desire to make active use of the information and hints of which it had been so prodigal. My interest had been stimulated, awakened, but I did not know Philadelphia any the better for it, I did not love Philadelphia any the better. I had got no further than I was in my scheme of existence, into which work, or research, or interest, on my part had not yet entered, but I had reached a point where that aimless scheme was an insufferable bore. From the moment I began to work, I began to see everything from the standpoint of work, and it is wonderful what a fresh and invigorating standpoint it is. I began to see that everything was not all of course and matter of fact, that everything was worth thinking about. Work is sometimes said to help people to put things out of their minds, but it helps them more when it puts things into their minds, and this is what it did for me. Through work I discovered Philadelphia and myself together. [Pg 234]

II

It strikes me as one of the little ironies of life that for the first inducement to work, and therefore the first incentive to my knowledge and love of Philadelphia, I should have been indebted to my Uncle, Charles Godfrey Leland, who, in 1880, when the Centennial excitement was subsiding, settled again in Philadelphia after ten years abroad, chiefly in England. Philadelphia welcomed him with its usual serenity, betrayed into no expression of emotion by the home-coming of one of its most distinguished citizens who, in London, had been received with the open arms London, in expansive moments, extends to the lion from America. The contrast, no doubt, was annoying, and my Uncle, of whom patience could not be said to be the predominating virtue, was accordingly annoyed and, on his side, betrayed into anything but a serene expression of his annoyance. Many smaller slights irritated him further until he worked himself up into the belief that he detested Philadelphia, and he was apt to be so outspoken in criticism that he succeeded in convincing me, anyway, that he did. Later, when I read his *Memoirs*, I found in them passages that suggest the charm of Philadelphia as it has not been suggested by any other writer I know of, and that he [Pg 237] could not have written had he not felt for the town an affection strong enough to withstand that town's easy indifference. But during the few years he spent in Philadelphia after his return he was uncommonly successful in hiding his affection, a fact which did not add to his popularity.

STATE HOUSE YARD

From his talk, I might have been expected to borrow nothing save dislike for Philadelphia. But his influence did not begin and end with his talk. There never was a man—except J.—who had such a contempt for idleness and such a talent for work. He could not endure people about him who did not work and, as I was anxious to enjoy as much of his company as I could, for I had found nobody in Philadelphia so entertaining, and as by work I might earn the money to pay for the independence I wanted above all things, I found myself working before I knew it.

I had my doubts when he set me to drawing but, my time being wholly my own and frequently hanging drearily on my hands, my ineffectual attempts to make spirals and curves with a pencil on a piece of paper, attempts that could not by the wildest stretch of imagination be supposed to have either an artistic or a financial value, did not strike me as a disproportionate price for the pleasure and stimulus of his companionship. Besides, he held the comfortable belief that anybody who willed to do it, could do anything—accomplishment, talent, genius reduced by him to a question of will. His will and mine combined, however, could not make a decorative artist of me, [Pg 238] but he was so kind as not to throw me over for ruthlessly shattering his favourite theory. He insisted that I should write if I could not draw.

I had my doubts about writing too. I have confessed that I was not given to thinking and therefore I had nothing in particular to say, nor were words to say it in at my ready disposal, for, there being one or two masters of talk in the immediate home circle, I had cultivated to the utmost my natural gift of silence. Nor could I forget two literary ventures made immediately upon my leaving the Convent, before the blatant conceit of the prize scholar had been knocked out of me—one, an essay on François Villon, my choice of a maiden theme giving the measure of my intelligence, the second a short story re-echoing the last love tale I had read—both MSS., neatly tied with brown ribbon to vouch for a masculine mind above feminine pinks and blues, confidently sent to *Harper's* and as confidently sent back with the Editor's thanks and no delay. But my Uncle would not let me off. I must stick at my task of writing or cease to be his companion, and so relapse into my old Desert of Sahara, thrown back into the colourless life of a Philadelphia girl who did not go out and who had waited to marry longer than her parents thought considerate or correct. Of all my sins, of none was I more guiltily conscious than my failure to oblige my family in this respect, for of none was I more frequently and uncomfortably reminded by my family. I scarcely ever went to see my Grandmother at this period that from her [Pg 239] favourite perch on the landing outside the dining-room, she did not look at me anxiously and reproachfully and ask, "Any news for me, my dear?" and she did not have to tell me there was but one piece of news she cared to hear.

Luckily, writing, my substitute for marriage, was an occupation I was free to take up if I chose, as the work it involved met with no objection from my Father. It was only when work took a girl where the world could not help seeing her at it, that the Philadelphia father objected. To write in the privacy of a third-story front bedroom, or of a back parlour, seemed a ladylike way of wasting hours that might more profitably have been spent in paying calls and going to receptions. If this waste met with financial return, it could be hushed up and the world be none the wiser. The way in which my friends used to greet me after I was fairly launched is characteristic of the Philadelphia attitude in the matter—"always scribbling away, I suppose?" they would say with amiable condescension.

I could not dismiss my scribbling so jauntily. The record of my struggles day by day might help to keep out of the profession of journalism and book-making many a young aspirant as ardent as I was, and with as little to say and as few words to say it in. Experience has taught me to feel, much as Gissing felt, about the "heavy-laden who sit down to the cursed travail of the pen," but nobody could have made me feel that way then, and I am not sure I should care to have missed [Pg 240] my struggles, exhausting and heart-rending as they were. During my apprenticeship when nothing, not so much as a newspaper paragraph, came from my mountain of labour, the Philadelphia surface of calm told gloomily on my nerves. Ready to lay the blame anywhere save on my sluggish brain, and moved by my Uncle's vehement denunciations, I vowed to myself a hundred times that a sleepy place, a dead place, like Philadelphia did not give anybody the chance to do anything. I changed my point of view when at last my "scribbling away" got into print.

III

My first appearance was with a chapter out of a larger work upon which I had been engaged for months. My Uncle, whose ideas were big, had insisted that I must begin straight off with a book, something monumental, a *magnum opus*; no writer was known who had not written a book; and to be known was half the battle. I was in the state of mind when I would have agreed to publish a masterpiece in hieroglyphics had he suggested it, and I arranged with him to set to work upon my book then and there, though I was decidedly puzzled to know with what it was to deal. I think he was too, my literary resources and tendencies not being of the kind that revealed themselves at a glance. But he declared that there was not a subject upon which a book could not be written if one only went about it in the right way, and in a moment of inspiration, seeking the particular [Pg 241] subject suitable to my particular needs, he suddenly, and to me to this day altogether incomprehensibly, hit upon Mischief. There, now, was a subject to make one's reputation on, none could be more original, no author had touched it—what did I think of Mischief?

What did I think? Had I been truthful, I should have said that I thought Mischief was the special attribute of the naughty child who was spanked well for it if he got his deserts. But I was not truthful. I said it was the subject of subjects, as I inclined to believe it was before I was done with it, by which time I had persuaded myself to see in it the one force that made the world go round—the incentive to evolution, the root of the philosophies of the ages, the clue to the mystery of life.

My days were devoted to the study of Mischief and, for the purpose, more carefully divided up and regulated than they ever had been at the Convent. Hours were set aside for research—I see myself and my sympathetic Uncle overhauling dusty dictionaries and encyclopædias at the long table in the balcony of the dusty Mercantile Library where nobody dreamed of disturbing us; I see him at my side during shorter visits to the Philadelphia Library where we were forever running up against people we knew who did disturb us most unconscionably; I see him tramping with me down South Broad Street to the Ridgway Library, that fine mausoleum of the great collections of James Logan and Dr. Rush, where our coming awoke the attendants and exposed [Pg 242] their awkwardness in waiting upon unexpected readers, and brought Mr. Lloyd Smith out of his private room, excited and delighted actually to see somebody in the huge and well-appointed building besides himself and his staff. Hours were reserved for reading at home, for it turned out that I could not possibly arrive at the definition of Mischief without a stupendous amount of reading in a stupendous variety of books of any and all kinds from Mother Goose to the Vedas and the Koran, from Darwin to Eliphas Levi. Hours, and they were the longest, were consecrated to my writing-table, putting the results of research and reading into words, defining Mischief in its all-embracing, universe-covering aspect, hewing the phrases from my unwilling brain as the blocks of marble are hewn out of the quarry. As I write, my old MSS. rises before me like a ghost, a disorderly ghost, erased, rewritten, pieces added in, pieces cut out, every scratched and blotted line bearing testimony to the toil that produced it. I can see now that I would have done better to begin with a more obvious theme, coming more within my limited knowledge and vocabulary. My task was too laborious for the fine frenzy, or the inspired flights, reputed to be the reward of the literary life. It was all downright hard labour, and so coloured my whole idea of the business of writing, that I have never yet managed to sit down to my day's work without the feeling which I imagine must be the navvy's as he starts out for his day's digging in the streets. [Pg 243]

In the course of time order grew out of the chaos. A chapter of my monumental work on Mischief was finished. It was made ready in a neat copy with hardly an erasure and, having an air of completeness in itself, was sent as a separate article to *Lippincott's Magazine*, for I decided magnanimously that, as I was a Philadelphian, Philadelphia should have the first chance. I had no doubts of it as a prophetic utterance, as a world-convulsing message, but the Editor of *Lippincott's* had. He refused it.

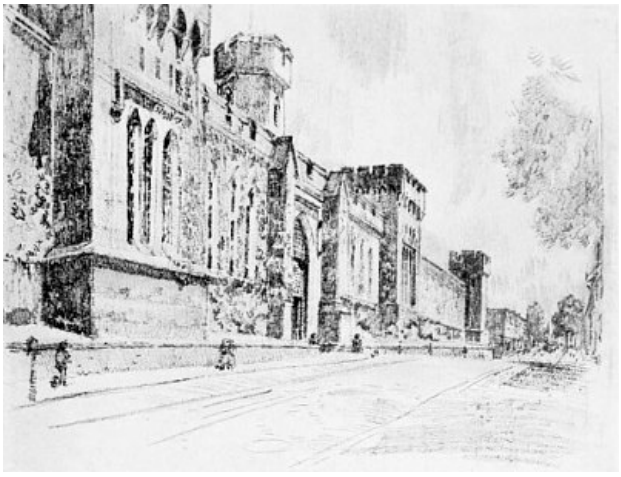
How it hurt, that prompt refusal! All my literary hopes came toppling over and I saw myself condemned to the old idleness and dependence. But our spirits when we are young go up as quickly as they go down. I recalled stories I had heard of great men hawking about their MSS. from publisher to publisher. Carlyle, I said to myself, had suffered and almost every writer of note—it was a sign of genius to be refused. Therefore,—the logic of it was clear and convincing—the refusal proved me a genius! A more substantial reassurance was the publication of the same article, done over and patched up and with the fine title of *Mischief in the Middle Ages*, in the *Atlantic Monthly* a very few months later. And when, on top of this, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the Editor of the *Atlantic*, wrote and told me he would be pleased to have further articles from me; when, in answer to a letter my Uncle had insisted on my writing. Oliver Wendell Holmes promised me his interest in Mischief as I proposed to define it. I saw the world at my feet where, to my sorrow, I have never seen it since that first fine moment of elation. [Pg 244]

The spectacle of myself in print set Philadelphia dancing before my eyes and turned the world a bit unsteady. But it did not relieve the labour of writing. Within the next year or two seven or eight chapters did get done and were published as articles in the *Atlantic*, but the world is still the poorer for the *magnum opus* that was to bring me fame. The fact was that in the making, it brought me mighty little money. My first cheque only whetted my appetite, but, in fairness to myself I must explain, through no more sordid motive than my desire to become my own bread-winner. The newspapers offered a wider scope at less expense of time and labour, and my Uncle not only relaxed so far as to allow me intervals from the bigger undertaking for simpler tasks, but gave me the benefit of his experience as a newspaper man. In the old days, before he had gone to live in London, he had had the run of almost every newspaper office in town, and he opened their doors for me. Thanks to his introduction, Philadelphia, at this stage of my progress, conspired to put work into my hands, and writing for Philadelphia papers taught me in a winter more about Philadelphia than I had learned in all the years I had already spent there. I marvelled that I could have thought it dead when it was so alive. I seemed to feel it quiver under my feet at every step, shaking me into speed, and filling me with pity for the sedate pace at which my Father and the Philadelphians of his generation walked through its pulsating streets. [Pg 245]

IV

My first newspaper commissions came from the *Press* and adventure accompanied them—the adventure of business letters in my morning's mail, of proofs, of visits to the office—adventures that far too soon became the commonplaces of my busy days as journalist. But my outlook upon life in Philadelphia had, up till then, been bounded by the brick walls of a Spruce Street house, and the editorial office, that holds no surprise for me now, held nothing save surprise when I was first summoned to it. I was bewildered by the disorder, stunned by the noise—boys coming and going, letters and telegrams pouring in, piles of proofs mounting up on the desk, baskets overflowing with MSS., floors strewn with papers, machinery throbbing close by, a heavy smell of tobacco over everything, and in the midst of the confusion—lounging, working, answering questions, tearing open letters and telegrams, correcting proof, and yet managing to talk with me,—Moses P. Handy, the editor, a red man in my memory of him, red hair, red beard, red cheeks, whose cordiality I could not flatter myself was due to his eagerness for my contributions, so engrossed was he in talking of the Eastern Shore of Maryland from which he came and in which my family had made their prolonged stay on the way from Virginia to Philadelphia. The Eastern Shore may be a good place to come away from, but the native never forgets that he did come from it and he never fails to hail his fellow exile as brother. [Pg 246]

My next commission I owed to the *Evening Telegraph*, for which I made a remarkable journey to Atlantic City: a voyage of discovery, though the report of it did not paralyse the Philadelphia public. I was deeply impressed by my exercise of my faculty of observation thus tested on familiar ground, but I am afraid it left the Editor indifferent, and, as in his case the Eastern Shore was not a friendly link between us, he expressed no desire for a second article or for a second visit. I have regretted it since, the Editor being Clarke Davis, whom not to know was, I believe, not to have arrived so far in Philadelphia journalism as I liked to think I had.



THE PENITENTIARY

A more remarkable journey followed to New York for I wish I could remember what paper; or

perhaps it is just as well I cannot, the adventure adding to the reputation neither of the paper nor of myself. The object was to attend the press view of an important exhibition of paintings, and at that stage of my education I doubt if I could have told a Rembrandt from a Rubens, much less a Kenyon Cox from a Church, a Chase from a Blum, which was more immediately to the point. I had my punishment on the spot, for my hours in the Gallery may be counted the most humiliating of my life. My ignorance would not let me lose sight of it for one little second. J. had gone with me—how I came to know him I mean to tell further on—but he had no press ticket, a stern man at the door refused to admit him without one, and I was alone in my incompetency to wrestle with it as I [Pg 249] could. Had he not returned with me to Philadelphia in the afternoon and devoted the interval in the train to throwing light upon my obscure and agonised notes, my copy could not have been delivered that evening as agreed. I know now that the paper would have come out all the same the next morning, but in my misery it did not seem possible that it could, and besides I was from the first, as through my many years of journalism, scrupulous to be on time with my copy and to keep to my agreements. That was my first experience in art criticism. I have tried to atone for it by years of conscientious work, but few Philadelphia papers can say as much for themselves. In those I see from time to time, the art criticism usually reads as if Philadelphia editors had lost nothing of their old amiability in handing it over to young ladies to get their journalistic training on.

I was given also my chance in two newspaper ventures Philadelphia made in the early Eighteen-Eighties. One was the *American*, a weekly on the lines of the New York *Nation*. Mr. Howard Jenkins, the editor, sent me books for review, and not the first baby, not the first baby's first tooth, could be as extraordinary a phenomenon as the first book sent for the purpose from the editorial office. Mine, as I have never forgotten, as I never could forget, was Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood*, and when Mr. Jenkins wrote me that "Mr. Pyle's folks" were pleased with what I had written, I thought I had got to the very top of the tree of journalism. That I had got no further [Pg 250] than a step from the bottom, and upon that had none too secure a foothold, I was reminded when the second book for review lay open before me.

The other venture was *Our Continent*, also a weekly, but illustrated, edited by Judge Tourgee. Of my contributions, I remember chiefly an article on Shop Windows, which suggests that I was busy with what I might call a more pretentious kind of reporting. My subjects and my manner of treating them may have been what they were,—of no special value to anybody but myself. But to myself I cannot exaggerate their value. I was learning from them all the time.

ON THE READING AT SIXTEENTH STREET

It was an education just to learn what a newspaper was. Heretofore I had accepted it as a thing that came of itself, arriving in the morning with the milk and the rolls for breakfast. I knew as little of its origin as the town boy knew of where the milk comes from in the *Punch* story that I do not doubt was old when *Punch* was young. Milk he had always seen poured from a can, our newspaper we had always had from the nearest news-agent. It was very simple. A newspaper appeared on the breakfast-table of a well-regulated Philadelphia house just as the water ran when the tap was turned on in the bath-room, or the gas burned when lit by a match. But after one article, after one visit to a newspaper office, after one journey to Atlantic City or New York, the newspaper did not seem so simple. I began to understand that it would not have got as far as [Pg 253] Spruce Street had it not been for an army of people writing, printing, correcting proof, tearing from one end of the town—of the world—to the other; without colossal machinery throbbing night and day, without an immeasurable consumption of tobacco. I began to understand the organization required to bring the army of people and the colossal machines into such perfect harmony that the daily miracle of the newspaper on the breakfast-table might be worked—to understand too that the miracle-working organization had not been created in a day, that behind the daily paper was not merely the toiling of its staff and its machines but a long history of striving, experiment, development.

I cannot say I went profoundly into the history, I was too engrossed in contributing my delightful share to the newspaper as it was, but to go superficially sufficed to show me in Philadelphia a spirit of enterprise altogether new to me. I had discovered only shortly before Philadelphia as the scene of the first Colonial Congress, and the Declaration of Independence, and the first big International Exposition in America, and now I added to these other discoveries the fact that

Philadelphia had been the first American town to publish a daily paper, the last discovery bringing me face to face with Benjamin Franklin who, it appeared, besides flying that tiresome kite and being the ancestor of Mrs. Gillespie, was the first printer and publisher of the paper that set an example for all America. Tranquil the Philadelphian was by repute, but he rolled up his [Pg 254] sleeves and pitched in when the moment came. Philadelphia's famous calm was but skin deep over its seething mass of workers, its energy, its toiling, its triumph. When I reflected on what was going on at night in every newspaper office in town, it seemed to me as unbelievable that, on the verge of this volcano of work, Philadelphians could keep on dancing at parties, at the Dancing Class, at the Assembly, as that men and women should have danced at Brussels on the eve of Waterloo. And newspaper-making was one only of Philadelphia's innumerable industries. That thought gave me the scale of the labour that goes to keep the machinery of life running.

V

Of some of the other industries I got to know a little. My Uncle who, as I have said, was a man of ideas and who had his fair proportion of Philadelphia energy, included among his many interests the subject of education. He deplored existing systems and methods. My belief is that the systems and methods might be of the best and education would still be a mistake, vulgarizing the multitude to whom it does not belong and encouraging in them a prejudice against honest work. My Uncle did not think as I do,—that I do not think now as he did frightens me as a disloyalty to his memory. But he could not overlook the distaste for manual work that had grown out of too much attention to books and as he never let his theories exhaust themselves in words, he lost no [Pg 257] time in persuading the Board of Education to put this particular one to a practical test. Doubts of their methods had assailed the Board, but no way out of the difficulty had been suggested until he came and said, "Set your children, your boys and girls, who are forgetting how to use their hands, to work at the Minor Arts." It struck them as a suggestion that warranted the experiment anyway, especially as the cost would be comparatively small. My Uncle had been back in Philadelphia not much more than a year when classes were put in his charge and a schoolroom—the school-house at Broad and Locust—at his disposal, and he inaugurated the study of the Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia with the Industrial Art School, as he had in London with the Home Arts. His sole payment was the pleasure of the experiment, a pleasure which few theorists succeed in securing. I, however, was paid by the City in solid dollars and cents for the fine amateurish inefficiency with which I helped him to manage the classes, recommended by him, whose consideration was as practical for my pockets which the *Atlantic*, backed by newspapers, had not filled to repletion.

LOCUST STREET EAST FROM BROAD STREET

This is not the place for the history of his experiment. It is known. The school has passed from the experimental stage into a permanent institution, though in the passing my Uncle has been virtually forgotten,—often the fate of the man who sets a ball of reform rolling. Of all this I have [Pg 258] elsewhere made the record. I am at present concerned with the influence the school had upon me and the unexpected extent to which it widened my knowledge of Philadelphia and Philadelphia activities.

How Philadelphia was educated was not a question that had kept me awake at nights. The Philadelphia girl of my acquaintance, if a day scholar, went naturally to Miss Irwin's or to Miss Annabel's in town; if a boarder perhaps to Miss Chapman's at Holmesburg or Mrs. Comegys at Chestnut Hill; unless her parents were converts or Catholics by birth when she went instead to the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Torresdale or in Walnut Street. The Philadelphia boy began with the Episcopal Academy and finished with the University of Pennsylvania. Friends went to the Friends' School in Germantown, and to Swarthmore and Haverford. What others did, did not matter. I had heard there were public or free schools where children could go for nothing, but

nobody to my knowledge went to them. With what insolence we each of us, in our own little fraction of the world, think everybody outside of it nobody! But up in the top story rooms of the school-house at Broad and Locust, where my work took me two afternoons in the week, I found myself the centre of a vast network of schools! High Schools, Grammar Schools, Primary Schools, Scholarships, more divisions and subdivisions than I could count; with teachers—for there was a class for teachers—and pupils coming from every ward and suburb, every street and alley of the town; a School Board keeping a watchful eye upon schools and teachers, not leaving me out; and [Pg 259] all about me a vast population without one idea or interest except the education of Philadelphia. And this implied, like the newspaper, a perfect organization of its own to keep the whole thing going—an organization that never could have been born in a day. The education of Philadelphia had absorbed a vast population since Philadelphia was: the first Philadelphia children hardly escaping from their cave dwellings before they were hurried into school to have their poor little minds trained and disciplined. Really, in my first days of work, life was a succession of startling discoveries about Philadelphia.

I could not get paid for my afternoons at the school, which I ought to have paid for considering the education they were to me, without making another discovery. The pay came monthly from the City in the form of a warrant, or so I believe it is called. As I have explained that I had never been possessed of money of my own, some allowance will be made for my stupidity in thinking it necessary to cash the warrant in person. It never occurred to me to open a bank account or to ask my Father to exchange the warrant for money. I went myself to the office in the big, new, unfinished City Hall—how well I remember, when I was kept waiting which was always, my conscientiousness in jotting down elaborate notes of windows and doors and upholstery and decoration: Zola in France and Howells at home having made Realism the literary fashion, and [Pg 260] Realism, I gathered, being achieved only by way of jotting down endless notes in every situation in which I found myself; especially as J. had brought back from Italy exemplary and inspiring tales of Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) and Mary Robinson (Mme. Duclaux), with whom he had worked and travelled, filling blank books with memoranda collected from the windows of every train they took and every hotel in which they stayed.

I am glad I was stupid, such a good thing for me was this going in person, such a suggestive lesson in City Government which I learned was as little of an automatic arrangement as education and the newspaper, and not necessarily something that all decent people should be ashamed of being mixed up with, the way my Father and the old-fashioned Philadelphian of his type looked upon it and every other variety of Government. It was just another huge, busy, striving, toiling organization, so huge as to fit with difficulty into the enormous ugly new buildings, then recently set down for it in Penn Square with complete indifference to Penn's plan for his green country town, or to get its work done in the maze of courts and passages and offices by the hordes of big and little officials no less preoccupied in City Government than journalists in their newspaper, or teachers in their school, or—outrageous as it may sound—society in the Assembly and Dancing Class and the things which I had been brought up to believe the beginning and end of existence on this earth.

BROAD STREET, LOOKING SOUTH FROM ABOVE ARCH STREET

My new knowledge of Philadelphia was widened in various other directions as time went on. My [Pg 263] Uncle's experiment, when it took practical shape, attracted attention and he was asked to lecture on it in places like the Franklin Institute—there was no keeping away very long from Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia once I got to know anything about Philadelphia—and to visit institutions like Moyamensing Prison or Kirkbride's Insane Asylum that he might consider the advisability of introducing his scheme of manual work for the benefit of the insane and the criminal. I usually accompanied him on these occasions, and before he had got through his rounds I had seen a number of different phases of Philadelphia activity and enterprise and power of organization. I

had been given some idea of the armies of doctors and nurses and scientists who had made Kirkbride's a model throughout the land, while Dr. Albert Smith had helped me to an additional insight into the hospitals that set as excellent an example. I had been given an idea of the armies of judges and juries and police and governors and warders and visiting inspectors,—of whom my Father was one, with a special tenderness for murderers whom he used to take his family to visit —at Moyamensing. And from the combination of all my new experiences I had gained further knowledge of the energies at work beyond the limits of "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine" to make Philadelphia what it was. [Pg 264]

VI

I ought to have needed no guide to the knowledge and appreciation of these things, it may be said. I admit it. But the happy mortals who are born observant do not picture to themselves the tortures gone through by those who must have observation thrust upon them before they begin to use their eyes. I had not been born to observe, I had not been trained to observe, and to become observant I had to go through the sort of practical course Mr. Squeers set to his boys. His method, denounce it as you will, has its merits. The students of Dotheboys Hall could never have forgotten what a window is or what it means to clean it. I had grown up to accept life as a pageant for me to look on at, with no part to play in it. After my initiation into work, I could never forget, in the quietest, emptiest sections of the town, not even in placid little backwaters like Clinton Street and De Lancey Place, the machinery forever crashing and grinding and roaring to produce the pageant, to weave for Philadelphia the beautiful serenity it wore like a garment. I could never forget that, insignificant as my share in the machinery might be, all the same I was contributing something to make it go. I could never be sure that everybody I met, however calm in appearance, might not be as mixed up in the great machine of work as I was beginning to be.

CLINTON STREET, WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL AT ITS END

I had to work to learn that Philadelphia had worked, and still worked, and worked so well as to be the first to have given America much that is best and most vital in the country—the first to show [Pg 267] the right way with its schools and hospitals and libraries and newspapers and galleries and museums, the leader in the fight for liberty of conscience, the scene of the first Colonial Congress and the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Centennial Exposition to commemorate it, a pioneer in science and industry and manufacture—a town upon which all the others in the land could not do better than model themselves—while all the time it maintained its fine air of calm that perplexes the stranger and misleads the native. But I had found it out, found out its greatness, before age had dimmed my perceptions and dulled my power of appreciation; and to find Philadelphia out is to love it.

CHAPTER XI: THE ROMANCE OF WORK [Pg 268]

I

I was still in the stage of wonder and joy at seeing myself in print, when work and Philadelphia joined in the most unlooked for manner to help me tell my Grandmother that "something" she was so anxiously waiting to hear. An article on Philadelphia which an intelligent Editor asked me to write was my introduction to J. The town that we both love first brought us together, as it now brings us back to it together after the many years that have passed since it laid the foundation of

our long partnership.

**THE CHERRY STREET STAIRS
NEAR THE RIVER**

I would say nothing about the article at this late date had it not added so materially to my life and to my knowledge of Philadelphia. I am not proud of it as a piece of literary work. But it seems, as I recall the days of my apprenticeship, to mark the turning of the ways, to point to the new road I was destined to take. I got it out the other day, the first time in over a quarter of a century, proposing to reprint it, thinking the contrast between my impressions of Philadelphia thirty years ago and my impressions of Philadelphia to-day might be amusing. In memory, it had remained a brilliant performance, one any editor would be pleased to jump at, and I was astonished to find it youthful and crude, inarticulate, inadequate not only to the subject itself but to my appreciation [Pg 271] of the subject which at the time was unbounded. I do not know whether to be more amazed at my failure in it to say what I wanted to say, or at the Editor's amiability in publishing it. The article may not have lost all its eloquence for me, since between the halting lines I can read the story I did not know how to tell, but for others it would prove a dull affair and it is best left where it is, forgotten in the old files of a popular magazine.

The story I read is one of a series of discoveries with a romance in each. The way the article came about was that J. had made etchings of Philadelphia, and the Editor, who had wisely arranged to use them, thought they could not be published without accompanying text. When he asked me, as a young Philadelphian just beginning to write, to supply this text, he advised me to consult with J., whom I did not know and whose studio address he gave me.

I was thrilled by the prospect, never having been in a studio nor met an artist, and when it turned out not half so simple as it looked on paper, when the first catching my artist was attended with endless delays and difficulties, it did not lessen the thrill or take away from the sense of adventure.

J.'s studio, which he shared with Mr. Harry Poore, was at the top of what was then the Presbyterian Building on Chestnut Street above Thirteenth, quite new and of tremendous height at a time when the sky-scraper had not been invented nor the elevator become a necessity of [Pg 272] Philadelphia life. Day after day, varying the hour with each attempt, now in the morning, now at noon, now toward evening, I toiled up those long flights of stairs, marvelling at the strange, unaccountable disclosures through half-opened studio doors, for it was a building of studios; glad of the support of my Uncle who was seeing me through this, as he saw me through all my earliest literary enterprises; arriving at the top, breathless and panting, only to be informed by a notice, written on paper and pinned on the tight-locked door, that J. was out and would be back in half an hour. My Uncle and I were inclined to interpret this literally, once or twice waiting trustingly on the dark landing some little while beyond the appointed time. On one occasion I believe the door was opened, when we knocked, by Mr. Poore who was not sure of the length of a half hour as J. reckoned it, but had an idea it might vary according to circumstances, especially now that J. was out of town. I went away not annoyed as I should be to-day, but more stirred than ever by the novelty of the adventure.

THE MORRIS HOUSE ON EIGHTH STREET

At last I tied J. down by an appointment, as I should have done at the start, and he, having returned to town, kept it to the minute. I think from first to last of this astonishing business I had no greater shock of astonishment than when I followed him into his studio. We were in the Eighteen-Eighties then, when American magazines and newspapers were making sensational copy out of the princely splendour of the London studios, above all of Tadema's, Leighton's, [Pg 275] Millais': palatial interiors, hung with priceless tapestries, carpeted with rare Oriental rugs, shining with old brass and pottery and armour, opening upon Moorish courts, reached by golden stairs, fragrant with flowers, filled with soft couches and luxurious cushions—flamboyant, exotic interiors that would not have disgraced Ouida's godlike young Guardsmen but that scarcely seemed to belong to men who made their living by the work of their hands. Indeed, it was their splendour that misled so many incompetent young men and women of the later Victorian age into the belief that art was the easiest and most luxurious short cut to wealth. But there was nothing splendid or princely about J.'s studio. It was frankly a workshop, big and empty, a few unframed drawings and life studies stuck up on the bare walls, the floors carpetless, for furniture an easel or two and a few odd rickety chairs—a room nobody would have dreamed of going into except for work. But then, my first impression of J. was of a man who did not want to do anything except work.

My experience had been that people—if I leave out my Uncle—worked, not because they wanted to but because they had to and that, sceptical as they might be on every other Scriptural point, they were not to be shaken out of their belief in work as a curse inherited from Adam. J., evidently, would have found the curse in not being allowed to work. And as new to me was the enthusiasm with which, while he showed me his prints and drawings, he began to talk about [Pg 276] Philadelphia and its beauty. It was unusual for Philadelphians to talk about their town at all; if they did, it was more unusual for them to talk with enthusiasm; and the interest in it forced upon them by the Centennial had been for every quality rather than its beauty. Even my Uncle—though later, in his *Memoirs*, he wrote charmingly of the charm of Philadelphia—at that time affected to admire nothing in it except the unsightly arches of the Pennsylvania Railroad, bridging the streets between the Schuylkill and the Station, and if he made the exception in their favour, it was because they reminded him of London. Thanks to the Centennial and the stimulus of hard work, I was not as ignorant of Philadelphia as I had been, but I was not rid of the old popular fallacy that the American in search of beauty must cross the Atlantic and go to Europe. And here was J., in five minutes telling me more about Philadelphia than I had learned in a lifetime, revealing to me in his drawings the beauty of streets and houses I had not had the wit to find out for myself, firing me with sudden enthusiasm in my turn, convincing me that nothing in the world counted but Philadelphia, opening my eyes to its unsuspected resources, so that after this I could walk nowhere without visions of romance where all before had been everyday commonplace, leaving me eager and impatient to start on my next journey of discovery which was to be in his company. [Pg 277]

II

To illustrate our article—for *ours* it had become—J. passed over the obvious picturesqueness of Philadelphia—the venerable Pennsylvania Hospital, the beautiful State House, Christ Church, the Old Swedes, St. Peter's—buildings for which Philadelphia, after years of indifference, had at last been exalted by the Centennial into historic monuments, the show places of the town, labelled and catalogued—buildings of which J. had already made records, having begun his work by drawing them, his plate of the State House among the first he ever etched. He now went in preference to the obscure by-ways, to the unpretending survivals of the past, so merged, so swallowed up in the present, that it needed keen eyes to detect them: old buildings stamped with age, but too humble in origin for the Centennial to have resurrected; busy docks, grimy river

banks, crazy old rookeries abandoned to the business and poverty that claimed them: to the strange, neglected, never-visited corners of a great town where beauty springs from the rich soil of labour and chance, neglect and decay.

How little I had known of Philadelphia up till then! One of the very first places to which he took me was the old Second Street Market that, when I lived within a stone's throw of it, I had never set my eyes on—the old market that, south of Pine, forces Second Street to widen and make space for it and that turns the gable of the little old Court House directly north, breaking the long [Pg 278] vista of the street as St. Clement's and St. Mary's in London break the vista of the Strand—the old market that I believe the city proposes to pull down, very likely will have pulled down before these lines are in print, though there is not a Philadelphian who would not go into ecstasies over as shabby and down-at-the-heel Eighteenth Century building if stumbled upon in an English country town. And as close to his old family home and mine J. led me into inn yards that might have come straight from the Borough on the Surrey side of the Thames, and in and out of dark mysterious courts which he declared as "good" as the exploited French and Italian courts every etcher has at one time or another made a plate of—curious nooks and by-ways I had never stopped to look at during my Third Street days and would have seen nothing in if I had.

And I remember going with him along Front Street, where I should have thought myself contaminated at a time when it might have varied the dull round of my daily walks, so unlike was it to the spick and span streets I knew,—glimpses at every crossing of the Delaware, Philadelphia's river of commerce that Philadelphians never went near unless to take the boat for Torresdale or, in summers of economy, the steamer for Liverpool; for several blocks, groups of seafaring men mending sails on the side-walk, Mariners' Boarding-Houses, a Mariners' Church, and Philadelphia here the seaport town it is and always has been; and then, successive odours of the barnyard, fish, spice, coffee, Philadelphia smelling as strong of the romance of trade as any [Pg 281] Eastern bazaar.

THE OLD COACHING-INN YARD

And I remember J. and I crossing the forbidden line into "up town" to find beauty, interest, picturesqueness in "Market, Arch, Race and Vine"—old houses everywhere, the old Meeting-House, Betsy Ross' house, Provost Smith's, the Christ Church Burial Ground at Fifth and Arch where Franklin is buried, narrow rambling alleys, red and black brick, and there, up on a house at the corner of Front, where it is to this day, a sign going back to the years when Race was still Sassafras Street, and so part of the original scheme of Philadelphia, to which, with Philadelphia docility, I had all my life believed South of Market alone could claim the right.

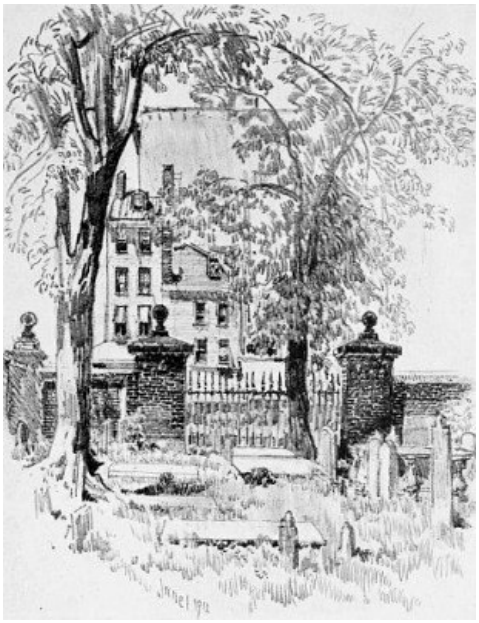
And I remember our wandering to the Schuylkill, not by the neat and well-kept roads and paths of the Park, but where tumbled-down houses faced it near Callowhill Street Bridge and works of one kind or another rose from its banks near Gray's Ferry, and Philadelphia was a town of industry, of machines, of railroads connecting it with all parts of the world,—for already to J. "the Wonder of Work" had made its irresistible appeal. And I remember our wandering farther, north and south, east and west—interest, beauty, picturesqueness never failing us—in the end Philadelphia transformed into a vast Wonderland, where in one little section people might spend their lives dancing, paying calls at noon, eating chicken salad and croquettes from Augustine's, but where in every other they were striving, struggling, toiling, to carry on Penn's traditions and [Pg 282] to give to his town the greatness, power and beauty he planned for it.

In these walks I had followed J. into streets and quarters of the town I had not known. But I would be leaving out half the story if I did not say how much he showed me in the streets and quarters I did know. It is with a town, I suppose, as with life out of which, philosophers say, we get just as much, or as little, as we bring to it. I had brought no curiosity, no interest, no sympathy, to Philadelphia, and Philadelphia therefore had given me nothing save a monotony of red brick and green shade. But now I came keen with curiosity, full of interest, aflame with

sympathy, and Philadelphia overwhelmed me with its gifts. Oh, the difference when, having eyes, one sees! I was as surprised to learn that I had been living in the midst of beauty all my life as M. Jourdain was to find he had been talking prose.

Down in lower Spruce and all the neighbouring streets, where I had walked in loneliness longing for something to happen, something happened at every step—beautiful Colonial houses, stately doorways, decorative ironwork, dormer windows, great gables facing each other at street corners, harmonious proportions—not merely a bit here and a bit there, but the old Colonial town almost intact, preserved by Philadelphia through many generations only to be abandoned now to the Russian Jew and the squalor and the dirt that the Russian Jew takes with him wherever he [Pg 283] goes. In not another American town had the old streets then changed so little since Colonial days, in not another were they so well worth keeping unchanged. I had not to dive into musty archives to unearth the self-evident fact that the early Friends, when they left England, packed up with their liberty of conscience the love of beauty in architecture and, what was more practical, the money to pay for it; that, in a fine period of English architecture, they got good English architects,—Wren said to have been of the number—to design not merely their public buildings, but their private houses; that, their Founder setting the example, they carried over in their personal baggage panelling, carvings, ironwork, red and black brick, furniture, and the various details they were not likely to procure in Philadelphia until Philadelphians had moved from their caves and the primeval forest had been cut down; that when Philadelphia could contribute its share of the work, they modified the design to suit climate, circumstances, and material, and bequeathed to us a Philadelphia with so much local character that it never could be mistaken for an English town.

This used to strike the intelligent foreigner as long as Philadelphia was content to have a character of its own and did not bother to be in architectural or any other movements. "Not a distressingly new-looking city, for the Queen Anne style in vogue when its prosperity began is in [Pg 284] the main adhered to with Quaker-like precision; good red brick; numerous rather narrow windows with white outside shutters, a block cornice along the top of the façades and the added American feature of marble steps and entry,"—this, in a letter to William Michael Rossetti, was Mrs. Gilchrist's description of Philadelphia in the late Eighteen-Seventies, and it is an appreciative description though most authorities would probably describe Philadelphia as Georgian rather than Queen Anne. Philadelphia did more to let the old character go to rack and ruin during the years I was away from it than during the two centuries before, and is to-day repenting in miles upon miles of sham Colonial. But repentance cannot wipe away the traces of sin—cannot bring back the old Philadelphia I knew.



FRANKLIN'S GRAVE

I do not want to attribute too much to my new and only partially developed power of observing. Had the measuring worm not retreated before the sparrow, I might perhaps have been less prepared during my walks with J. to admit the beauty of the trees lining every street, as well as of the houses they shaded. But what is the use of troubling about the might-have-been? The important thing is that, with him I did for the first time see how beautiful are our green, well-shaded streets. With him too I first saw how beautiful is their symmetry as they run in their long straight lines and cross each other at right angles. It was a symmetry I had confused with monotony, with which most Philadelphians, foolishly misled, still confuse it. They would rather, for the sake of variety, that Penn had left the building and growth of Philadelphia to chance as [Pg 287] the founders of other American towns did—they would rather boast with New York or Boston of the disorderly picturesqueness of streets that follow old cow tracks made before the town was. But Penn understood the value of order in architecture as in conduct. It is true that Ruskin, the accepted prophet of my young days, did not include order among his Seven Lamps, but there was a good deal Ruskin did not know about architecture, and a town like Paris in its respect for arrangement—for order—for a thought-out plan—will teach more at a glance than all his rhapsodies. Philadelphia has not the noble perspectives of the French capital nor the splendid

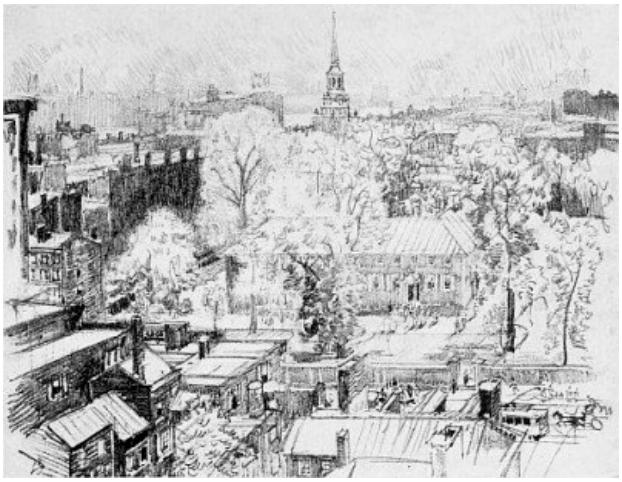
buildings to complete them, but its despised regularity gives it the repose, the serenity, which is an essential of great art, whether the art of the painter or the engraver, the sculptor or the architect. And it gives, too, a suggestiveness, a mystery we are more apt to seek in architectural disorder and caprice. I know nobody who has pointed out this beauty in Penn's design except Mrs. Gilchrist in the description from which I have already borrowed, and she merely hints at the truth, not grasping it. Philadelphia to her was more picturesque and more foreign-looking than she expected, and her explanation is in the "long straight streets at right angles to each other, long enough and broad enough to present that always pleasing effect of vista-converging lines that stretch out indefinitely and look as if they must certainly lead somewhere very pleasant," the [Pg 288] streets that are to the town what "the open road" is to the country,—the long, white, straight road beckoning who can say where?

III

It was without the slightest intention on my part that the vista-converging lines of the streets led me direct to William Penn. But I defy anybody to do a little thinking while walking through the streets of Philadelphia and not be led to him, so for eternity has he stamped them with his vivid personality—not William Penn, the shadowy prig of the school history, but William Penn, the man with a level head, big ideas, and the will to carry them out—three things that make for genius. To the weakling of to-day the fight for liberty of conscience would loom up so gigantic a task as to fill to overflowing his little span here below. But in the fight as Penn fought it, the material details could be overlooked as little as the spiritual, the comfort of the bodies of his people no more neglected than the freedom of their souls. He did not stop to preach about town-planning and garden cities, and improved housing for the workman, like the would-be reformer of to-day. With no sentimental pose as saviour of the people, no drivel about reforming and elevating and sweetening the lives of humanity, no aspiration towards "world-betterment," Penn made sure that Philadelphia should be the green town he thought it ought to be and that men and women, [Pg 289] whatever their appointed task, should have decent houses to live in. He had the common-sense to understand that his colonists would be the sturdier and the better equipped for the work they had to do if they lived like men and not like beasts, and that a town as far south as Philadelphia called for many gardens and much green shade. The most beautiful architecture is that which grows logically out of the needs of the people. That is why Penn's city as he designed it was and is a beautiful city, to which English and German town reformers should come for the hints Philadelphians are so misguided as to seek from them.

I could not meet Penn in his pleasant streets and miss the succession of Friends who took over the responsibility of ensuring life and reality to his design, not allowing it, like Wren's in London, to lapse into a half-forgotten archaeological curiosity. Personally. I knew nothing of the Friends and envied J. who did because he was one of them, as I never could be, as nobody, not born to it, can. I had seen them, as alas! they are seen no longer: quiet, dignified men in broad-brimmed hats, sweet-faced women in delicate greys and browns, filling our streets in the spring at the time of Yearly Meeting. Once or twice I had seen them at home, the women in white caps and fichus, quiet and composed, sitting peacefully in their old-time parlours simple and bare but filled with priceless Sheraton or Chippendale. They looked, both in the open streets and at their own [Pg 290] firesides, so placid, so detached from the world's cares, it had not occurred to me that they could be the makers of the town's beauty and the sinews of its strength. But in my new mood I could nowhere get far from them.

Ghosts of the early Friends haunted the old streets and the old houses and, mingling with them, were ghosts of the World's People who had lost no time in coming to share their town and ungraciously abuse the privilege. The air was thick with association. J. and I walked in an atmosphere of the past, delightfully conscious of it but never troubling to reduce it to dry facts. We could not have been as young as we were and not scorn any approach to pedantry, not as lief do without ghosts as to grub them up out of the Philadelphia Library or the Historical Society. We left it to the antiquary to say just where the first Friends landed and the corner-stone of their first building was laid, just in which Third Street house Washington once danced, in which Front Street house Bishop White once lived. It was for the belated Boswell, not for us, to follow step by step the walks abroad of Penn, or Franklin, or any of our town's great men. It was no more necessary to be historians in order to feel the charm of the past than to be architects in order to feel the charm of the houses, and for no amount of exact knowledge would we have exchanged the romance which enveloped us.



ARCH STREET MEETING

Could I have put into words some of the emotion I felt in gathering together my material, what an article I would have made! But my words came with difficulty, and indeed I have never had the "ready pen" of the journalist, always I have been shy in expressing emotion of any kind. No reader could have guessed from my article my enthusiasm as I wrote it. But at least it did get written and my pleasure in it was not disturbed by doubt. I was too enthralled by what I had to say to realize that I had not managed to say it at all. [Pg 293]

IV

With the publication of the article our task was at an end, but not our walks together. J. and I had got into the habit of them, it was a pleasant habit, we saw no reason to give it up.

Sometimes we walked with new work as an object. There were articles about Philadelphia for *Our Continent*. We called it work—learning Romany—when we both walked with my Uncle up Broad Street to Oakdale Park, and through Camden and beyond to the Reservoir, where the Gypsies camped, and made Camden in my eyes, not the refuge of all in doubt, debt, or despair as its traditions have described it, but a rival in romance of Bagdad or Samarcand. When we walked still further, taking the train to help us out, to near country towns for the autumn fairs, never missing a side show, we called this the search for local colour, and I filled note-books with notes. Sometimes we walked for no more practical purpose than pleasure in Philadelphia. And we could walk for days, we could walk for miles, and exhaust neither the pleasure nor the town that I once fancied I knew by heart if I walked from Market to Pine and from the Delaware to the Schuylkill. [Pg 294]

I remember as a remarkable incident my discovery of the suburbs. With the prejudice borrowed from my Father, I had cultivated for all suburbs something of the large sweeping contempt which, in the Eighteen-Nineties, Henley and the *National Observer*, carrying on the tradition of Thackeray, made it the fashion to profess for the suburbs of London. West Philadelphia and Germantown were no less terms of opprobrium in my mouth than Clapham and Brixton in Henley's. But Henley, though it was a mistake to insist upon Clapham with its beautiful Common and old houses and dignified air, was expressing his splendid scorn of the second-rate, the provincial, in art and in letters. I was only expressing, parrot-like, a pose that did not belong to me, but to my Father in whose outlook upon life and things there was a whimsical touch, and who carried off' his prejudices with humour.

CLIVEDEN, THE CHEW HOUSE

I was the more foolish in this because few towns, if any, have lovelier suburbs than Philadelphia. Their loveliness is another part of our inheritance from William Penn who set no limits to his dream of a green country town, and from the old Friends who, in deference to his desire, lined not only their streets but their roads with trees. This is only as it should be, I thought when, reading the letters of John Adams, I came upon his description of the road to Kensington and [Pg 297]

beyond, "straight as the streets of Philadelphia, on each side ... beautiful rows of trees, button-woods, oaks, walnuts, cherries, and willows." In our time, scarcely a road out of Philadelphia is without the same beautiful rows, if not the same variety in the trees, and while much of the open country it ran through in John Adams' day has been built up with town and suburban houses, the trees still line it on each side. Everybody knows the beauty of the leafy roads of the Main Line, quite a correct thing to know, the Main Line being the refuge of the Philadelphian pushed out of "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine" by business and the Russian Jew combined. But the Main Line has not the monopoly of suburban beauty, though it may of suburban fashion. The Main Street in Germantown, with its peaceful old grey stone houses and great overshadowing trees, has no rival at home or abroad, and I have seen as commonplace a street as Walnut in West Philadelphia, its uninteresting houses screened behind the two long lines of trees, become in the golden light of a summer afternoon as stately an avenue as any at Versailles or St. Germain.

Not only the trees, but the past went with us to Germantown. Has any other American suburb so many old houses to boast? Stenton, the Chew House, the Johnson House, the Morris House, the Wistar House, Wyck—are there any other Colonial houses with nobler interiors, statelier [Pg 298] furniture, sweeter gardens? I recall the pillared hall of Chew House, the finely proportioned entrance and stairway of Stenton, the garden of Wyck as I last saw it—rather overgrown, heavy with the perfume of roses and syringa, the June sun low behind the tall trees that stand close to the wall along Walnut Lane;—I recall the memories clustering about those old historic homes, about every lane and road and path, and I wonder that Germantown is not one of the show places of the world. But the foreigner, to whom Philadelphia is a station between New York and Washington or New York and Chicago, has never heard of it, nor has the rest of America to whom Philadelphia is the junction for Atlantic City. With the exception of Stenton, the old Germantown houses are for use, not for show, still lived in by the families who have lived in them from the beginning, and I love them too well to want to see them overtaken by the fate of sights starred in Baedeker, even while I wonder why they have escaped.

At times J. and I walked in the green valley of the Wissahickon, along the well-kept road past the old white taverns, with wide galleries and suppers of cat-fish and waffles, which had not lost their pleasant primitiveness to pass themselves off as rural Rumpelmeyers where ladies stop for afternoon tea. Can the spring be fairer anywhere than in and around Philadelphia when wistaria blossoms on every wall and the country is white with dogwood? Often we wandered in the Wissahickon woods, by narrow footpaths up the low hillsides, so often that, wherever I may be, [Pg 299] certain effects of brilliant sunshine filtering through the pale green of early spring foliage will send me straight back to the Wissahickon and to the days when I could not walk in Philadelphia or its suburbs and not strike gold at every step. And the Wissahickon was but one small section of the Park, of which the corrupt government Philadelphia loves to rail at made the largest and fairest, at once the wildest and most wisely laid-out playground, in America. Will a reform Government, with all its boasting, do as much for Philadelphia? I had skimmed the surface only on those boating parties up the river and those walking parties in the starlit or moonlit shade. Wide undiscovered stretches lay off the beaten track, and the mansions of the Park—Strawberry, Belmont, Mount Pleasant—were well stocked, not only with lemonade and cake and peanuts, with croquettes and chicken salad, but with beauty and associations for those who knew how to give the order. And, greater marvel, beauty—classic beauty—was to be had even in the Fairmount Water Works that, after I left school, I had looked down upon as a childish entertainment provided for the holidays, beneath the consideration of my maturer years.

V

Of all our walks, none was better than the walk to Bartram's on the banks of the Schuylkill beyond Gray's Ferry. It seemed very far then, before the trolley passed by its gate, and before the rows of little two-story houses had begun to extend towards it like the greedy tentacles of the [Pg 300] great town. The City Government had not taken it over, it was not so well looked after. The old grey stone house, with the stone tablet on its walls bearing witness that his Lord was adored by John Bartram, had not yet been turned into a museum. I am not sure whether the trees around it —the trees collected from far and near—were learnedly labelled as they are now. The garden had grown wild, the thicket below was a wilderness. It is right that the place should be cared for. The city could not afford to lose the beauty one of its most famous citizens, who was one of the most famous botanists of his day, built up, and his family preserved, for it, and when I returned I welcomed the sign this new care gave of Philadelphia's interest, so long in the awakening. But Bartram's was more beautiful in its neglect, as an old church is more beautiful before the restorer pulls down the ivy and scrapes and polishes the stone. Many were the Sunday afternoons J. and I spent there, and many the hours we sat talking on the little bench at the lower end of the wilderness, where we looked out on the river and planned new articles.

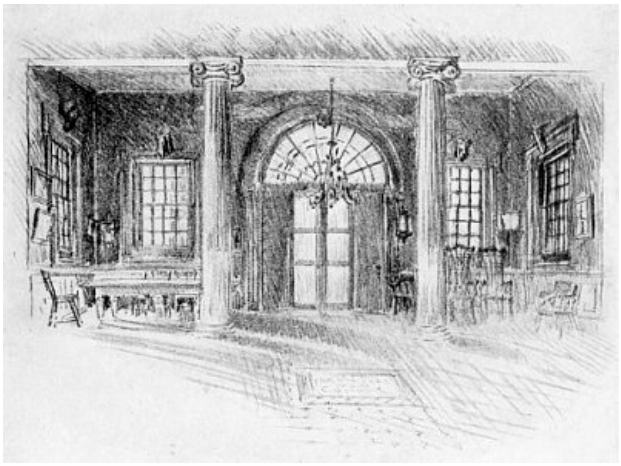
BARTRAM'S

When our walks together had become too strong a habit to be broken and we decided to make the habit one for life, we went back again and again to Bartram's and on that same little bench, looking out upon the river, we planned work for the long years we hoped were ahead of us: [Pg 303] perhaps seeing the future in the more glowing colours for the contrast with the past about us, the ashes of the life and beauty from which our phœnix was to soar. The work then planned carried and kept us thousands of miles away, but it belongs none the less to the old scenes, where it was inspired, and I like to think that, though the chances of this work have made us exiles for years, the memory of our life as we have lived it is inseparable from the memory of Bartram's or, indeed, of Philadelphia which, through work, I learned to see and to love.

CHAPTER XII: PHILADELPHIA AND LITERATURE [Pg 304]

I

On the principle that nothing interests a man—or a woman—so much as shop, I had no sooner begun to write than I saw Philadelphia divided not between the people who could and could not go to the Assembly and the Dancing Class, but between the people who could and could not write; and, after I began to write for illustration, between the people who could and could not paint and draw. It had never before occurred to me to look for art and literature in Philadelphia.



CARPENTER'S HALL INTERIOR

At that time, you had, literally, to look for the literature to find it. Philadelphia, with its usual reticence and conscientiousness in preventing any Philadelphian from becoming a prophet in Philadelphia, had hidden its literary, with its innumerable other, lights under a bushel, content itself to know they were there, if nobody else did. As towns, like men, are apt to be accepted at their own valuation, most Americans would then have thought it about as useful to look for snakes in Ireland as for literature in Philadelphia. I am not sure that the Philadelphian did not agree with them. Recently, I have heard him, in his new zeal for Philadelphia, talk as if it were the biggest literary thing on earth, the headquarters of letters in the United States, a boast which [Pg 307] I am told Indianapolis also makes and, as far as I am concerned, can keep on making undisputed, for I do not believe in measuring literature like so much sheet iron or calico. But no matter what we have come to in Philadelphia, in the old days the Philadelphian seldom gave his lions a chance to roar at home or paid the least attention to them if they tried to. I rather think he would have affected to share the Western Congressman's opinion of "them literary fellers" when the literary fellers came from his native town.

But the Philadelphian must have done a great deal of reading to judge by the number of public

libraries in the town,—the Philadelphia Library, the Ridgway, the Mercantile, the Free Public Library, the University Library, the Bryn Mawr College Library, the Friends' Germantown Library, the Library of the Historical Society, and no doubt dozens I know nothing about—and there were always collectors from the days of Logan and Dr. Rush to those of Mr. Widener, George C. Thomas and Governor Pennypacker. But the Philadelphia reading man never talked books and the Philadelphia collector never vaunted and advertised his treasures, as he does now that collecting is correct. The average man kept his books out of sight. I remember few in my Grandfather's house, and not a bookcase from top to bottom—few in any other house except my Father's. But I know that many people had books and a library set apart to read them in, and I have been astonished since to see the large collections in houses where of old I had never noticed [Pg 308] or suspected their presence. The Philadelphian was as reticent about his books and his pleasure in them as about everything else, with the result that he got the credit for neither, even at home. This had probably something to do with the fact that though, as far back as I can remember, I had had a fancy for books and for reading, I grew up with the idea that for literature, as for beauty, the Atlantic had to be crossed, that it was not in the nature of things for Philadelphia to have had a literary past, to claim a literary present, or to hope for a literary future. But as I had discovered my mistake about the beauty during those walks with J., so in my modest stall in the literary shop, I learned how far out I had been about the literature. It was the same story over again. I had only to get interested, and there was everything in the world to interest me.

II

There was the past, for Philadelphia had had a literary past, and not at all an empty past, but one full of the romance of effort and pride of achievement. Because Philadelphians did not begin to write the minute they landed on the banks of the Delaware, some wise people argue that Friends were then, as now, unliterary. But what of William Penn, whose writings have become classics? What of Thomas Elwood, the friend of Milton? What of George Fox who, if unlettered, was a born writer no less than Bunyan? Friends did not write and publish books right off in Philadelphia for [Pg 309] the same excellent reason that other Colonists did not in other Colonial towns. Living was an absorbing business that left them no time for writing, and printing presses and publishers' offices and book stores did not strike them as immediate necessities in the wilderness. It was not out of consideration that the early Philadelphia Friends bequeathed nothing to the now sadly overladen shelves of the British Museum and the Library of Congress.

When leisure came Philadelphians were readier to devote it to science. According to Mr. Sydney Fisher, Pennsylvania has done more for science than any other State: a subject upon which my profound ignorance bids me be silent. But science did not keep them altogether from letters. No people ever had a greater itch for writing. Look at the length of their correspondence, the minuteness of their diaries. And they broke into poetry on the slightest provocation. Authorities say that no real poem appeared in America before 1800, but the blame lies not alone with Philadelphia. It did what it could. Boston may boast of Anne Bradstreet who was rhyming before most New Englanders had time for reading, but so could Philadelphia brag of Deborah Logan—if Philadelphia ever bragged of anything Philadelphian—and I am willing to believe there is no great difference between the two poetesses without labouring through their verses to prove myself wrong. And the Philadelphian was as prolific as any other Colonial in horrible doggerel to his mistress's hoops and bows, to her tears and canary birds. And as far as I know, only a [Pg 310] Philadelphian among Colonial poets is immortalized in the Dunciad, though possibly Ralph, Franklin's friend to whom the honour fell, would rather have been forgotten than remembered solely because his howls to Cynthia made night hideous for Pope. And where else did the young men so soon form themselves into little groups to discourse seriously upon literature and kindred matters, as they walked sedately in the woods along the Schuylkill? Where else was there so soon a society—a junto—devoted to learning?

In innumerable ways I could see, once I could see anything, how Philadelphia was preparing itself all along for literary pursuits and accomplishment. Let me brag a little, if Philadelphia won't. Wasn't it in Germantown that the first paper mill of the Colonies was set up? Wasn't it there that the New Testament was printed in German—and went into seven editions—before any other Colony had the enterprise to print it in English, so that Saur's Testament is now a treasure for the collector? Isn't it maintained by some authorities, if others dispute it, that the first Bible in English was published in Philadelphia by Robert Aitken, at "Pope's Head above the Coffee House, in Market Street"? And Philadelphia issued the first American daily paper, the most important of the first American reviews, the most memorable Almanac of Colonial days—can any other compete with Poor Richard's? And Philadelphia opened the first Circulating Library—the [Pg 313] Philadelphia Library is no benevolent upstart of to-day. And Philadelphia publishers were for years the most go-ahead and responsible—who did not know the names of Cary, Lea, Blanchard, Griggs, Lippincott, knew nothing of the publishing trade. And Philadelphia book stores, with Lippincott's leading, were the best patronized. And Philadelphia had the monopoly of the English book trade, with Thomas Wardle to direct it. And Philadelphia held its own views on copyright and stuck to them in the face of opposition for years—whether right or wrong does not matter, the thing is that it cared enough to have views. There is a record for you! Why the literary man had only to appear, and Philadelphia was all swept and garnished for his comfort and convenience.

MAIN STREET, GERMANTOWN

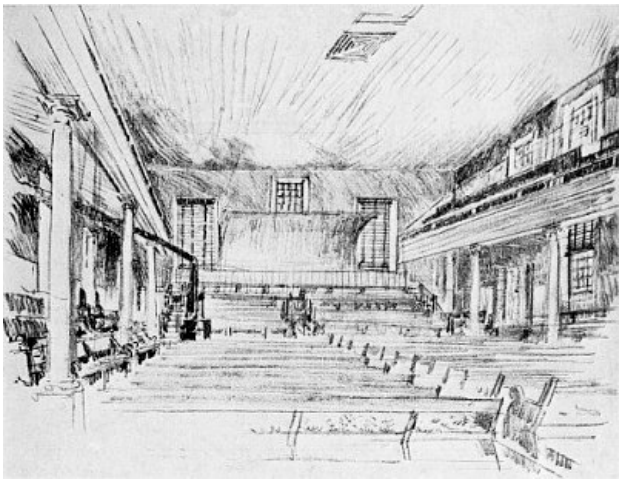
And the literary man did appear, with amazing promptness under the circumstances. When the demand was for political writers, Philadelphia supplied Franklin, Dickinson, and a whole host of others, until it is all the Historical Society of Pennsylvania can do to cope with their pamphlets. When the demand was for native fiction, Philadelphia produced the first American novelist, Charles Brockden Brown, and if Philadelphians do not read him in our day, Shelley did in his, which ought to be as much fame as any pioneer could ask for. When the need was for an American Cookery Book, Philadelphia presented Miss Leslie to the public who received her with such appreciation that, in the First Edition, she is harder to find than Mrs. Glasse. When, with the [Pg 314] years, the past rose in value, Philadelphia gave to America an antiquary, and John Watson, with his Annals, set a fashion in Philadelphia that had to wait a good half century for followers. And when the writer was multiplied all over the country and the reader with him, Philadelphia provided the periodical, the annual, the parlour-table book, that the one wrote for and the other subscribed to—an endless succession of them: *The Casket*, *The Gift*, *The Souvenir*, which I have no desire to disturb on their obscure shelves; the *Philadelphia Saturday Museum*, and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, to me the emptiest of empty names; *Sartain's Union Magazine*, which I might as well be honest and say I have never seen; *Graham's*, in its prime, unrivalled, unapproached; *Godey's Lady's Book*, offering its pages alike to the newest verse and the latest mode, the popular magazine that every American saw at his dentist's or his doctor's, edited by Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, for a woman, then as always, could get where she chose, if she had the mind to, without the help of arson and suicide; *Peterson's*, which I recall only in its title; *Lippincott's*, in my time the literary test or standard in Philadelphia and scrupulously taken in by the Philadelphia householder. I can see it still, lying soberly on the centre table in the back parlour of the Eleventh and Spruce Street house, never defaced or thumbed, I fancy seldom opened, but like everything in the house, like my Grandfather himself, a type, a symbol of [Pg 315] Philadelphia respectability. It was as much an obligation for the respectable Philadelphia citizen to subscribe to *Lippincott's* as to belong to the Historical Society, to be a member of the Philadelphia Library, to buy books for Christmas presents at Lippincott's or Porter and Coates'. The Philadelphian, who had no particular use for a book as a book or, if he had, kept the fact to himself, was content to parade it as an ornament, and no parlour was without its assortment of pretty and expensive parlour-table books, received as Christmas presents, and as purely ornamental as the pictures on the wall and the vases on the mantelpiece. I know one Philadelphian who carried this decorative use of books still further and nailed them to the ceiling to explain that the room they decorated was a library, which nobody would have suspected for a moment, as they were the only volumes in it.

For the man who had a living to make out of literature, Philadelphia was a good place, not to come away from, but to go to, and a number of American men of letters did go, though I need hardly add Philadelphia made as little of the fact as possible. In Philadelphia Washington Irving, sometimes called America's first literary man, published his books, but truth compels me to admit that he fared better when he handed them over to Putnam in New York; though of late years, the Lippincotts have done much to atone for the old failure by their successful issues of *The Alhambra* and *The Traveller*. To Philadelphia magazines, N. P. Willis, and there was no more [Pg 316] popular American writer, pledged himself for months ahead. To Philadelphia, Lowell came from Boston to get work. Poe deserted Richmond and the South for Philadelphia, where he contributed to Philadelphia magazines, edited them, planned new ones, while Philadelphia waited until he was well out of the world to know that he ever had lived there. Altogether, when I came upon the scene, Philadelphia had had a highly creditable literary past, and was having a highly creditable literary present, and, in pursuance of its invariable policy, was making no fuss about it.

III

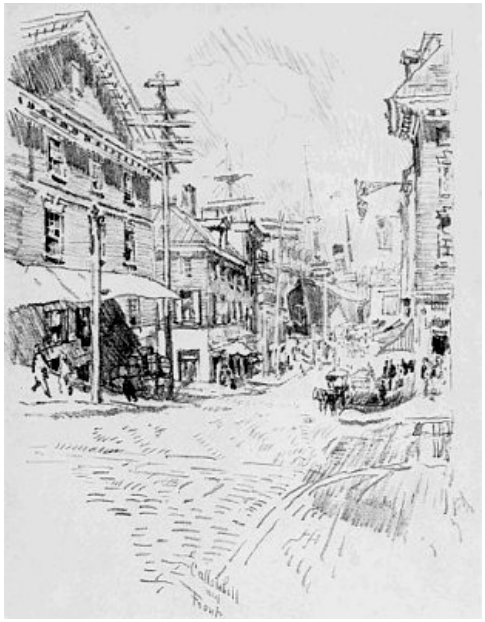
As I look back, the three most conspicuous figures of this literary present were Charles Godfrey Leland, George Boker and Walt Whitman. All three were past middle age, they had done most of their important work, they had gained an international reputation. But that of course made no difference to Philadelphia. I doubt if it had heard of George Boker as a man of letters, though it knew him politically and also socially, as he had not lost his interest in society and the Philadelphia Club. My Uncle, having no use for society in Philadelphia and saying so with his

accustomed vigour, and not having busied himself with politics for many years, was ignored unreservedly. Walt Whitman, who probably would not have been considered eligible for the Assembly and the Dancing Class had he condescended to know of their existence, did not exist [Pg 319] socially, and it is a question if he would have collected round him his ardent worshippers from Philadelphia had he not had the advantage of having been born somewhere else. If I am not mistaken, this worship had not begun in my time, when he was more apt to receive a visitor from London or Boston than from Philadelphia.



ARCH STREET MEETING—INTERIOR

The fact that it was my good fortune to know these three men contributed considerably to my new and pleasant feeling of self-importance. When I wrote the life of my Uncle a few years ago, I had much to say of him and my relations with him at this period, and I do not want to repeat myself. But I can no more leave him out of my recollections of literary Philadelphia than out of my personal reminiscences. When he entered so intimately into my life he was nearer sixty than fifty, but he had lost nothing of his vigour nor of his physical beauty—tall, large, long-bearded, a fine profile, the eyes of the seer. He was fastidious in dress, with a leaning to light greys and browns, and a weakness for canes which he preferred thin and elegant. I remember his favourite was black and had an altogether unfashionable silver, ruby-eyed dragon for handle. On occasions to which it was appropriate, he wore a silk hat; on others, more informal, he exchanged it for a large soft felt—a modified cowboy hat—which suited him better, though he would not have forgiven me had I had the courage to say so to his face, his respect for the conventions, always [Pg 320] great, having been intensified during his long residence in England. It seems superfluous to add that he could not pass unnoticed in Philadelphia streets, which did not run to cowboy hats or dragon-handled canes or any deviations from the approved Philadelphia dress. Nor did his fancy for peering into shop windows make him less conspicuous, and as his daily walk was hardly complete if it did not lead to his buying something in the shop, were it only a five-cent bit of modern blue-and-white Japanese china, this meant that before his purchase was handed over to me, as it usually was, his pleasure being not in the possession but in the buying, he had parcels to carry, a shocking breach of good manners in Philadelphia. In his company therefore I became a conspicuous figure myself, and I was often his companion in the streets; but to this I had no objection, having been inconspicuous far too long for my taste.



FRONT AND CALLOWHILL

He had written his *Breitmann Ballads* years before when the verse of no other American of note—unless it was Longfellow's and Whittier's and Lowell's in the *Biglow Papers*—had had so wide a circulation. He had also published one or two of his Gypsy books, never surpassed except by

Borrow. And he was engaged in endless new tasks—more Gypsy papers, Art in the Schools, Indian Legends, Comic Ballads, Essays on Education, and I did not mind what since my excitement was in being admitted for the first time into the companionship of a man who devoted [Pg 323] himself to writing, to whom writing was business, who sat down at his desk after breakfast and wrote as my Father after breakfast went down to his office and bought and sold stocks, who never stopped except for his daily walk, who got back to work if there was a free hour before dinner and who, after dinner, read until he went to bed. Moreover, he had brought with him the aroma, as it were, of the literary life in London. He had met many of the people who, because they had written books, were my heroes. Here would have been literature enough to transfigure Philadelphia had I known no other writers.

IV

But, through him, I did know others. First of all, George Boker with whom, however, I could not pretend to friendship or more than the barest acquaintance. In the streets he was as noticeable a figure as my Uncle, though given neither to cowboy hats and dragon-handled canes nor to peering into shop windows and carrying parcels. Like my Uncle, he was taller than the average man, and handsomer, his white hair and white military moustache giving him a more distinguished air, I fancy, in his old age than was his in his youth. His smile was of the kindliest, the characteristic I remember best. He had returned from his appointments as Minister to Russia and Turkey and had given up active political and diplomatic life. He had written most of his poems, if not all, including the *Francesca da Rimini* which Lawrence Barrett was shortly [Pg 324] afterwards to put on the stage, and he impressed me as a man who had had his fill of life and work and adventure and was content to settle down to the comforts of Philadelphia. He and my Uncle, who had been friends from boyhood or babyhood, spent every Sunday afternoon together. My Uncle had large spacious rooms on the ground floor of a house in South Broad Street where the Philadelphia Art Club now is, and there George Boker came Sunday after Sunday and there, if I dropped in, I saw him. I had the discretion never to stay long, for I realized that their intimate free talk was valued too much by both for them to care to have it interrupted. I can remember nothing he ever said—I have an idea he was a man who did not talk a great deal, while my Uncle did; my memory is of his kindly smile and my sense that here was one of the literary friendships I had read of in books. So, I thought, might Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith have met and talked, or Lamb and Coleridge, and Broad Street seemed tinged with the romance that I took for granted coloured the Temple in London and Gough Square.

V

Through my Uncle I also met Walt Whitman, and he impressed me still more with the romance of literature. He was so unexpected in Philadelphia, for which I claim him in his last years, Camden being little more than a suburb, whatever Camden itself may think. I could almost have imagined [Pg 325] that it was for the humour of the thing he came to settle where his very appearance was an offence to the proprieties. George Boker was scrupulously correct. My Uncle's hat and dragon-handled cane only seemed to emphasize his inborn Philadelphia shrinking from eccentricity. But Walt Whitman, from top to toe, proclaimed the man who did not bother to think of the conventions, much less respect them. You saw it in his long white hair and long white beard, in his loose light grey clothes, in the soft white shirt unlaundered and open at the neck, in the tall, formless grey hat like no hat ever worn in Philadelphia. To have been stopped by him on Chestnut Street—a street he loved—would have filled me with confusion and shame in the days before literature had become my shop. But once literature blocked my horizon, to be stopped by him lifted me up to the seventh heaven. If people turned to look, and Philadelphians never grew quite accustomed to his presence, my pleasure was the greater. I took it for a visible sign that I was known, recognized, and accepted in the literary world. And what a triumph in streets where, of old, life had appalled me by its emptiness of incident!

In one way or another I saw a good deal of Walt Whitman, but most frequently by the chance which increased the picturesqueness of the meeting. I called on him in the Camden house described many times by many people: in my memory, a little house, the room where I was received simple and bare, the one ornament as unexpected there as Walt Whitman himself in [Pg 326] Philadelphia, for it was an old portrait, dark and dingy, of an ancestor; and I wondered if an ancestor so ancient as to grow dark and dingy in a frame did not make it easier to play the democrat and call every man comrade—or *Camerado*, I should say, as Walt Whitman said, with his curious fondness for foreign words and sounds. But though I saw him at home, he is more associated in my memory with the ferry-boat for Camden when my Uncle and I were on our way to the Gypsy's camping place near the reservoir; and with the corner of Front and Market and the bootblack's big chair by the Italian's candy and fruit stand where he loved to sit, and where I loved to see him, though, Philadelphian at heart, I trembled for his audacity; and with the Market Street horse-car, where he was already settled in his corner before it started and where the driver and the conductor, passing through, nodded to him and called him "Walt," and where he was as happy as the modern poet in his sixty-horse-power car. He was happiest when sitting out in front with the driver, and I have rarely been as proud as the afternoon he gave up that privileged seat to stay with my Uncle and myself inside. His greeting was always charming. He would take a hand of each of us, hold the two in his for a minute or so beaming upon us, never saying very much. I remember his leading us once, with our hands still in his, from the fruit-stand to the tobacconist's opposite to point out to my Uncle the wooden figure of an Indian at the door, [Pg 329] for which he professed a great admiration as an example of the art of the people before they

were trained in the Minor Arts.

THE ELEVATED AT MARKET STREET WHARF

These chance meetings were always the best, and he told us that he thought them so, that he loved his accidental meetings with friends—there were many he prized among his most valued reminiscences. And I remember his story of Longfellow having gone over to Camden purposely to call on him, and not finding him at home, and their running into each other on the ferry-boat to Market Street, and Longfellow saying that he had come from the house deeply disappointed, regretting the long quiet talk he had hoped for, but deciding that perhaps the strange chance of the meeting on the water was better. My Uncle, had he been hurrying to catch a train, would still have managed to talk philosophy and art education. But I remember Walt Whitman also saying that the ferry and the corner of Market Street and the Market Street car were hardly places for abstract discussion, though the few things said there were the less easily forgotten for being snatched joyfully by the way.

It was one day in the Market Street car that he and my Uncle had the talk which left with me the profoundest impression. As a rule I was too engrossed in thinking what a great person I was, when in such company, to shine as a reporter. But on this occasion the subject was the School of [Pg 330] Industrial Arts in which I was giving my Uncle the benefit of my incompetent assistance. He asked Walt Whitman to come and see it, telling him a little of its aims and methods. Whitman refused, amiably but positively. I cannot recall his exact words, but I gathered from them that he had no sympathy with schemes savouring of benevolence or reform, that he believed in leaving people to work out their own salvation, and this, coming as it did after I had seen for myself the terms he was on with the driver and conductor, expressed more eloquently than his verse his definition of democracy. I may be mistaken, but I thought then and have ever since that his belief in the people carried him to the point of thinking they knew better than the philanthropist what they needed and did not need. My Uncle was not of accord with him and I, who am neither democrat nor philanthropist, would not pretend to decide between them. My Uncle did not like Walt Whitman's attitude and refusal, convinced as he was of the good to the people that was to come of the reform he was initiating, though he was constitutionally incapable of meeting the people he was reforming on equal terms. The twinkle in Walt Whitman's eye when he refused gave me the clue to the large redeeming humour with which he looked upon a foolish world, seeing each individual in the place appointed, right in it, fitting into it, unfit for any other he did not make for himself of his own desire and courage—the humour without which the human tragedy would not be bearable. [Pg 331]

I wish I could have had more talk with Whitman, I wish I had been older or more experienced, that I might have got nearer to him—or so I felt in those old days. I have now an idea that his silence was more effective than his speech, that if he had said more to any of his devoted following he might have been less of a prophet. But his tranquil presence was in itself sufficient to open a new outlook, and it reconciled me to the scheme of the universe for good or for ill. His personality impressed me far more than his poems. It seemed to me to explain them, to interpret them, as nothing else could—his few words of greeting worth pages of the critic's eloquent analysis.

CHAPTER XIII: PHILADELPHIA AND LITERATURE—CONTINUED [Pg 332]

I

I had glimpses into other literary vistas, but mostly from a respectful and highly appreciative distance. How I wish I could recapture even as much as the shadow of the old rapturous awe with which any man or woman who had ever made a book inspired me!

DR. FURNESS'S HOUSE, WEST WASHINGTON SQUARE
JUST BEFORE IT WAS PULLED DOWN

There was reason for awe when the man was Dr. Horace Howard Furness, the editor of Shakespeare, and if Philadelphia knew its duty better than to draw attention to so scholarly a performance by a Philadelphian, scholars out of Philadelphia, who were not hampered by Philadelphia conventions, hailed it as the best edition of Shakespeare there could be. I must always regret that in his case I succeeded in having no more than the glimpse. Most of my literary introductions came through my Uncle who, though he knew Dr. Furness, saw less and less of him as time went on, partly I think because of one of those small misunderstandings that are more unpardonable than the big offences—certainly they were to my Uncle. Dr. Furness' father, old Dr. Furness the Unitarian Minister, meeting him in the street one day, asked him gaily, but I have no doubt with genuine interest, how his fad, the school, was getting on. My Uncle, who could not stand having an enterprise so serious to him treated lightly by others, [Pg 335] retorted by asking Dr. Furness how his fad the pulpit was getting on. The result was coolness. The chances are that Dr. Furness never realized the enormity of which he had been guilty, but my Uncle could neither forget his jest nor forgive him and his family for it. And his heart was not softened until many years afterwards, when in far Florence he heard that Dr. Furness wished for his return to Philadelphia that he might vindicate his claim, in danger of being overlooked, as the first to have introduced the study of the Minor Arts into the Public Schools.

Mrs. Wister was another Philadelphia literary celebrity whose work had made her known to all America by name, the only way she was known to me. It was my loss, for they say she was more charming than her work. But to Philadelphia no charm of personality, no popularity of work, could shed lustre upon her name, which was her chief glory: literature was honoured when a Wister stooped to its practice. On her translations of German novels, Philadelphians of my generation were brought up. After *Faith Gartney's Girlhood* and *Queechy* and *The Wide, Wide World*, no tales were considered so innocuous for the young, not yet provided with the mild and exemplary adventures of the tedious Elsie. Would the *Old Mam'selle's Secret* survive re-reading, I wonder? The favourites of yesterday have a way of turning into the bores of to-day. Not long ago I tried re-reading Scott whom in my youth I adored, but his once magnificent heroes had [Pg 336] dwindled into puppets, their brilliant exploits into the empty bombast of Drury Lane and Wardour Street. If Scott cannot stand the test, what hope for the other old loves? I risk no more lost illusions.

From no less a distance I looked to Mrs. Rebecca Harding Davis who, with Mrs. Wister, helped to supply the country with fiction, in her case original, while her son, Richard Harding Davis, was on the sensational brink of his career. And again from a distance I looked to Frank Stockton, with no idea that he was a Philadelphia celebrity—very likely every other Philadelphian was as ignorant, but that is no excuse for me. I had not found him out as my fellow citizen when I saw much of him some years later in London, nor did I find it out until recently when, distrustful of my Philadelphia tendency to look the other way if Philadelphians are distinguishing themselves, I consulted the authorities to make sure how great or how small was my knowledge of Philadelphia literature. From all this it will be seen that in those remote days I was very much on the literary outside in Philadelphia, but with the luck there to run up against some of the giants.

Into the vista of the poets chance gave me one brief but more intimate glimpse. In a Germantown house—I am puzzled at this day to say whose—I was introduced one evening to Mrs. Florence Earle Coates and Dr. Francis Howard Williams, both already laurel-crowned, at a small gathering over which Walt Whitman presided. In his grey coat and soft shirt I remember he struck me as more dressed than the guests in their evening clothes, but I remember he also struck me as less [Pg 337] at home in the worshipping parlour than in the bootblack's corner. The eloquence of his presence stands out in my memory vividly, though I have forgotten the name of the host or hostess to whom I am indebted for enjoying it, and I think it must have been then that I began to suspect there was more of a literary life in Philadelphia than I had imagined. I had no opportunity to get

further than my suspicion, for it was very shortly after that J. and I undertook to carry out the plans we had been making on the old bench by the river in Bartram's Garden. Walt Whitman I never saw again, and of the group assembled about him nothing for many years.

THE GERMANTOWN ACADEMY

I came into closer contact with writers to whom literature and journalism were not merely a method of expression, but a means of livelihood. Philadelphia, with its magazines, as with so much else, had shown the way and other towns had lost no time in following and getting ahead. New York was in the magazine ascendant. *The Century* and *Harper's* had replaced *Graham's* and *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's*. But *Lippincott's* remained, and though the Editor, after his cruel letter of refusal, never deigned to notice me, it was some satisfaction to have been in actual correspondence with an author as distinguished as John Foster Kirk, the historian of Charles the Bold. When *Our Continent* was labouring to revive the old tradition of Philadelphia as a centre of publishers and periodicals, I got as far as the editorial office—very far indeed in my opinion—and [Pg 338] there once or twice I saw Judge Tourgee, who had abandoned his reconstructive mission and judicial duties for an editorial post in Philadelphia, and who at the moment was more talked about than any American author, his *Fool's Errand* having given him the sort of fame that *Looking Backward* brought to Bellamy: ephemeral, but colossal while it lasted. Curiously, I recall nothing of the man himself—not his appearance, his manner, his talk. I think it must have been because, for me, he was overshadowed by his Art Editor, Miss Emily Sartain; my interest in him eclipsed by my admiration for her and my envy of a woman, so young and so handsome, who had attained to such an influential and responsible post. I thought if I ever should reach half way up so stupendous a height, I could die content. Louise Stockton, Frank Stockton's sister, and Helen Campbell were on the staff, in my eyes amazing women with regular weekly tasks and regular weekly salaries. I might argue for my comfort that there was greater liberty in being a free lance, but how wonderful to do work that an editor wanted every week, was willing to pay for every week!—wonderful to me, anyway, who had just had my first taste of earning an income, but not of earning it regularly and without fail. My Uncle wrote more than once for Tourgee; J. and I contributed those articles which were further excuses for our walks together: Judge Tourgee, to his own loss, thinking it a recommendation for a contributor to be a Philadelphian as he would [Pg 341] not have thought had he known his Philadelphia better. *Our Continent* was too Philadelphian to be approved in Philadelphia or to be in demand out of it. One symbol of literary respectability the town had in *Lippincott's*, and one was as much as it could then support. *Our Continent* came to an end either just before or just after J. and I set out on our travels. There were other women in journalism who excited my envy. Mrs. Lucy Hooper's letters to the *Evening Telegraph* struck me as the last and finest word in foreign correspondence. I never, even upon closer acquaintance, lost my awe of Mrs. Sarah Hallowell who was intimately associated with the *Ledger*, or of Miss Julia Ewing, though her association with the same paper had nothing to do with its literary side.

II

Now and then I was stirred to the depths by my glimpse of writers from other parts of the world. It was only when a prophet was a home product that Philadelphia kept its eyes tight shut; when the prophet came from another town it opened them wide, and its arms wider than its eyes, and showed him what a strenuous business it was to be the victim of Philadelphia hospitality. It was rather pleased if the prophet happened to be a lord, or had a handle of some kind to his name, but an author would answer for want of something better, especially if he came from abroad. No Englishman on a lecture tour was allowed to pass by Philadelphia. [Pg 342]

Immediately on his arrival, the distinguished visitor was appropriated by George W. Childs, who had undertaken to play in Philadelphia the part of the Lord Mayor in the City of London and do the town's official entertaining, and who was known far and wide for it—"he has entertained all the English who come over here," Matthew Arnold wrote home of him, and visitors of every other

nationality could have written the same of their own people passing through Philadelphia. You would meet him in the late afternoon, fresh from the *Ledger* office, strolling up Chestnut Street of which he was another of the conspicuous figures—not because of any personal beauty, but because he did not believe in the Philadelphia practice of hiding one's light under a bushel, and had managed to make himself known by sight to every other man and woman in the street; just as old Richard Vaux was; or old "Aunt Ad" Thompson, everybody's aunt, in her brilliant finery, growing ever more brilliant with years; or that distinguished lawyer, Ben Brewster, "Burnt-faced Brewster," whose genius for the law made every one forget the terrible marks a fire in his childhood had left upon his face. Philadelphia would not have been Philadelphia without these familiar figures. Childs seldom appeared on Chestnut Street without Tony Drexel, straight from some big operation on the Stock Exchange, the two representing all that was most successful in the newspaper and banking world of Philadelphia: their friendship now commemorated in that new combination of names as familiar to the new and changing generation as Cadwallader-Biddle was to the old and changeless. Between them it was the exception when there was not an emperor, or a prince, or an author, or an actor, or some other variety of a distinguished visitor being put through his paces and shown life in Philadelphia, on the way to the house of one or the other and to the feast prepared in his honour. At the feast, if there was speaking to be done, it was invariably Wayne MacVeagh who did it. As I was not greatly in demand at public functions, I heard him but once—a memorable occasion which did not, however, impress me with the brilliance of his oratory.

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Matthew Arnold, the latest distinguished visitor, was to lecture, and I had been looking forward to the evening with an ardour for which alas! I have lost the faculty. Literary celebrities were still novelties—more than that, divinities—in my eyes. Among them, Matthew Arnold held particularly high rank, one of the chief heroes of my worship, and many of my contemporaries worshipped with me. Youth was then, as always, acutely conscious of the burden of life, and we made our luxury of his pessimism. I could spout whole passages of his poems, whole poems when they were short, though now I could not probably get further than their titles. There had been a dinner first —there always was a dinner first in Philadelphia—and a Philadelphia dinner being no light matter, he arrived late. The delay would have done no harm had not Wayne MacVeagh, who presided, introduced him in a speech to which, once it was started, there seemed no end. It went on and on, the audience growing restless, with Matthew Arnold himself an object of pity, so obvious was his embarrassment. Few lecturers could have saved the situation, and Matthew Arnold would have been a dull one under the most favourable circumstances. I went away disillusioned, reconciled to meeting my heroes in their books. And I could understand when, years later, I read the letters he wrote home, why the tulip trees seemed to have as much to do as the people in making Philadelphia the most attractive city he had seen in America.

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THE STATE HOUSE FROM INDEPENDENCE SQUARE

Another distinguished visitor who lectured about this period came off more gaily:—Oscar Wilde, to whose lecture I had looked forward with no particular excitement, for I was young enough to feel only impatience with his pose. After listening to him, I had to admit that he was amusing. His affected dress, his deliberate posturings, his flamboyant phrases and slow lingering over them as if loth to let them go, made him an exhilarating contrast to Matthew Arnold, shocked as I was by a writer to whom literature was not always in dead earnest, nor to teach its goal, even though it was part of his pose to ape the teacher, the voice in the wilderness. And he was so refreshingly enthusiastic when off the platform, as I saw him afterwards in my Uncle's rooms. He let himself go without reserve as he recalled the impressions of his visit to Walt Whitman in Camden and his meeting with the cowboy in the West. To him, the cowboy was the most picturesque product of America from whom he borrowed hat and cloak and appeared in them, an amazing spectacle. And I find in some prim, priggish, distressingly useless little notes I made at the time, that it was a perfect, a supreme moment when he talked to Walt Whitman who had been to him the master, at whose feet he had sat since he was a young lad, and who was as pure and earnest and noble and grand as he had hoped. That to Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde seemed "a great big splendid boy" is now matter of history.

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I know that Philadelphia entertained Wilde, and so I fancy him staying with George W. Childs,

dining with Tony Drexel, and being talked to after dinner by Wayne MacVeagh, though I cannot be sure, as Philadelphia, with singular lack of appreciation, included me in none of the entertaining. I saw him only in Horticultural Hall, where he lectured, and at my Uncle's. This was seeing him often enough to be confirmed in my conviction that literature might be a stimulating and emotional adventure.

Many interesting people of many varieties were to be met in my Uncle's rooms. I remember the George Lathrops who, like Lowell and Poe of old, had come to Philadelphia for work: Lathrop rather embittered and disappointed, I thought; Mrs. Lathrop—Rose Hawthorne—a marvellous woman in my estimation, not because of her beautiful gold-red hair, nor her work, which I do not believe was of special importance, but as the daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne and therefore a link between me in my insignificance and the great of Brook Farm and Concord. I remember [Pg 348] editors from New York, impressive creatures; and Members of Parliament, hangers-on of the literary world of London; and actresses, its lions, when in England:—Janauschek, heavily tragic off as on the stage, for whom my Uncle's admiration was less limited than mine; and Miss Genevieve Ward, playing in *Forget-Me-Not*, her one big success, for she failed in the popularity to repeat it that comes so easily to many less accomplished. How timidly I sat and listened, marvelling to find myself there, feeling like the humble who shall be exalted in the Bible, looking upon my Uncle's rooms as the literary threshold from which I was graciously permitted to watch the glorious company within.

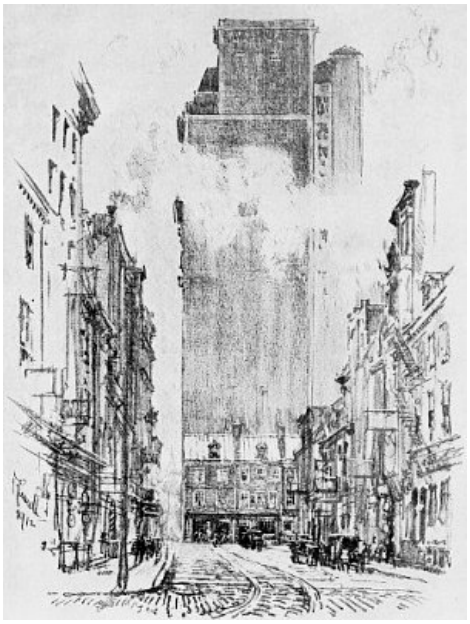
III

I had gone no further than this first, tremulous ardent stage in my career when my Uncle deserted his memorable rooms never to return, and J. and I started on the journey that we thought might last a year—as long as the money held out, we had said, to the discomfort of the family who no doubt saw me promptly on their hands again—and that did not bring me back to Philadelphia for over a quarter of a century. Of literary events during my absence, somebody else must make the record.

"THE LITTLE STREET OF CLUBS," CAMAC STREET ABOVE SPRUCE STREET

When I did go back after all those years, I was conscious that there must have been events for a record to be made of, or I could not have accounted for the change. Literature was now in the air. Local prophets were acknowledged, if not by all Philadelphia, by little groups of satellites [Pg 351] revolving round them. Literary lights had come from under the bushel and were shining in high places. Societies had been industriously multiplying for the encouragement of literature. All such encouragement in my time had devolved upon the Penn Club that patronized literature, among its other interests, and wrote about books in its monthly journal and invited their authors to its meetings. During my absence, not only had the Penn Club continued to flourish—to such good purpose that J. and I were honoured by one of these invitations and felt that never again could Fame and Fate bring us such a triumphant moment, except when the Academy of Fine Arts paid us the same honour and so upset our old belief that no Philadelphian could ever be a prophet in Philadelphia!—but Philadelphia had broken out into a multitude of Clubs and Societies, beginning with the Franklin Inn, for Franklin is not to be got away from even in Clubland, and his Inn, I am assured, is the most comprehensive literary centre to which every author, every artist, every editor, every publisher who thinks himself something belongs to the number of one hundred—that there should be the chance of one hundred with the right to think themselves something in Philadelphia is the wonder!—and in the house in Camac Street, which one Philadelphian I know calls "The Little Street of Clubs," the members meet for light lunch and much talk and, it may be, other rites of which I could speak only from hearsay, my sex disqualifying me from getting my [Pg 352] knowledge of them at first hand. And there is a Business and Professional Club and a Poor

Richard, bringing one back to Franklin again, in the same Little Street. And there are Browning Societies, and Shakespeare Societies, and Drama-Reforming Societies, and Pegasus Societies, and Societies for members to read their own works to each other; and more Societies than the parent Society discoursing in the woods along the Schuylkill could have dreamed of: with the Contemporary Club to assemble their variously divided ends and objects under one head, and to entertain literature as George W. Childs had entertained it, and, going further, to pay literature for being entertained, if literature expresses itself in the form of readings and lectures by those who practise it professionally. The change disconcerted me more than ever when I, Philadelphia born, was assured of a profitable welcome if I would speak to the Club on anything. The invitation was tentative and unofficial, but the Contemporary Club need be in no fear. It may make the invitation official if it will, and never a penny the poorer will it be for my presence: I am that now rare creature, a shy woman subject to stage fright. And I cannot help thinking that, despite the amiability to the native, the stranger, simply because he is a stranger, continues to have the preference, so many are the Englishmen and Englishwomen invited to deliver themselves before the Club who never could gather an audience at home.



DOWN SANSOM STREET FROM EIGHTH STREET

THE LOW HOUSES AT SEVENTH STREET HAVE SINCE BEEN TORN DOWN AND THE WESTERN END OF THE CURTIS BUILDING NOW OCCUPIES THEIR PLACE

And Philadelphia has recaptured the lead in the periodical publication that pays, and I found the [Pg 355] Curtis Building the biggest sky-scraper in Philadelphia, towering above the quiet of Independence Square, a brick and marble and pseudo-classical monument to the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and if in the race literature lags behind, what matter when merit is vouched for in solid dollars and cents? What matter, when the winds of heaven conspire with bricks and mortar to make the passer-by respect it? I am told that on a windy day no man can pass the building without a fight for it, and no woman without the help of stalwart policemen. In her own organ of fashion and feminine sentiment, she has raised up a power against which, even with the vote to back her, she could not prevail.

And Philadelphia is not content to have produced the first daily newspaper but is bent on making it as big as it can be made anywhere. If I preserved my morning paper for two or three days in my hotel bedroom, I fairly waded in newspapers. On Sundays if I carried upstairs only the *Ledger* and the *North American*, I was deep in a flood of Comic Supplements, and Photograph Supplements, and Sport Supplements, and every possible sort of Supplement that any other American newspaper in any other American town can boast of—all the sad stuff that nobody has time to look at but is what the newspaper editor is under the delusion that the public wants—in Philadelphia, one genuine Philadelphia touch added in the letters and gossip of "Peggy Shippen" [Pg 356] and "Sally Wister," names with the double recommendation to Philadelphia of venerable age and unquestionable Philadelphia respectability.

And I found that the Philadelphia writer has increased in numbers and in popularity, whether for better or worse I will not say. I have not the courage for the rôle of critic on my own hearth, knowing the penalty for too much honesty at home. Nor is there any reason why I should hesitate and bungle and make myself unpleasant enemies in doing indifferently what Philadelphia, in its new incarnation, does with so much grace. I have now but to name the Philadelphian's book in Philadelphia to be informed that it is monumental—but to mention the Philadelphia writer of verse to hear that he is a marvel—but to enquire for the Philadelphia writer of prose to be assured that he is a genius. There is not the weeest, most modest little Philadelphia goose that does not sail along valiantly in the Philadelphia procession of swans. The new pose is prettier than the old if scarcely more successful in preserving a sense of proportion, and it saves me from committing myself. I can state the facts that strike me, without prejudice, as the lawyers say.

IV

One is that the last quarter of a century has interested the Philadelphia writer in Philadelphia as he had not been since the days of John Watson. Most Philadelphians owned a copy of Watson's [Pg 357] *Annals*. I have one on my desk before me that belonged to J.'s Father, one must have been in my Grandfather's highly correct Philadelphia house, though I cannot recall it there, for a Philadelphian's duty was to buy Watson just as it was to take in *Lippincott's*, and Philadelphians never shirked their obligations. They probably would not have been able to say what was in Watson, or, if they could, would have shrugged their shoulders and dismissed him for a crank. But they would have owned the *Annals*, all the same. Then the Centennial shook them up and insisted on the value of Philadelphia's history, and Philadelphians were no longer in fashion if they did not feel, or affect, an interest in Philadelphia and its past. After the Centennial the few who began to write about it could rely upon the many to read about it.

THE DOUBLE STAIRWAY IN THE PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL

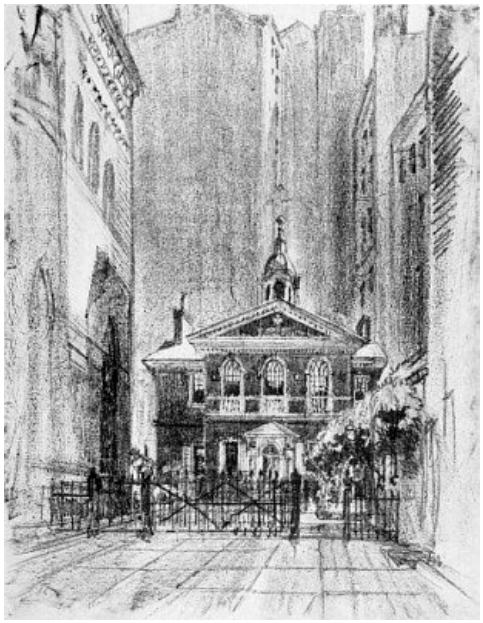
Once, the Philadelphian who was not ashamed to write stories made them out of the fashionable life of Philadelphia. Dr. Weir Mitchell inaugurated the new era, or the revolt, or the secession, or whatever name may be given it with the first historical novel of Philadelphia. It is fortunate, when I come to *Hugh Wynne*, that I have renounced criticism and all its pretences. As a Friend by marriage, if such a thing is possible, I cannot underestimate the danger. Only a Friend born a Friend is qualified to write the true Quaker novel, and I am told by this kind of Friend that *Hugh Wynne* is not free from misrepresentations, misconceptions and misunderstandings. This may be [Pg 358] true—I breathe more freely for not being able to affirm or to deny it—but, as Henley used to say, there it is—the first romantic gold out of the mine Philadelphia history is for all who work it. Since these lines were written the news has reached me that never again will Dr. Mitchell work this or any other mine. I cannot imagine Philadelphia without him. When I last saw him, it seemed to me that no Philadelphian was more alive, more in love with life, better equipped to enjoy life in the way Philadelphia has fashioned it—the Philadelphia life in which his passing away must leave no less a gap than the disappearance of the State House or the Pennsylvania Hospital would leave in the Philadelphia streets. If Dr. Mitchell's digging brought up the romance of Philadelphia, Mr. Sydney George Fisher's has unearthed the facts, for Philadelphia was the root of the great growth of Pennsylvania which is the avowed subject of his history. And the men who helped to make this history have now their biographers at home, though hitherto the task of their biography had been left chiefly to anybody anywhere else who would accept the responsibility, and my Brother, Edward Robins, Secretary of the University of Pennsylvania, has written the life of Benjamin Franklin, without whom the University would not have been, at least would not have been what it is. And in so many different directions has the interest spread that my friend since *Our Convent Days*, Miss Agnes Repplier, has taken time from her studies in literature and from [Pg 361] building a monument to her beloved Agrippina to write its story. When she sent me her book, I opened it with grave apprehensions. In the volumes she had published, humour was the chief charm, and how would humour help her to see Philadelphia? I need not have been uneasy. There is no true humour without tenderness. If she had her smile for the town we all love, as we all have, it was a tender smile, and I think no reader can close her book without wanting to know still more of Philadelphia than it was her special business in that place to tell them. And that no vein of the Philadelphia mine might be left unworked. Miss Anne Hollingsworth Wharton has busied herself to gather up old traditions and old reminiscences, dipping into old letters and diaries, opening wide Colonial doorways, resurrecting Colonial Dames, reshaping the old social and domestic life disdained by historians. The numerous editions into which her books have gone explain that she has not worked for her own edification alone, that Philadelphia, once it was willing to hear any talk about itself, could not hear too much. And after Miss Wharton have come Mr. Mather Lippincott and Mr. Eberlein to collect the old Colonial houses and their memories, followed by Mr. Herbert C. Wise and Mr. Beidleman to study their architecture: just in time if Philadelphia perseveres in its crime of moving out of the houses for the benefit of the Russian Jew and of mixing their memories with squalor. Of all the ways in which Philadelphia has [Pg 362]

changed, none is to me more remarkable than in this rekindling of interest out of which has sprung the new group of writers in its praise.

Nor were the Philadelphia poets idle during my absence. Dr. Mitchell had not before sung so freely in public, nor had he ranked, as I am told he did at the end, his verse higher than his medicine. Mrs. Coates' voice had not carried so far. Dr. Francis Howard Williams had not rhymed for Pageants in praise of Philadelphia. Mr. Harrison Morris had not joined the Philadelphia choir. Mr. Harvey M. Watts had not been heard in the land. I have it on good authority that yearly the Philadelphia poets meet and read their verses to each other, a custom of which I cannot speak from personal knowledge as I have no passport into the magic circle, and perhaps it is just as well for my peace of mind that I have not. Rumour declares that, on certain summer evenings, a suburban porch here or there is made as sweet with their singing as with the perfume of the roses and syringa in the garden, and I am content with the rumour for there is always the chance the music might not be so sweet if I heard it. I like to remember that the poets on their porch, whether their voices be sweet or harsh, descend in a direct line from the young men who wandered, discoursing of literature, along the Schuylkill. And Philadelphia's love of poetry is to be assured not only by its own singers but by its care, now as in the past, for the song of others. Horace Howard Furness, Jr., has taken over his father's task and, in so doing, will see that [Pg 363] Philadelphia continues to be famous for the most complete edition of Shakespeare.

There had been equal activity during my absence among the story-tellers. Since Brockden Brown, not one had written so ambitious a tale as *Hugh Wynne*, not one had ever laughed so good-humouredly at Philadelphia as Thomas A. Janvier in his short stories of the Hutchinson Ports and Rittenhouse Smiths—what gaiety has gone out with his death! Not one had ever seen character with such truth as Owen Wister,—if only he could understand that as good material awaits him in Philadelphia as in Virginia and Wyoming. And John Luther Long is another of the story-tellers Philadelphia can claim though, like Mr. Wister, he shows a greater fancy for far-away lands or to wander among strange people at home.

There is no branch of literature that Philadelphia has not taken under its active protection. Who has contributed more learnedly to the records of the Inquisition than Henry Charles Lea, or to the chronicles of the law in the United States than Mr. Hampton L. Carson and Mr. Charles Burr, duly conscious as Philadelphia lawyers should be of the Philadelphian's legal responsibility? Who can compete in knowledge of the evolution of the playing card with Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer or rival her collection? Who ever thought of writing the history of autobiography before Mrs. Anna Robeson Burr? The time had but to come for an admirer to play the Boswell to [Pg 364] Walt Whitman, and Mr. Traubel appeared. When Columbia wanted a Professor of Journalism, Philadelphia sent it Dr. Talcott Williams. When England seemed a comfortable shelter for research there was no need to be in a hurry about, Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith showed what could be done with an exhaustive study of Dr. Donne, though why he was not showing instead what could be done with the Loganian Library, where the chance to show it was his for the claiming, he alone can say. When such recondite subjects as Egyptian and Assyrian called for interpreters, Philadelphia was again on the spot with Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson and Dr. Morris Jastrow. And for authorities on the drama and history, it gives us Mr. Felix Schelling and Dr. McMaster,—but perhaps for me to attempt to complete the list would only be to make it incomplete. Here, too, I tread on dangerous ground. It may be cowardly, but it is safe to give the tribute of my recognition to all that is being accomplished by the University of Pennsylvania and its scholars—by Bryn Mawr College and its students—by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania—by other Colleges and learned bodies—by innumerable individuals—and not invite exposure by venturing into detail and upon comment. It is in these emergencies that the sense of my limitations comes to my help.



CARPENTER'S HALL, BUILT 1771

At least I am not afraid to say that, on my return, I fancied I found this side of Philadelphia life [Pg 367]

less a side apart, less isolated, more identified with the social side, and the social side, for its part, accepting the identification. The University and Bryn Mawr could not have played the same social part in the Philadelphia I remember. Perhaps I shall express what I mean more exactly if I say that, returning with fresh eyes, I saw Philadelphia ready and pleased, as I had not remembered it, to acknowledge openly talents and activities it once made believe to ignore or despise—to go further really and, having for the first time squarely faced its accomplishments, for the first time to blow its own trumpet. The new spirit is one I approve. I would not call all the work that comes out of Philadelphia monumental, as some Philadelphians do, or Philadelphia itself a modern Athens, or the hub of the literary universe, or any other absurd name. But I do think that in literature and learning it is now contributing, as it always has contributed, its fair share to the country, and that if Philadelphia does not say so, the rest of the country will not, for the rest of the country is still under the delusion that Philadelphia knows how to do nothing but sleep.

CHAPTER XIV: PHILADELPHIA AND ART

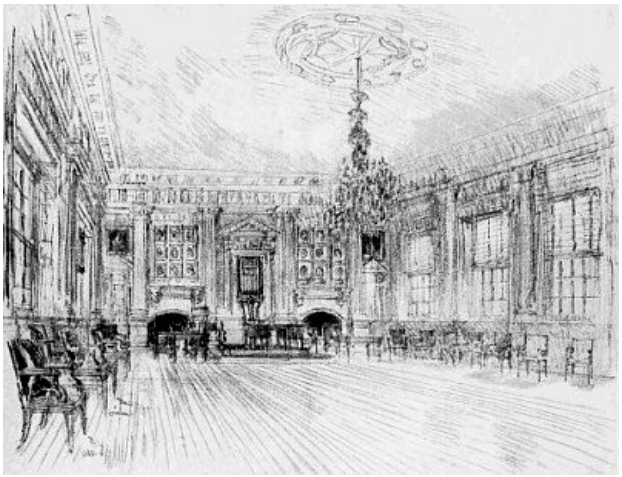
[Pg 368]

I

Ignorance of art and all relating to it could not have been greater than mine when I paid that first eventful visit to J.'s studio on Chestnut Street.

I lay the blame only partly on my natural capacity for ignorance. It was a good deal the fault of the sort of education I received and the influences among which I lived—the fault of the place and the period in which I grew up. Nominally, art was not neglected at the Convent. A drawing-class was conducted by an old bear of a German, who also gave music lessons, and who prospered so on his monopoly of the arts with us that he was able to live in a delightful cottage down near the river. Drawing was an "extra" of which I was never thought worthy, but I used to see the class at the tables set out for the purpose in the long low hall leading to the Chapel, the master grumbling and growling and scolding, the pupils laboriously copying with crayon or chalk little cubes and geometrical figures or, at a more advanced stage, the old-fashioned copy-book landscape and building, rubbing in and rubbing out, wrestling with the composition as if it were a problem in algebra. The Convent could take neither credit, nor discredit, for the system; it was the one then in vogue in every school, fashionable or otherwise, and not so far removed, after all, from systems followed to this day in certain Academies of Art.

[Pg 371]



INDEPENDENCE HALL—LENGTHWISE VIEW

Another class was devoted to an art then considered very beautiful, called Grecian Painting. It was not my privilege to study this either, but I gathered from friends who did that it was of the simplest: on the back of an engraving, preferably of a religious subject and prepared by an ingenious process that made it transparent, the artist dabbed his colours according to written instructions. The result, glazed and framed, was supposed to resemble, beyond the detection of any save an expert, a real oil painting and was held in high esteem.

A third class was in the elegant art of making wax flowers and, goodness knows why, my Father squandered an appreciable sum of his declining fortunes on having me taught it. I am the more puzzled by his desire to bestow upon me this accomplishment because none of the other girls' fathers shared his ambition for their daughters and I was the only member of the class. Alone, in a room at the top of the house—chosen no doubt for the light, as if the deeds there done ought not to have been shrouded in darkness—I worked many hours under the tuition of Mother Alicia, cutting up little sheets of wax into leaves and petals, colouring them, sticking them together, and producing in the end two horrible masterpieces—one a water-lily placed on a mirror under a glass shade, the other a basket of carnations and roses and camelias—both of which masterpieces my poor family, to avoid hurting my feelings, had to place in the parlour and keep there I blush to remember how long. It must be admitted that this was scarcely an achievement

[Pg 372]

to encourage an interest in art. For the appreciation of art, as for its practice, it is important to have nothing to unlearn from the beginning; mine was the sort of training to reduce me to the necessity of unlearning everything; and most of my contemporaries, on leaving school, were in the same plight.

My eyes were no better trained than my hands. Works of art at the Convent consisted of the usual holy statues designed for our spiritual, not æsthetic edification; the Stations of the Cross whose merit was no less spiritual; two copies of Murillo and Rafael which my Father, in the fervour of conversion, presented to the Mother Superior; and a picture of St. Elizabeth of Hungary that adorned the Convent parlour, where we all felt it belonged, such a marvel to us was its combination of brilliantly-coloured needle-and-brush work.

Illustrated books there must have been in the ill-assorted hodge-podge of a collection in the Library from which we obtained our reading for Thursday afternoons and Sundays. But though I doubt if there was a book I had not sampled, even if I had not been able to read it straight through, I can recall no illustrations except the designs by Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt, made for Moxon's Tennyson and reproduced by the Harpers for a cheap American edition of the Poems, a copy of which was given to me one year as a prize. Little barbarian as I was, I disliked [Pg 373] the drawings of the Pre-Raphaelites because they mystified me—the Lady of Shalott, entangled in her wide floating web, the finest drawing Holman Hunt ever made; the company of weeping queens in the Vale of Avalon, in Rossetti's harmoniously crowded design—when I flattered myself I understood everything that was to be understood, more especially Tennyson's Poems, many of which I could recite glibly from beginning to end—and did recite diligently to myself at hours when I ought to have been busy with the facts and figures in the class books before me. Most people, young or old, dislike anything which shows them how much less they understand than they think they do.

Of the history of art I was left in ignorance as abject, the next to nothing I knew gleaned from a *Lives of the Artists* adapted to children, a favourite book in the Library, one providing me with the theme for my sole serious effort in drama—a three-act play, Michael Angelo its hero, which, with a success many dramatists might envy. I wrote, produced, acted in, and found an audience of good-natured nuns for, all at the ripe age of eleven.

II

When I left the Convent for the holidays and eventually "for good," little in my new surroundings was calculated to increase my knowledge of art or to teach me the first important fact, as a step to knowledge, that I knew absolutely nothing on the subject. In my Grandfather's house, art was [Pg 374] represented by the family portraits, the engraving after Gilbert Stuart's Washington, the illustrated lamp shade, and the Rogers Group. My Father, re-established in a house of his own, displayed an unaccountably liberal taste, straying from the Philadelphia standard to the extent of decorating his parlour walls with engravings of Napoleon he had picked up in Paris—to one, printed in colour, attaching a value which I doubt if the facts would justify, though, as I have never come across it in any collection, Museum, or Gallery, it may be rarer and, therefore, more valuable, than I think. Other fruits of his old journeys to Paris were two engravings, perhaps after Guys, of two famous ladies of that town, whose presence in our prim and proper and highly domestic dining-room seems to me the most incongruous accident in an otherwise correctly-appointed Philadelphia household. When I think of Napoleon replacing Washington on our walls, I suspect my Father of having broken loose from the Philadelphia traces in his youth, though by the time I knew him the prints were the only signs of a momentary dash for freedom on the part of so scrupulous a Philadelphian.

It is curious that illustrations should have as small a place in my memory of home life as of the Convent. The men of the Golden Age of the Sixties had published their best work long before I had got through school, and in my childhood books gave me my chief amusement. But I [Pg 375] remember nothing of their fine designs. The earlier Cruikshank drawings for Dickens I knew well in the American edition which my Father owned, and never so long as I live can I see the Dickens world except as it is shown in the much over-rated Cruikshank interpretations. Other memories are of the highly-finished, sentimental steel-engravings of Scott's heroines, including Meg Merrilies, whom I still so absurdly associate with Crazy Norah. Another series of portraits, steel-engravings, as highly-finished and but slightly less insipid, illustrated my Father's edition of Thiers' *French Revolution* through which, one conscientious winter, I considered it my duty to wade. And I recall also the large volumes of photographs after Rafael and other masters that, in the Eighteen-Seventies, came into fashion for Christmas presents and parlour-table books, and that I think must have heralded the new departure the Centennial is supposed to have inaugurated.

If I try to picture to myself the interior of the houses where I used to visit, art in them too seems best represented by family portraits no more remarkable than my Grandfather's, by the engraving of Stuart's Washington, or of Penn signing the Treaty with the Indians, or of the American Army crossing the Delaware, all three part of the traditional decoration of the Philadelphia hall and dining-room, and by a Rogers Group and an illustrated lamp shade. The library in which a friend first showed me a volume of Hogarth's engravings I remember as [Pg 376] exceptional. But I have an idea that had I possessed greater powers of appreciation then, I should have a keener memory now of other houses full of interesting pictures and prints and illustrated books, which I did not see simply because my eyes had not been trained to see them.

Certainly, there were Philadelphia collections of these things then, as there always have been—only they were not heard of and talked about as they are now, or, if they were, it was to dismiss their collecting as an amiable fad. Mr. John S. Phillips had got together the engravings which the Pennsylvania Academy is to-day happy to possess. People who were interested did not have to be told that Mr. Claghorn's collection was perhaps the finest in the country; J. was one of the wise minority, and often on Sundays took advantage of Mr. Claghorn's generosity in letting anybody with the intelligence to realize the privilege come to look at his prints and study them; but I, who had not learned to be interested, knew nothing of the collection until I knew J. Gebbie and Barrie's store flourished in Walnut Street as it hardly could had there not been people in Philadelphia, as Gebbie once wrote to Frederick Keppel, who collected "these smoky, poky old prints." Gebbie and Barrie have gone, but Barrie remains, a publisher of art books, and there are other dealers no less important and perhaps more enterprising, who prosper, as one of them has recently assured me they could not, if they depended for their chief support upon Philadelphia. [Pg 379] But Philadelphia gives, as it gave, solid foundations of support, with the difference that to-day it takes good care the world should know it.

GIRARD COLLEGE

A few Philadelphians collected pictures. One of the show places, more select and exclusive than the Mint and Girard College, for the rare visitor to the town with a soul above dancing and dining, was Mr. Gibson's gallery in Walnut Street, open on stated days to anybody properly introduced, or it may be that only a visiting card with a proper address was necessary for admission. The less I say about the Gallery the better, for I never went to Mr. Gibson's myself, though I knew the house as I passed it for one apart in Philadelphia—one where so un-Philadelphia-like a possession as a picture gallery was allowed to disturb the Philadelphian's first-story arrangement of front and back parlours. The collection can now be visited, without any preliminary formalities, at the Academy of Fine Arts. Mrs. Bloomfield Moore was still living in Philadelphia and she must have begun collecting though, well as I knew the inside of her house in my young days, I hesitate to assert it as a fact—which shows my unpardonable blindness to most things in life worth while. I never, as far as I remember, went anywhere for the express purpose of looking at paintings. I had not even the curiosity which is the next best thing to knowledge and understanding. I have said how meagre are my impressions of the old Academy on Chestnut Street. It is a question to me whether I had ever seen more than the outside of the new Academy [Pg 380] at Broad and Cherry Streets before I met J. To go to the exhibitions there had not as yet come within the list of things Philadelphians who were not artists made a point of doing. Altogether, judging from my own recollections, Philadelphians did not bother about art, and did not stop to ask whether there was any to bother about in Philadelphia, or not.

III

Their indifference was their loss. The art, with a highly respectable pedigree, was there for Philadelphia to enjoy and be proud of, if Philadelphia had not been as reticent about it as about all its other accomplishments and possessions. I have a decided suspicion that I have come to a subject about which I might do well to observe the same reticence, not only as a Philadelphian, but as the wife of an artist. For if, as the wife of a Friend, I have learned that only Friends are qualified to write of themselves, as the wife of an artist I have reason to believe it more discreet to leave all talk of art to artists, though discretion in this regard has not been one of the virtues of my working life. But just now, I am talking not so much of art as of my attitude towards art which must have been the attitude of the outsider in Philadelphia, or else it would not have been mine. As for the genealogy of Philadelphia art, it is, like the genealogy of Philadelphia families, in the records of the town for all who will to read.

In the very beginning of things Philadelphia may have had no more pressing need for the artist's [Pg 381] studio than for the writer's study. But it was surprising how soon its needs expanded in this

direction. English and other European critics deplore the absence of an original—or aboriginal—school of art in America, as if they thought the American artist should unconsciously have lost, on his way across the Atlantic, that inheritance from centuries of civilization and tradition which the modern artist who calls himself Post-Impressionist is deliberately endeavoring to get rid of, and on his arrival have started all over again like a child with a clean slate. Only an American art based on the hieroglyphics and war paint of the Indians would satisfy the critic with this preconceived idea. But the first American artists were not savages, they were not primitives. They did not paint pictures like Indians any more than the first American architects built wigwams like Indians, or the first American Colonials dressed themselves in beads and feathers like Indians. Colonials had come from countries where art was highly developed, and they could no more forget the masters at home than they could forget the literature upon which they and their fathers had been nourished. If years passed before a Philadelphian began to paint pictures, it was because Philadelphians had not time to paint as they had not time to write. The wonder really is that they began so soon—that so soon the artist got to work, and so soon there was a public to care enough for his work to enable him to do it. [Pg 382]

In a thousand ways the interest of Philadelphians in art expressed itself. It is written large in the beauty of their houses and in their readiness to introduce ornament where ornament belonged. The vine and cluster of grapes carved on William Penn's front door; the panelling and woodwork in Colonial houses; the decoration of a public building like the State House; the furniture, the silver, the china, we pay small fortunes for when we can find them and have not inherited them; the single finely-proportioned mirror or decorative silhouette on a white wall; the Colonial rooms that have come down to us untouched, perfect in their simplicity, not an ornament too many;—all show which way the wind of art blew.

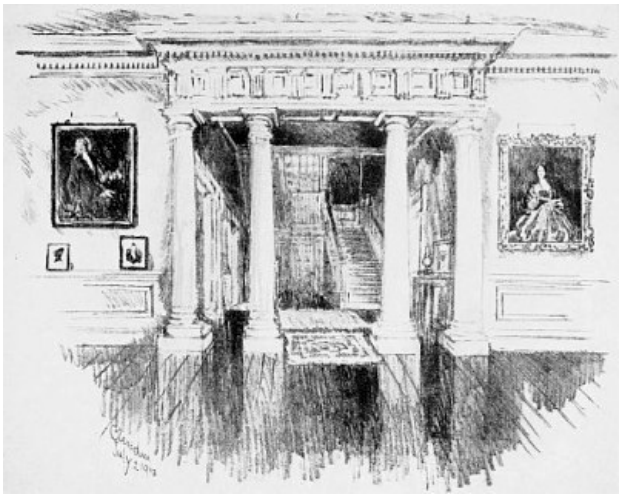
There was hardly one of the great men from any American town, makers of first the Revolution and then the Union, who did not appreciate the meaning and importance of art and did not leave a written record, if only in a letter, of his appreciation. Few things have struck me more in reading the Correspondence and Memoirs and Diaries of the day. But these men were not only patriots, they were men of intelligence, and they knew the folly of expecting to find in Philadelphia or New York or Boston the same beautiful things that in Paris or London or Italy filled them with delight and admiration, or of seeing in this fact a reason to lower their standard. The critics who are shocked because we have no aboriginal school might do worse than read some of these old documents. I recommend in particular a passage in a letter John Adams wrote [Pg 385] to his wife from Paris. It impressed me so when I came upon it, it seemed to me such an admirable explanation of a situation perplexing to critics, that I copied it in my notebook, and I cannot resist quoting it now.

UPSALA, GERMANTOWN

"It is not indeed the fine arts which our country requires," he writes, "the useful, the mechanic arts are those which we have occasion for in a young country as yet simple and not far advanced in luxury, although much too far for her age and character.... The science of government it is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of legislation and administration and negotiation ought to take place of, indeed to exclude, in a manner, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain."

John Adams and his contemporaries may not have had American grandfathers with the leisure to earn for them the right to study art, but they did not ignore it. All the time they felt its appeal and responded to the appeal as well as busy men, absorbed in the development of a new country, could. They got themselves painted whenever they happened to combine the leisure to sit and a [Pg 386] painter to sit to. When a statesman like Jefferson, who confessed himself "an enthusiast on the

subject of the arts," was sent abroad, he devoted his scant leisure to securing the best possible sculptor for the statue of Washington, or the best possible models for public buildings at home. Much that we now prize in architecture and design we owe to the men who supposed themselves too occupied with politics and war to encourage art and artists. They were not too busy to provide the beauty without which liberty would have been a poor affair—not too busy to welcome the first Americans who saw to it that all the beauty should not be imported from Europe. "After the first cares for the necessaries of life are over, we shall come to think of the embellishments," Franklin wrote to his London landlady's daughter. "Already some of our young geniuses begin to lisp attempts at painting, poetry and music. We have a young painter now studying at Rome."



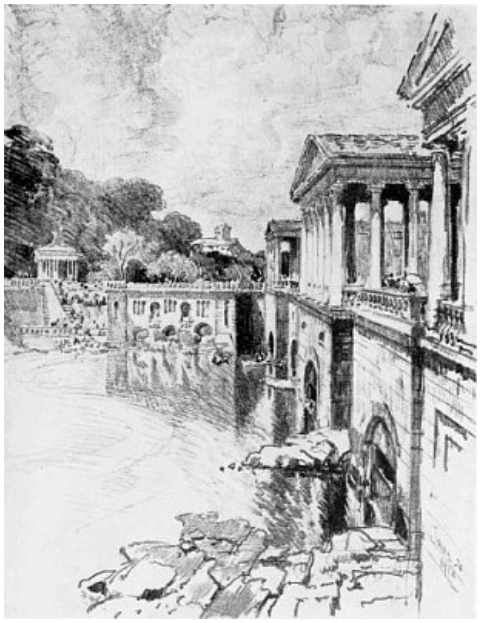
THE HALL AT CLIVEDEN, THE CHEW HOUSE

In this care for the embellishments of life, of so much more real importance than the necessaries, Philadelphia was the first town to take the lead, though Philadelphians have since gone out of their way to forget it. The old Quaker lady in her beautiful dress, preserving her beautiful repose, in her beautiful old and historic rooms, shows the Friends' instinctive love of beauty even if they never intentionally, or deliberately, undertook to create it. For the most beautiful of what we now call Colonial furniture produced in the Colonies, Philadelphia is given the credit by authorities on [Pg 389] the subject. Franklin's letters could also be quoted to show Philadelphians' keenness to have their portraits done in "conversation" or "family" pieces, or alone in miniatures, whichever were most in vogue. Even Friends, before Franklin, when they visited England sought out a fashionable portrait-painter like Kneller because he was supposed the best. Artists from England came to Philadelphia for commissions, artists from other Colonies drifted there, Peale, Stuart, Copley. Philadelphia, in return, spared its artists to England, and the Royal Academy was forced to rely upon Philadelphia for its second President—Benjamin West. The artist's studio in Philadelphia had become a place of such distinction by the Revolution that members of the first Congress felt honoured themselves when allowed to honour it with their presence—in the intervals between legislating and dining. The Philadelphian to-day, goaded by the moss-grown jest over Philadelphia slowness and want of enterprise into giving the list of Philadelphia "firsts," or the things Philadelphia has been the first to do in the country, can include among them the picture exhibition which Philadelphia was the first to hold, and the Pennsylvania Academy which was the first Academy of the Fine Arts instituted in America. Philadelphia was the richest American town and long the Capital; the marvel would be if it had not taken the lead in art as in politics.

CHAPTER XV: PHILADELPHIA AND ART—CONTINUED [Pg 390]

I

By the time I grew up years had passed since Philadelphia had ceased to be the Capital, and during these years its atmosphere had not been especially congenial to art. But the general conditions had not been more stimulating anywhere in America. The Hudson River School is about all that came of a period which, for that matter, owed its chief good to revolt in countries where more was to be expected of it: in France, to first the Romanticists and then the Impressionists who had revolted against the Academic; in England to the Pre-Raphaelites who, with noisy advertisement, broke away from Victorian convention. Art in America had not got to the point of development when there was anything to revolt against or to break away from. What it needed was a revival of the old interest, a reaction from the prevailing indifference to all there was of art in the country.



**THE OLD WATER-WORKS,
FAIRMOUNT PARK**

Some say this came in Philadelphia with the Centennial. The Centennial's stirring up, however, would not have done much good had not artists already begun to stir themselves up. How a number of Americans who had been studying in Paris and Munich returned to America full of youth and enthusiasm in the early Eighteen-Seventies, there to lead a new movement in [Pg 393] American art, has long since passed into history—also the fact that one of the most remarkable outcomes of this new movement was the new school of illustration that quickly made American illustrated books and magazines famous throughout the world. But what concerns me as a Philadelphian is that, once more at this critical moment, Philadelphia took the lead. The publishers of the illustrated books and magazines may have been chiefly in New York, the illustrations were chiefly from Philadelphia, and there is no reason why Philadelphia should not admit it with decent pride. Abbey and Frost were actually, Howard Pyle and Smedley virtually, Philadelphians. Blum and Brennan passed through the Academy Schools. J., when I met him, was at the threshold of his career. And the illustrators were but a younger offshoot of the new Philadelphia group. Miss Mary Cassatt had already started to work in Paris, where Jules Stewart and Ridgway Knight represented the older Philadelphia school; Mrs. Anna Lea Merritt was already in London; J. McLure Hamilton had finished his studies at Antwerp; Alexander and Birge Harrison had been heard of in Paris where Sargent—who belongs to Philadelphia if to any American town—had carried off his first honours. At home Richards was painting his marines; Poore had begun his study of animals; Dana, I think, was beginning his water-colours; William Sartain had long been known as an engraver; Miss Emily Sartain was an art editor and soon to be the head of an art school; the Moran family, with the second generation, had become almost a [Pg 394] Philadelphia institution; from Stephen Ferris J. could learn the technic of etching as from the Claghorn collection he could trace its development through the ages; and of the younger men and women, his contemporaries, he did not leave me long in ignorance.

My own work had led me to the discovery of so many worlds of work in Philadelphia, I could not have believed there was room for another. But there was, and the artists' world was so industrious, so full of energy, so sufficient unto itself, so absorbed in itself, that, with the first glimpse into it, the difficulty was to believe space and reason could be left for any outside of it. This new experience was as extraordinary a revelation as my initiation into the newspaper world. I had been living, without suspecting it, next door to people who thought of nothing, talked of nothing, occupied themselves with nothing, but art: people for whom a whole army of men and women were busily employed, managing schools, running factories, keeping stores, putting up buildings—delightful people with whom I could not be two minutes without reproaching myself for not having known from the cradle that nothing in life save art ever did count, or ever could. And at this point I can afford to get rid of Philadelphia reticence without scruple since through this, to me, new world of work I had the benefit of J.'s guidance.

It was a moment when it had got to be the fashion for artists in all the studios in the same building to give receptions on the same day, and I learned that J.'s, so strange to me at first, was [Pg 395] only one of an endless number. For part of my new experience was the round of the studios on the appointed day, when I was too oppressed by my ignorance and my desire not to expose it and my uncertainty as to what was the right thing to say in front of a picture, that I do not remember much besides, except the miniatures of Miss Van Tromp and the marines of Prosper Senat, and why they should now stand out from the confused jumble of my memories I am sure I cannot see.

Then J. took me to the Academy of Fine Arts and it was revealed to me as a place not to pass by but to go inside of: artists from all over the country struggling to get in for its annual exhibition of paintings which already had a reputation as one of the finest given in the country; artists from all over the world drawn in for its international exhibitions of etchings—Whistler, Seymour Haden, Appian, Lalanne, a catalogue-full of etchers introduced for the first time to my uneducated eyes; everybody who could crowding in on Thursday afternoons to sit on the stairs

and listen to the music, while I upbraided myself for not having known ages ago what delightful things there were to do, instead of letting my time hang heavy on my hands, in Philadelphia.

J. had me invited to more private evenings and reunions of societies of artists, and I remember—if they do not—meeting many who were at the very heart of the machinery that made the wheels of [Pg 396] the new movement go round:—Mr. Leslie Miller, the director of the School of Industrial Art from which promising students were emerging or had emerged; Stephen Parrish and Blanche Dillaye and Gabrielle Clements, whose etchings were with the Whistlers and the Seymour Hadens in the international exhibitions; Alice Barber full of commissions from magazines; Margaret Leslie and Mary Trotter in their fervent apprenticeship; Boyle and Stephens the sculptors; Colin Cooper and Stephens the painters. What a rank outsider I felt in their company! And how grateful I was for my talent as a listener that helped to save me from exposure!

II

I saw another side of the revival at my Uncle's Industrial Art School in the eagerness of teachers and pupils both to know and to learn and to practise—an eagerness that had, I fear, an eye to ultimate profit. That was the worst feature of the booming of art in the Eighteen-Eighties. Gain was the incentive that drove too many students to the art schools of Philadelphia as to those of Paris, or London, and set countless amateurs in their own homes to hammering brass and carving wood and stamping leather. Art was to them an investment, a speculation, a gentlemanly—or ladylike—way of making a fortune. An English painter I know told me a few years since that he had put quite six thousand pounds into art, what with studying and travelling for subjects, and he thought he had a right to look for a decent return on his money. That expresses the attitude of a [Pg 399] vast number of Philadelphians in their new active enthusiasm. However trumpery the amount of labour they invested, they counted on it to bring them in a big dividend in dollars and cents.

THE STAIRWAY, STATE HOUSE

I am afraid my Uncle, without meaning to, encouraged this spirit, when he started not only the Industrial Art School, but the Decorative Art Club in Pine Street. He was an optimist and saw only the beautiful side of anything he was interested in. To please him I was made the Treasurer of the Club. The Committee sympathised with my Uncle and worked for the ultimate good he thought the Club was to accomplish in Philadelphia. Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Mifflin, Mrs. Pepper, Miss Julia Biddle with whom I served, agreed with him that women who had some training in art would understand better the meaning of art and the pleasure of the stimulus this understanding could give. My Uncle, however, always ready to do anybody a good turn, went further and was anxious that provision should also be made to sell the work done in the Club, which in this way would be open to many who could not otherwise afford it. I fancy that this provision, if not the success of the Club, was one of its chief attractions. The amateur is apt to believe she can romp in gaily and snatch whatever prizes are going by playing with the art which is the life's work, mastered by toil and travail, of the artist.

I criticise now, but in my new ardour I saw nothing to criticise. On the contrary, I saw perfection: artists and students encouraged, occupations and interests lavished upon amateurs whose lives [Pg 400] had been as empty as mine; and I worked myself up into a fine enthusiasm of belief in art as a new force, or one that if it had always existed had been waiting for its prophet,—just as electricity had waited for Franklin to capture and apply it to human needs. I went so far in my exaltation as to write an inspired—or so it seemed to me—article on Art as the New Religion, proving that the old religions having perished and the old gods fallen, art had re-arisen in its splendour and glory to provide a new gospel, a new god, to take their place, and I filled my essay with ingenious arguments, and liberal quotations from William Morris and Ruskin, and rhetorical flights of prophecy. I had not given the last finishing and convincing touches to my exposition of the new gospel when, with my marriage, came other work more urgent, and I was spared the humiliation of seeing my Palace of Art collapse, like the house built on sand, while I still believed

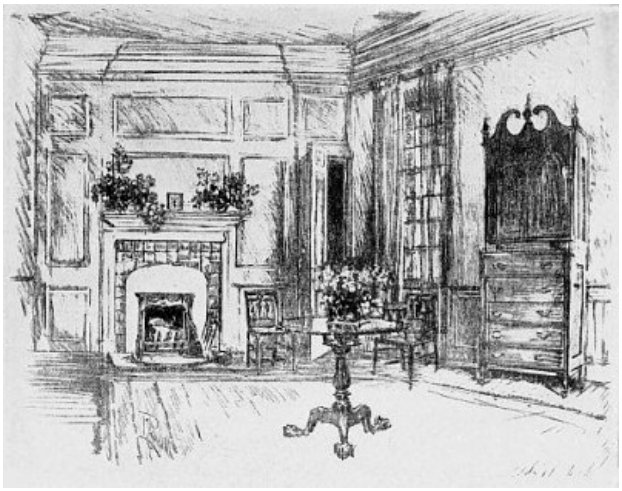
in it. In the years that followed I got to know most of the galleries and exhibitions of Europe; despite my scruples I made a profession of writing about art; and the education this meant taught me, among other things, the simple truth that art is art, and not religion. But I cannot laugh at the old folly of my ignorance. The enthusiasm, the mood, out of which the article grew, was better, healthier, than the apathy that had saved me from being ridiculous because it risked nothing. [Pg 401]

III

These years away from home were spent largely in the company of artists and were filled with the talk of art; what had been marvels to me in Philadelphia became the commonplaces of every day. But I was all the time in Italy, or France, or England, and could not realize the extent to which, for Philadelphians who had not wandered, artists and art were also becoming more and more a part of everyday life. I did not see Philadelphia in the changing, not until it had changed, and possibly I feel the change more than those who lived through it. It is not so much in the things done, in actual accomplishment, that I am conscious of it, as in the new concern for art, the new attentions heaped upon it, the new deference to it. Art is in the air—"on the town," a subject of polite conversation, a topic for the drawing-room.

When I first came out, art had never supplied small talk in society, never filled up a gap at a dull dinner or reception. We should have been disgracefully behind the times if we could not chatter about Christine Nilsson and Campanini and the last opera, or Irving and Ellen Terry and their interpretation of Shakespeare; if we had not kept up with Trollope and George Eliot, and read the latest Howells and Henry James, and raved over the Rubaiyat. But we might have had the brand-newest biographical dictionary of artists at our fingers' ends—as we had not—and there would have been no occasion to use our information. Nobody sparkled by sprinkling his talk with the [Pg 402] names of artists and sculptors, nobody asked what was in the last Academy or who had won the gold medal in Paris, nobody discussed the psychology or the meaning of the picture of the year. I remember thinking I was doing something rather pretentious and pedantic when I began to read Ruskin. I remember how a friend who was a tireless student of Kügler and Crowe and Cavalcaselle, as a preparation to the journey to Europe that might never come off, was looked upon as a sort of prodigy—a Philadelphia phenomenon. But to-day I am sure there is not the name of an artist, from Cimabue and Giotto to Matisse and Picasso, that does not go easily round the table at any Philadelphia dinner; not a writer on art, from Lionardo to Nordau, who cannot fill up awkward pauses at an afternoon crush; not one of the learned women of Philadelphia who could not tell you where every masterpiece in the world hangs and just what her emotions before it should be, who could not play the game of attributions as gracefully as the game of bridge, who could not dispose of the most abstruse points in art as serenely as she settles the simplest squabble in the nursery.

The Academy is no longer abandoned in the wilderness of Broad and Cherry Streets; its receptions and private views are social functions, its exhibitions are events of importance, the best given in Philadelphia and throughout the land, its collections are the pride of the wealthy [Pg 405] Philadelphians who contribute to them, its schools are stifled with scholarships.



UPPER ROOM, STENTON

The other Art Schools have multiplied, not faster, however, than the students whose legions account for, if they do not warrant, the existence not of the Academy Schools alone, but of the School of Industrial Art, the Drexel Institute, the Woman's School of Design, the Uncle's old little experiment enlarged into a large Public Industrial Art School where, I am told, the Founder is comfortably forgotten—of more institutes, schools, classes than I probably have heard of.

The Art Galleries have multiplied: there is some reason for Memorial Hall now that the Wilstach Collection is housed there, and the *Yellow Buskin*, one of the finest Whistlers, hangs on its walls, now that the collections of decorative art are being added to by Mrs. John Harrison and other Philadelphians who are ambitious for their town and its supremacy in all things. Nor does this Philadelphia ambition soar to loftier heights than in the project for the new Parkway from the City Hall with a new Art Gallery—the centre of a sort of University of Art if I can rely upon the

plans—to crown the Park end of this splendid (partially still on paper) avenue, as the Arc de Triomphe crowns the western end of the Avenue of the Champs-Elysées.

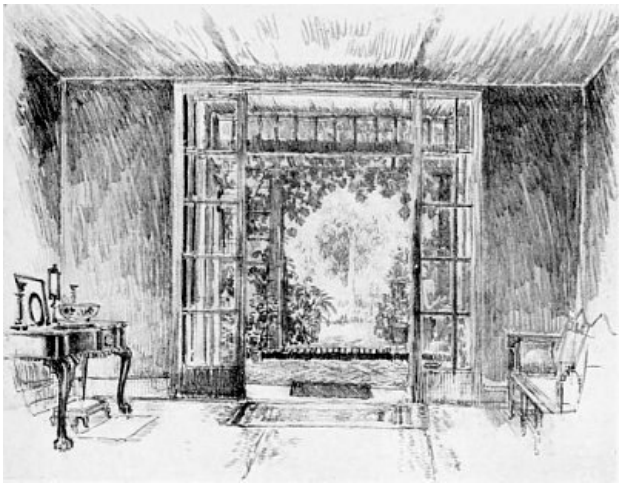
The collectors multiply, their aims, purse, field of research, all expanding; their shyness on the subject surmounted; Old Masters for whom Europe now weeps making their triumphant entry [Pg 406] into Philadelphia; the highest price, that test of the modern patron, paid for a Rembrandt in Philadelphia; the collections of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Widener and Mr. Elkins and Mr. Thomas in Philadelphia as well known by the authorities as the Borghesi collection in Rome or the Duke of Westminster's in London.

The social life of art grows and can afford the large luxurious Club in South Broad Street, artists and their friends amply supporting it. And the old Sketch Club, once glad of the shelter of a room or so, has blossomed forth in a house of its own in the flourishing "Little Street of Clubs," with the Woman's Plastic Club close by.

The artists only, as far as I can see, have not multiplied and grown in proportion. But the artist somehow appears to be the last consideration of those who think they are encouraging art. Still there are new names for my old list: Henry Thouron, Violet Oakley, Maxfield Parrish, now ranked with the decorative painters—and, I might just point out in passing, it is to Philadelphia that Boston, Harrisburg, and at times New York must send for their decorators, whose work I have not seen in place to express an opinion on it one way or the other. Cecilia Beaux and Adolphe Borie now figure with the portrait painters; Waugh and Fromuth with the marine painters, who include also Stokes, the chronicler of Arctic splendors of sea and sky, and Edward Stratton Holloway, the making of beautiful books claiming his interest no less than the sea; [Pg 407] Glackens, Thornton Oakley, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Jessie Wilcox Smith with the illustrators; McCarter, Redfield with the group gathered about the Academy; Grafly with the sculptors; Clifford Addams, Daniel Garber with the winners of scholarships. Architects have not lagged behind in the race—after the Furness period, a Cope and Stewardson period, a Wilson Eyre period, to-day a Zantzinger, Borie, Medary, Day, Page, Trumbauer, and a dozen more periods each progressing in the right direction; with young men from the Beaux-Arts and young men from the University School, eager to tackle the ever-increasing architectural commissions in a town growing and re-fashioning itself faster than any mushroom upstart of the West, to inaugurate a period of their own.

IV

I am not a fighter by nature, I set a higher value on peace as I grow older, and I look to ending my days in Philadelphia. Therefore I chronicle the change; I do not criticise it. But a few comments I may permit myself and yet hope that Philadelphia will not bear me in return the malice I could so ill endure. I think the gain to Philadelphia from this new interest has, in many ways, been great. If art is the one thing that lives through the ages—art whether expressed in words, or paint, or bricks and mortar, or the rhythm of sound,—it follows that the pleasure it gives—when genuine—is the most enduring. This is a distinct, if perhaps at the moment negative, [Pg 408] gain. A more visible gain I think comes from the new desire, the new determination to care for the right thing: a fashion due perhaps to the insatiable American craving for "culture," and at times guilty of unintelligent excesses, but pleasanter in results than the old crazes that filled Philadelphia drawing-rooms with spinning wheels and cat's tails and Morris mediævalism,—if they brought *Art Nouveau* in their train, thank fortune it has left no traces of its passing; a fashion more dignified in results than the old standards that filled Philadelphia streets with flights of originality, and green stone monsters, and the deplorable Philadelphia brand of Gothic and Renaissance, Romanesque and Venetian, Tudor and everything except the architecture that belongs by right and tradition in Penn's beautiful town.



WYCK
The doorway from within

But interest in art does not create art, and when Philadelphia believes in this interest as a creator, Philadelphia falls into a mistake that it has not even the merit of having originated. I have watched for many years the attempts to make art grow, to force it like a hot-house plant. The same thing is going on everywhere. In England, South Kensington for more than half a

century has had its schools in all parts of the kingdom, the County Council has added to them, the City Corporation and the City Guilds have followed suit, artists open private classes, exhibitions have increased in number until they are a drug on the market, art critics flourish, the papers devote columns to their platitudes. And what has England to show as the outcome of all [Pg 411] this care? Go look at the decorations in the Royal Exchange and the pictures in the Royal Academy, examine the official records and learn how great is the yearly output of art teachers in excess of schools for them to teach in, and you will have a good idea of the return made on the money and time and red tape lavished upon the teaching of art. It is no better in Paris. Schools and students were never so many, foreigners arrive in such numbers that they are pushing the Frenchman out of his own Latin Quarter, American students swagger, play the prince on scholarships, are presented with clubs and homes where they can give afternoon teas and keep on living in a little America of their own. And what comes of it? Were the two Salons, with the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne thrown in, ever before such a weariness to the flesh?—was mediocrity ever before such an invitation to the posèur and the crank to pass off manufactured eccentricity as genius?

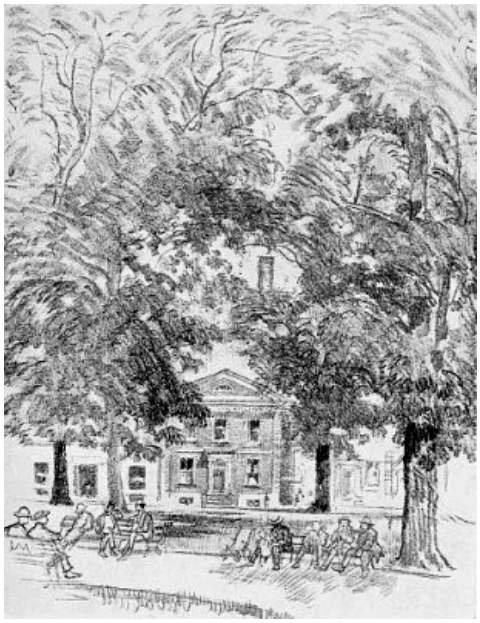
It would not be reasonable to expect more of Philadelphia than of London and Paris. I cannot see that finer artists have been bred there on the luxury of scholarships and schools than on their own efforts when they toiled all day to be able to study at night, when success was theirs only after a hard fight. The Old Masters got their training as apprentices, not as pampered youths luxuriating in fine schools and exhibitions and incomes and every luxury; they were patronized [Pg 412] and more splendidly than any artists to-day, but not until they had shown reason for it, not until it was an honour to patronize them. The new system is more comfortable, I admit, but great work does not spring from comfort. Philadelphia is wise to set up a high standard, but not wise when it makes the way too easy. For art is a stern master. It cares not if the weak fall by the roadside, so long as the strong, unhampered, succeed in getting into their own. The best thing that has been done at the Academy for many a day is the reducing of the scholarships from a two, or three, years' interval free of responsibility, to a summer's holiday among the masterpieces of Europe, which, I am told, is all they are now.

CHAPTER XVI: PHILADELPHIA AT TABLE [Pg 413]

I

If interest in the art of eating called for justification, I could show that I come by mine legitimately. My family took care of that when the sensible ancestor who made me an American settled in Accomac, where most things worth eating were to be had for the fishing or the shooting or the digging, so that Accomac feasted while the rest of Virginia still starved, and when my Grandfather, in his day, moved to Philadelphia which is as well provided as Accomac and more conscientious in cultivating its possibilities. It would be sheer disloyalty to the family inheritance if I did not like to eat well, just as it would be rank hypocrisy to see in my loyalty a virtue.

Accomac's reputation for good eating has barely got beyond the local history book, Accomac, I find, being a place you must have belonged to at one time or another, to know anything about. But Philadelphia made a reputation for its high living as soon as the Philadelphian emerged from his original cave, or sooner—read Watson and every other authority and you will find that before he was out of it, even the family cat occupied itself in hunting delicacies for the family feast. And right off the Philadelphian understood the truth the scientist has been centuries in groping after: that if people's food is to do them good, they must take pleasure in it. The material was his the [Pg 414] minute he landed on the spot, not the least recommendations of which were its fish and game and its convenience as a port where all the country did not produce could be brought from countries that did—a spot that, half-way between the North and the South, assured to Philadelphia one of the best-stocked markets in the world, ever the wonder and admiration of every visitor to the town. Pleasure in the material, if history can be trusted, dates as far back. A wise man once suggested the agreeable journeys that could be planned on a gastronomical map of France—from the Tripe of Caen to the Bouillabaisse of Marseilles, from the Château Margaux of Bordeaux to the Champagne of Rheims, from the Ducks of Rouen to the Truffles of Périgord, and so, from one end to the other of that Land of Plenty. I would suggest that an agreeable record of Philadelphia might be based upon the dinners it has eaten, from the historic dinner foraged for by the cat over a couple of centuries ago, to the banquet of yesterday in Spruce Street or Walnut, at the Bellevue or the Ritz.



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPENSARY FROM INDEPENDENCE SQUARE

I should like some day to write this history myself, when I have more space and time at my disposal. I have always been blessed with a healthy appetite, a decent sense of discrimination in satisfying it, and also a deep interest in the Philosophy of Food ever since I began to collect cookery books. The more profoundly I go into the subject, the readier I am to believe with Brillat-Savarin that what a man is depends a good deal on what he eats. This is why I think that if the [Pg 417] Philadelphian is to be understood, the study of him must not stop with his politics and his literature and his art, but must include his marketing and his bill of fare. He has had the wit never to doubt the importance of both, and the pride never to make light of his genius for living well.

The early Friends in Philadelphia knew better than to pull a long face, burrowing for the snares of the flesh and the devil in every necessity of life, like the unfortunate Puritans up in New England. It was not to lead a hermit's existence William Penn invited them to settle on the banks of the Delaware, and he and they realized that pioneer's work could not be done on hermit's fare. They entertained no fanatical disdain for the pleasures of the table, no ascetic abhorrence to good food, daintily prepared. Brawn and chocolate and venison were Penn's tender offering as lover to Hannah Callowhill, olives and wine his loving gift as friend to Isaac Norris. For equally "acceptable presents" that admirable citizen had to thank many besides Penn. James Logan knew that the best way to manage your official is to dine him, and in his day, and after it, straight on, no public commissioner, and indeed no private traveller, could visit Philadelphia and not be fed with its banquets and comforted with its Madeira and Punch, while few could refrain from saying so with an eloquence and gratitude that did them honour. Benjamin Franklin, keeping up the tradition, was known to feast more excellently than a philosopher ought, and his philosophy of [Pg 418] food is explained by his admission in a letter that he would rather discover a *recipe* for making Parmesan cheese in an Italian town than any ancient inscription. The American Philosophical Society could not conduct its investigations without the aid of dinners and breakfasts, nor could any other Philadelphia Society or Club study, or read, or hunt, or fish, or legislate, or pursue its appointed ends, without fine cooking and hard drinking—though I hope they were not the inspiration of Thomas Jefferson's severe criticism of his fellow Americans who, he said, were unable to terminate the most sociable meals without transforming themselves into brutes. It was impossible for young ladies and grave elders to keep descriptions of public banquets and family feasts and friendly tea-drinkings out of their letters and diaries: one reason of the fascination their letters and diaries have for Philadelphians who read them to-day. And altogether, by the Revolution, to judge from John Adams' account of his "sinful feasts" in Philadelphia, and General Greene's description of the luxury of Boston as "an infant babe" to the luxury of Philadelphia, and the rest of America's opinion of Philadelphia as a place of "crucifying expenses," and many more signs of the times, the dinners of Philadelphia had become so inseparable from any meeting, function, or business, that I am tempted to question whether, had they not been eaten, the Declaration of Independence could have been signed. But it was signed and who can say, in face [Pg 421] of the fact, that Philadelphia was any the worse for its feasting? And what if it proved a dead weight to John Adams, did Boston, did any other town do more in the cause of patriotism and independence?

MORRIS HOUSE, GERMANTOWN

One inevitable feature of the "sinful feasts" was the Madeira John Adams drank at a great rate, but suffered no inconvenience from. I could not dispense with it in these old records, such a sober place does it hold in my own memories of Philadelphia. The decanter of Madeira on my Grandfather's dinner table marked the state occasion, and I would not have recognized Philadelphia on my return had the same decanter not been produced in welcome. It was an assurance that Philadelphia was still Philadelphia, though sky-scrapers might break the once pleasant monotony of low, red brick houses and motor horns resound through the once peaceful streets.

From the beginning Madeira was one of the things no good Philadelphia household could be without—just the sound, dignified, old-fashioned wine the Philadelphian would be expected to patronize, respectable and upright as himself. Orders for it lighten those interminably long letters in the Penn-Logan correspondence, so long that all the time I was reading them, I kept wondering which of the three I ought to pity the most: Penn for what he had to endure from his people; Logan for having to keep him posted in his intolerable wrongs; or myself for wading through all they both had to say on the subject. As time went on, I do not believe there was an official function at which Madeira did not figure. There I always find it—the wine of ceremony, the sacrificial wine, without which no compact could be sealed, no event solemnized, no pleasure enjoyed. It seems to punctuate every step in the career of Philadelphians and of Philadelphia, and I thought nothing could be more characteristic, when I read the *Autobiography* of Franklin, than that it should have been over the Philadelphia Madeira one Governor of Pennsylvania planned a future for him, and another Governor of Pennsylvania later on discoursed provincial affairs with him, "most profuse of his solicitations and promises" under its pleasant influence. Throughout the old annals I am conscious of that decanter of Madeira always at hand, the Philadelphian "as free of it as an Apple Tree of its Fruit on a Windy Day in the month of July," one old visitor to the town records with a pretty fancy for which, as like as not, it was responsible.

[Pg 422]

And throughout the more modern records, there it is again. Even in the old-fashioned Philadelphia boarding-house less than a century ago, the men after dinner sat over their Madeira. New generations of visitors, like the old, drank it and approved, the Madeira that supported John Adams at Philadelphia's sinful feasts helping to steer Thackeray and an endless succession of strangers at the gate through Philadelphia's course of suppers and dinners. It amuses me to recall, as an instance of all it represented to Philadelphia, that for a couple of years at the Convent, though a healthier child than I never lived, I was made by the orders of my Father, obeyed by no means unwillingly on my part, to drink a glass of Madeira, with a biscuit, every morning at eleven. And so deep-rooted was its use in the best traditions of Philadelphia respectability, that the irreproachable Philadelphia ladies who wrote cookery books never omitted the glass of Madeira from the Terrapin, and went so far as to quote Scripture and to recommend a little of it for the stomach's sake.

[Pg 423]

II

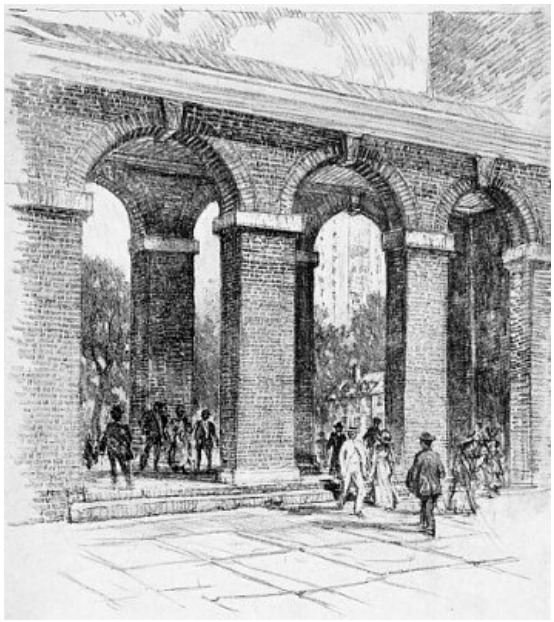
One of these Philadelphia ladies wrote the most famous cookery book to this day published in America; a fact which pleases me, partly because, with Edward Fitzgerald, I cannot help liking a cookery book, and still more because it flatters my pride as a Philadelphian that so famous a book should come from Philadelphia. It seems superfluous to add that I mean Miss Leslie's *Complete Cookery*. What else could I mean?

There had been cookery books in America before Miss Leslie's. America, with Philadelphia to set the standard, could not get on very far without them. If in the hurry and flurry of Colonial life, the American did not have the leisure to write them, he borrowed them, the speediest way to manufacture any kind of literature. There is an American edition of Mrs. Glasse, with Mrs. Glasse left out—the American pirate was nothing if not thorough. There is an American edition of Richard Briggs who was not deprived of the credit of his book, though robbed of his title. There are American editions I have no doubt of many besides which I have only to haunt the old bookstalls and second-hand book stores of Philadelphia assiduously enough to find. But of American cookery books, either borrowed or original, before the time of Miss Leslie, I own but

[Pg 424]

the stolen Mrs. Glasse and an insignificant little manual issued in New York in 1813, an American adaptation probably of an English model to which I have not yet succeeded in tracing it.

Nor do I know of any I do not own, and I know as much of American cookery books as any of the authorities, and I do not mind saying so, as I can without the shadow of conceit. Vicaire includes only two or three in his *Bibliographie*; Hazlitt, to save trouble, confined himself to English books; Dr. Oxford's interest is frankly in the publications of his own country, though, in his first bibliography, he mentions a few foreign volumes, and in his second he refers to one American piracy, and these are the three chief bibliographers of the Kitchen in Europe. American authorities do not exist, when I except myself. It is true that G. H. Ellwanger made a list of cookery books, but he threw them together anyhow, with no attempt at classification, and his list scarcely merits the name of bibliography. The history of the American cookery book is a virgin field, and as such I present it to the innumerable American students who are turned out from the Universities, year after year, for the research work that is frequently of as little use to themselves as to anybody else. [Pg 427]



THE STATE HOUSE COLONNADE

But many as may be the discoveries in the future, Miss Leslie cannot be dethroned nor deprived of her distinction as the Mrs. Glasse of America. Other writers, if there were any, were allowed to disappear; should they be dragged out of their obscurity now, it would be as bibliographical curiosities, bibliographical specimens. Miss Leslie was never forgotten, she survives to-day, her name honoured, her book cherished. She leapt into fame on its publication, and with such ardour was the First Edition bought up, with such ardour either reverently preserved or diligently consulted that I, the proud possessor of Mrs. Glasse in her First Edition "pot folio," of Apicius Cœlius, Gervase Markham, Scappi, Grimod de la Reynière, and no end of others in their first Editions, cannot as yet boast a First Edition of Miss Leslie. I have tried, my friends have tried; the most important book-sellers in the country have tried; and in vain, until I begin to think I might as well hope for the Elzevir *Patissier Français* as the 1837 *Complete Cookery*. It may be hidden on some unexplored Philadelphia book shelf, for it was as indispensable in the Philadelphia household as the decanter of Madeira. I ask myself if its appreciation in the kitchen, for which it was written, is the reason why I have no recollection of it in the Eleventh and Spruce Street house, well as I remember *Lippincott's* on the back parlour table, nor in my Father's library, well as I recall his editions of Scott and Dickens, Voltaire and Rousseau, a combination expressive of a liberal taste in literature. But never anywhere have I seen that elusive First Edition, never anywhere succeeded in obtaining an earlier edition than the Fifty-Eighth. The date is 1858—think of it! fifty-eight editions in twenty-one years! Can our "Best Sellers" surpass that as a record? Or can any American writer on cookery after Miss Leslie, from Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale and Jenny June to Marion Harland and the Philadelphia Mrs. Rorer, rank with her as a rival to Mrs. Glasse, as the author of a cookery book that has become the rare prize of the collector? [Pg 428]

III

It is so proud an eminence for a quiet Philadelphia maiden lady in the Eighteen-Thirties and Forties to have reached that I cannot but wish I knew more of Miss Leslie personally. From her contemporaries I have learned nothing save that she went to tea parties like any ordinary Philadelphian, that she was interested in the legends and traditions of her town, which wasn't like any ordinary Philadelphian, and that she condescended to journalism, editing *The Casket*. There is a portrait of her at the Academy, Philadelphia decorum so stamped upon her face and dress that it makes me more curious than ever to know why she was not the mother of children instead of a writer of books. These books explain that she had a literary conscience. In her preface to her *Domestic Economy*, which is not an unworthy companion to her *Complete Cookery*, she reveals an unfeminine respect for style. "In this as in her Cookery Book," she writes, a dignity expressed in her use of the third person, "she has not scrupled when necessary, to [Pg 429]

sacrifice the sound to the sense; repeating the same words when no others could be found to express the purport so clearly, and being always more anxious to convey the meaning in such terms as could not be mistaken than to risk obscuring it by attempts at refined phraseology or well-rounded periods." Now and then the temptation was too strong and she fell into alliteration, writing of "ponderous puddings and curdled custards." But this is exceptional. As a rule, in her dry, business-like sentences, it would be impossible to suspect her of philandering with sound, or concerning herself with the pleasure of her readers.

Her subject is one, happily, that can survive the sacrifice. The book is a monument to Philadelphia cookery. She was not so emancipated as to neglect all other kitchens. *Recipes* for Soup *à la Julienne* and Mulligatawny, for Bath Buns and Gooseberry Fools, for Pilaus and Curries, are concessions to foreign conventions. *Recipes* for Oysters and Shad, for Gumbo and Buckwheat Cakes, for Mint Juleps and Sweet Potatoes, for Pumpkins and Mush, show her deference to ideals cultivated by Americans from one State or another. But concessions and deference do not prevent her book—her two books—from being unmistakably Philadelphian:—an undefinable something in the quality and quantity, a definable something in the dishes and ingredients. I [Pg 430] know that in my exile, thousands of miles from home, when I open her *Complete Cookery*, certain passages transport me straight back to Philadelphia, to my childhood and my youth, to the second-story back-building dining-room and the kitchen with the lilacs at the back-yard door. I read of Dried Beef, chipped or frizzled in butter and eggs, and, as of old in the Eleventh and Spruce Street house, a delicious fragrance, characteristic of Philadelphia as the sickly smell of the ailanthus, fills my nostrils and my appetite is keen again for the eight o'clock tea, long since given way to the eight o'clock dinner. I turn the pages and come to Reed Birds, roasted or baked, and at once I feel the cool of the radiant fall evening, and I am at Belmont or Strawberry Mansion after the long walk through the park, one of the gay party for whom the cloth is laid. Or the mere mention of Chicken Salad sets back the clock of the years and drops me into the chattering midst of the Philadelphia five o'clock reception, in time for the spread that, for sentiment's sake, is dear to me in memory, but that, for digestion's sake, I hope never to see revived. Or a thrill is in the dressing for the salad alone, in the mere dash of mustard that Philadelphia has the independence to give to its Mayonnaise. I am conservative in matters of art. I would not often recommend a deviation from French precedent which is the most reliable and the finest. But Philadelphia may be trusted to deviate, when it permits itself the liberty, with discretion and distinction.

THE SMITH MEMORIAL, WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK

CHAPTER XVII: PHILADELPHIA AT TABLE—CONTINUED [Pg 433]

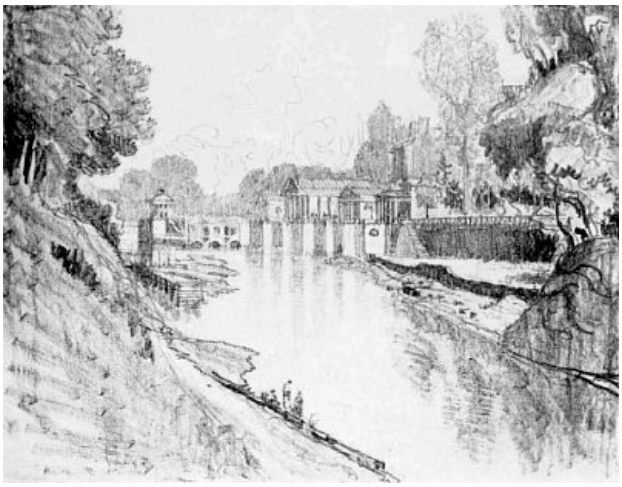
I

So much of Philadelphia is in Miss Leslie that her silence on one or two matters essentially Philadelphian is the greater disappointment.

I have said that when I was young it was the business of the man of the house to market and to make the Mayonnaise for the dinner's salad, and I have searched for the reason in vain. His appropriation of the marketing seems to be comparatively modern. If the chronicles are to be trusted, it was the woman's business as late as Mrs. Washington's day. But by mine, the man's going to market had settled solidly into one of those Philadelphia customs taken for granted by Philadelphians simply because they were Philadelphia customs. Never in print have I seen any reference to this division of family labour except in the Philadelphia stories of Thomas A. Janvier who, as a Philadelphian, knew that it became well brought up Philadelphia men to attend to the

marketing and that duties becoming to them were above explanation. Janvier knew also that only in Philadelphia, probably, could it occur to the "master of a feast" to dress the salad, and that this was the reason "why a better salad is served at certain dinner tables in Philadelphia than at any other dinner tables in the whole world." Miss Leslie is not without honour in her own town and [Pg 434] was there reverenced by no one as truly as by Janvier, but his reverence for the Art of Cookery was more profound and he shared the belief of the initiated that in it man surpasses as hitherto, I regret to say, he has surpassed in all the arts.

Janvier himself was the last "master of the feast" it was my good fortune to watch preparing the Mayonnaise. It was a solemn rite in his hands, and the result not unworthy—his salads were delicious, perfect, original, their originality, however, never pushed to open defiance of the Philadelphia precedents he respected. One of my pleasantest memories of him is of his salad-making at his own dinner table in his London rooms, one or two friends informally gathered about him, and the summer evening so warm that he appeared all in white—a splendid presence, for he was an unusually handsome man, of the rich, flamboyant type that has gone out of fashion almost everywhere except in the South of France. The white added, somehow, to the effect of ceremony, and he lingered over every stage of the preparation and the mixing,—the Philadelphia touch of mustard not omitted,—with due gravity and care. How different the salad created with this ceremony from the usual makeshift mixed nobody knows how or where!



THE BASIN, OLD WATER-WORKS

That the Philadelphia man should have accepted this responsibility, explains better than I could how high is the Philadelphia standard. I could not understand Miss Leslie's silence on the subject, [Pg 437] did I not suspect her of a disapproval as complete as her Cookery. She had no new-fangled notions on the position of woman, no desire to dispute man's long-established superiority. If she was willing to teach women how to become accomplished housewives, it was that they might administer to the comfort and satisfy the appetite of their fathers and brothers and husbands and sons. The end of woman, according to her creed, is to make the home agreeable for man, and it would save us many of to-day's troubles if we agreed with her. No man, since it is to his advantage, will blame her for being more orthodox as a woman than as a Philadelphian, nor is it at very great cost that I forgive her. I prize her book too much from the collector's standpoint, if from no other, to resent its sentiment. And my joy in my copy—in my Fifty-eighth Edition—is none the less because it was presented to me by Janvier who, in a few short stories, gave the spirit of the Philadelphia feast as Miss Leslie, in two substantial volumes, collected and classified its materials.

Another thing I do not find in Miss Leslie is the Oyster Croquette, which she could not have ignored had she once eaten it. Therefore I am led to see in it the product of a generation nearer my own. In my memories of childhood it is inseparable from my Grandmother's eight o'clock tea on evenings when the family were invited in state—in my memories of youth inseparable from every afternoon or evening party at which I feasted fearlessly and well—and it figured at many a [Pg 438] Sunday high-tea, that exquisite feast which, by its very name, refuses to let itself be confounded with its coarser counterpart known to the English as a meat-tea. From these facts I conclude, though I have no other data to rely upon, that the Oyster Croquette must have been not simply the masterpiece, but the creation of Augustine, for the Oyster Croquette which the well-brought-up Philadelphian then ate at moments of rejoicing was always of his cooking.

II

Augustine—the explanation is superfluous for Philadelphians of my age—was a coloured man with the genius of his race for cookery and probably a drop or more of the white blood that developed in him also the genius for organization, so that he was a leader among caterers, as well as a master among cooks. It is worth noting that the demand for cooks in Philadelphia being great, the greatest cooks in America never failed to supply it: worth noting also that the Philadelphia housewife, being thus well supplied, had not begun when I was young to amuse herself with the chafing-dish as she does now. For many years, Augustine's name and creations were the chief distinction of every Philadelphia feast. To have entertained without his assistance would have been as serious a crime as to have omitted Terrapin—in season—and Ice-cream from

the Philadelphia menu; as daring as to have gone for chocolates anywhere save to Pénas' or for smilax anywhere save to Pennock's, and this sort of daring in Philadelphia would have been deplored not as harmless originality, but as eccentricity in the worst possible taste. Thanks to Augustine, Philadelphia became celebrated in America for its Oyster Croquettes and Terrapin and Broiled Oysters—what a work of genius this, with the sauce of his invention!—as Bresse is in France for its Chickens, or York in England for its Hams. [Pg 439]

So much I know about him, and no more—but his name should go down in history with those of Vatel and Carême and Gouffé: an artist if ever there was one! Because he did not commit suicide like Vatel—his oysters were never late—because he did not write encyclopedias of cookery like Carême and Gouffé, his name and fame are in danger of perishing unless every Philadelphian among my contemporaries hastens to lay a laurel leaf upon his grave. I fear nothing as yet has been done to preserve his memory. His name survives on the simple front of a South Fifteenth Street house, where I saw it and rejoiced when I was last at home and, in compliment to him, went inside and ate my lunch in the demure light of a highly respectable dining-room in the society of a dozen or more highly respectable Philadelphians seated at little tables. I could not quarrel with my lunch—it was admirably cooked and served—but it was an everyday lunch, not the occasional feast—the Augustine of old did not cook the ordinary meal and the Fifteenth Street house is too modest to be accepted as the one and only monument to his memory.

GIRARD STREET

The Oyster Croquette could not have sprung up in a day and triumphed were Philadelphia as hide-bound with convention as it is supposed to be. Philadelphia is conservative in matters of cookery when conservatism means clinging to its great traditions; it is liberal when liberality means adapting to its own delightful ends the new idea or the new masterpiece. It never ceased to be sure of its materials nor of their variety, the Philadelphia market half way between North and South continuing to provide what is best in both: the meats of the finest—the fattest mutton he ever saw, Cobbett, though an Englishman, found in Philadelphia—its fruits and vegetables of the most various, its butter, good Darlington butter, famed from one end of the land to the other. And in the preparation of its materials, for the sake of eating better, Philadelphians never have hesitated to take their good where they have found it. Dishes we prize as the most essentially Philadelphian have sometimes the shortest pedigree. Why, the Ice-cream that is now one of Philadelphia's most respected institutions, came so recently that people we, of my generation, knew could remember its coming. On my return to Philadelphia, with the advantage the perspective absence gives, I could appreciate more clearly than if I had stayed at home how well Philadelphia eats and how nobly it has maintained its old ideals, how nobly accepted new ones. It has not wavered in the practice of eating well and taking pleasure in the eating—the reputation of giving good dinners is, as in my youth, the most highly prized. To quote Janvier: "The person who achieves celebrity of this sort in Philadelphia is not unlike the seraph who attains eminence in the heavenly choir." But I am conscious of a latitude that would not have been allowed before in the choice of a place to eat them in, and amazed at the number of new dishes. [Pg 440] [Pg 443]

III

The back-building dining-room was the one scene I knew for the feast. If I were a man I could tell a different tale. As a woman I used to hear—all Philadelphia women used to hear—of colossal masculine banquets at the Philadelphia Club and the Union League, of revels at the Clover Club, of fastidious feasts at more esoteric clubs—the State in Schuylkill, the Fish-House Club, and what were the others?—clubs carrying on the great Colonial traditions, perpetuating the old Colonial Punch as zealously as the Vestal Virgins watched their sacred fire, observing mystic practices in the Kitchen, the Philadelphia man himself, it was said, putting on the cook's apron, presiding over grills and saucepans, and serving up dishes of such exquisite quality as it has not entered into the mind of mere woman to conceive or to execute: with the true delicacy of the gourmet

choosing rather to consecrate his talents to the one perfect dish than to squander them upon many, shrinking as an artist must from the plebeian "groaning-board" of the gluttonous display. To stories of these marvels I listened again and again, but my only knowledge of them is based on [Pg 444] hearsay. I would as soon have expected to be admitted to Mount Athos or to the old Chartreuse as to banquets and feasts and revels so purely masculine; to ask for the vote would have seemed less ambitious than to pray for admission. What folly then it would be for me to pretend to describe them! What presumption to affect a personal acquaintance I have not and could not have! Into what pitfalls of ignorance would I stumble! It is for the Philadelphia man some day to write this particular chapter in the history of Philadelphia at Table.

As to the Philadelphia woman at the period of which I speak, she had no Clubs. It was not supposed to be good form for her to feast outside of the back-building dining-room. She might relieve her hunger with Oysters in Jones's dingy little shop, or a plate of Ice-cream in Sautter's sombre saloon; or, with a boating party in spring or summer, she might go for dinner or supper to one of the restaurants in the Park. But for more serious entertaining, home, or her friends' home, was the place. Not that she was, as the fragile, fainting Angelina type once admired, too ethereal to think of food and drink. She could order and eat a luncheon, or a dinner, with the best, though she did not do the marketing or make the Mayonnaise. But she would rather have gone without food than defy the unwritten Philadelphia law.

THE UNION LEAGUE, FROM BROAD AND CHESTNUT STREETS

Now Philadelphia has changed all that. The wise remain faithful to the back-building dining-room and, within its grave and tranquil walls, on its substantial leather-covered chairs, Stuart's [Pg 447] Washington looking down from his place above the mantelpiece, they continue to feast with a luxury Lucullus might have envied. Fashion, however, drives the less wise to more frivolous scenes. I never thought to see the day when I should, in Philadelphia, lunch at a large, well-appointed, luxurious woman's club, when I should be invited to feast at the Union League—my lunch there was one of the most extraordinary of all my extraordinary experiences on my return to Philadelphia—when the cloth for my dinner would be laid in a big, gay, noisy, crowded Country Club—and yet the miracle had been worked in my absence and I saw not the day, but the many days when these things happened. Not only this. In Clubs and Country Clubs a degree of privacy is still assured. But it is a degree too much, to judge from the way Philadelphia rushes to lunch, and dine, and drink the tea it does not want at five o'clock, in hotels and restaurants: our little secluded oyster saloons exchanged for dazzling lunch counters, the Spruce and Pine and Walnut Street house that could not be except in Philadelphia deserted for the Ritz and the Bellevue that might be in New York or Chicago, Paris or London, Vienna or Rome. The old fashion was to celebrate the feast in cloistered seclusion, to let none intrude who was not bidden to share it. Now the fashion is to cry out and summon the mob and the multitude to gaze upon Philadelphia feasting. I know that this is in a measure the result of a change that is not peculiar to [Pg 448] Philadelphia alone. All the world to-day, wherever you go, dines in public—the modern Dives must always dine where his Lazarus cannot possibly mistake the gate. But I could not have believed that Philadelphia would come to it—that Philadelphia would step out from the sanctuary into the market-place and proclaim to the passer-by the luxury he had once so scrupulously kept to himself.

IV

Nor is the feast quite what it was, though this is not because it has lost, but rather because it has gained. I trembled on my return lest the old gods be fallen. My first visit after long years away was one of a few hours only. I ran over from New York to lunch with old friends. There was a horrid moment of bewilderment when I stepped from the Pennsylvania Station into a street

where I ought to have been at home and was not, and this made me dread that at the luncheon the change would be more overwhelming. Certain things belong to, are a part of, certain places that can never be the same without them. I met a Frenchman the other day in London, who had not been there for ten years, and who was in despair because at no hotel or restaurant could he find a gooseberry or an apple tart. They were not dishes of which he was warmly enamoured; no Frenchman could be; but a London shorn of gooseberry and apple tarts was not the London he had known. The dread of the same disillusionment was in my heart as I drew near my luncheon, more serious in my case because the things I did not want to lose were too good to lose. But my [Pg 449] dread was wasted. Broad Street might have changed, but not the Chicken Salad with the Philadelphia dash of mustard in the Mayonnaise, not the Croquettes though Augustine had gone, not the Ice-cream rising before me in the splendid pyramid of my childhood with the solid base of the Coffee Ice-cream I had never gone to Sautter's without ordering. And I knew that hope need not be abandoned when I was assured that, though Sautter's have opened a big new place on Chestnut Street, where a long *menu* disputes the honours with their one old masterpiece, it is to the gloomy store in the retirement of Broad and Locust that the Philadelphia woman, who gives a dinner, sends for her Ice-cream.

These things were unaltered—they are unalterable. All the old friends reappeared at the breakfasts, luncheons and dinners that followed in the course of the longer visit when, not the Fatted Calf, but the Fatted Shad, Soft-Shell Crab, Fried Oyster, Squab—how the name mystified my friend, George Steevens, though he had but to open an old English cookery book in my collection to know that in England, before he was born, a Squab was a young Pigeon—Broiled Chicken, Cinnamon Bun, little round Cakes with white icing on top, were prepared for the prodigal. But there were other dishes, other combinations new to me: Grape Fruit had come in during my absence, though long enough ago to have reached England in the meanwhile; also the fashion of serving Shad and Asparagus together, the *dernier cri* of the Philadelphia epicure, [Pg 450] though—may I admit it now as I have not dared to before?—a combination in which I thought two delicate flavours were sacrificed, one to the other. And there were amazing combinations in the Salads, daring, strange, unPhiladelphian, calling for the French Dressing for which my Philadelphia had small use. I so little liked the new sign of the new Sundae at the new popular lunch-counter and druggist's that, with true Philadelphia prejudice, I never sampled it. And there were other innovations I would need to write a cookery book to exhaust—sometimes successful, sometimes not, but with no violation of the canons of the art in which Philadelphia has ever excelled. In every experiment, every novelty, the motive, if not the result, was sound.

For this reason I have no fear for the future of Philadelphia cookery, if only it has the courage not to succumb unreservedly to cold storage. The changes may be many, but Philadelphia knows how to sift them, retaining only those that should be retained, for beneath them all is the changelessness that is the foundation of art.

CHAPTER XVIII: PHILADELPHIA AFTER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY [Pg 451]

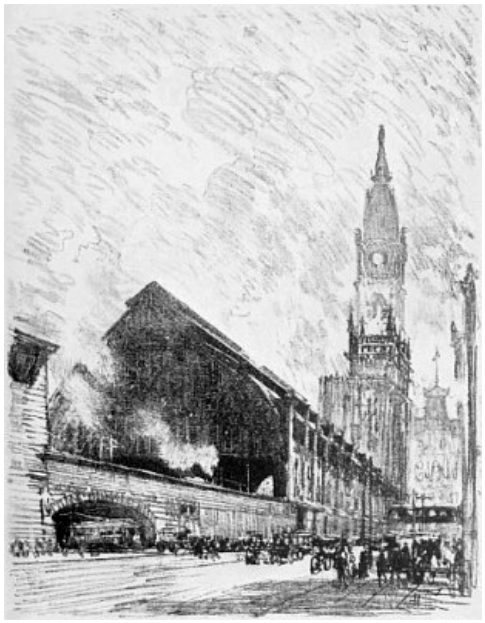
I

I confess to a good deal of emotion as the train slowed up in the Pennsylvania Station, and I think I had a right to it. It is not every day one comes home after a quarter of a century's absence, and at the first glance everything was so bewilderingly home-like. Not that I had not had my misgivings as the train neared Philadelphia. From the car windows I had seen my old Convent at Torresdale transformed beyond recognition, many new stations with new names by the way, rows and rows of houses where I remembered fields, Philadelphia grown almost as big as London to get into, a new, strange, unbelievable sky-line to the town, the bridges multiplied across the Schuylkill—change after change where I should have liked to find everything, every house, field, tree, blade of grass even, just as I had left it. But what change there might be in the station kept itself, for the moment anyway, discreetly out of sight. For all the difference I saw, I might have been starting on the journey that had lasted over a quarter of a century instead of returning from it.

This made the shock the greater when, just outside in Market Street, I was met by a company of mounted policemen. It is true they were there to welcome not me, but the President of the United [Pg 452] States who was due by the next train, and were supported by the City Troop, as indispensable a part of my Philadelphia as the sky over my head and the bricks under my feet; true also that, well-uniformed, well-mounted, well-groomed as they were, I felt they would be a credit to any town. But the shock was to find them there at all. Philadelphia in my day could not have run, or would not have wanted to run, to anything so officially imposing; that it could and did now was a warning there was no mistaking. Whatever Philadelphia might have developed, or deteriorated, into, it was not any longer the Philadelphia I had known and loved.

It was the same sort of warning all the way after that. Wherever I went, wherever I turned, I stumbled upon an equally impossible jumble of the familiar and the unfamiliar. At times, I positively ached with the joy of finding places so exactly as I remembered them that I caught myself saying, just here "this" happened, or "that," as I and my Youth met ourselves; at others I

could have cried for the absurdity, the tragedy, of finding everything so different that never in a foreign land had I seemed more hopelessly a foreigner.



BROAD STREET STATION

I did not have to go farther than my hotel for a reminder that Philadelphia, to oblige me, had not stood altogether still during my quarter of a century's absence, but had been, and was, busy refashioning itself into something preposterously new. From one of my high windows I might look [Pg 455] down to the Philadelphia Library and the Episcopal Academy,—those two bulwarks of Philadelphia respectability—and beyond, stretching peacefully away to the peaceful curves of the Delaware, to a wide plain of flat red roofs and chimneys, broken by the green lines of the trees that follow the straight course of Philadelphia's streets and by the small green spaces of the trees that shade Philadelphia's back-yards: level and lines and spaces I knew as well as a lesson learnt by heart. But, from the midst of this red plain of roofs, huge high buildings, like towers, that I did not know, sprang up into the blue air, increasing in number as my eye wandered northward until, from the other window, I saw them gathered into one great, amazing, splendid group with William Penn, in full-skirted coat and broad-brimmed hat, springing still higher above them.

When I went down into the streets, I might walk for a minute or two between rows of the beloved old-fashioned red brick houses, with their white marble steps and their white shutters below and green above, and then, just as exultantly I began to believe them changeless as the Pyramids and the Sphinx, I would come with a jar upon a Gothic gable, an absurd turret, a Renaissance doorway, a façade disfigured by a hideous array of fire escapes, a sham Colonial house, or some other upstart that dated merely from yesterday or the day before. And here and there a sky-scraper of an apartment house swaggered in the midst of the little "homes" that were Philadelphia's pride—the last new one, to my dismay, rearing its countless stories above the once [Pg 456] inviolate enclosure of Rittenhouse Square.

When I went shopping in Chestnut Street my heart might rejoice at the sight of some of the well remembered names—Dreka, Darlington, Bailey, Caldwell, as indispensable in my memory as that of Penn himself—but it sank as quickly in the vain search for the many more that have disappeared, or indeed, for the whole topsy-turvy order of things that could open the big new department stores into Market Street and make it the rival of Chestnut as a shopping centre, or that could send other stores up to where stores had never ventured in my day: stores in Walnut Street as high as Eighteenth, a milliner's in Locust Street almost under the shadow of St. Mark's, a stock-broker at the corner of Fifteenth and Walnut, Hughes and Müller—I need tell no Philadelphian who Hughes and Müller are even if they have unkindly made two firms of the old one—within a stone's throw of Dr. Weir Mitchell's house; when I saw that I felt that sacrilege could go no further.

WANAMAKER'S

For sentiment's sake, I might eat my plate of ice-cream at the old little marble-topped table in the old Locust Street gloom at Sautter's, or buy cake at Dexter's at the old corner in Spruce Street, but Mrs. Burns with her ice-cream, Jones with his fried oysters, had vanished, gone away in the *Ewigkeit* as irrevocably as Hans Breitmann's Barty or the snows of yester-year. And Wyeth's and [Pg 459] Hubbell's masqueraded under other names, and Shinn, from whom we used to buy our medicines, was dead, and the new firm sold cigars with their ice-cream sodas, and my Philadelphia was stuffed with saw-dust.

Not a theatre was as I had left it, new ones I had never heard of drawing the people who used to crowd the Chestnut, which has rung down its curtain on the last act of its last play even as I write; the Arch, given over now, alas! to the "Movies" and the "Movies" threaten the end of the drama not only at the Arch but at all theatres forever; well-patronized houses flourishing in North Broad Street; the staid Academy of Music thrown into the shadow by its giddy prosperous upstart of a rival up-town.

Vanished were old landmarks for which I confidently looked—the United States Mint from Chestnut Street; from Broad and Walnut the old yellow Dundas House with the garden and the magnolia for whose blossoming I had once eagerly watched with the coming of spring; from Thirteenth and Locust the old Paterson House, turned into the new, imposing, very much criticised building of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; from Eleventh and Spruce, that other garden overlooked by the windows of the house my Grandfather built and lived in, as my Father did after him, and, to me more cruel, the house itself passed into other hands, grown shabby with time, and the sign "For Sale" hanging on its neglected walls. Change, change, change—that was what I had come home for! [Pg 460]

II

I am not sure, however, that I had not the worst shock of all when I wandered from the old home, further down Spruce Street, below the beautiful Eighteenth Century Hospital, dishonoured now and shut in on the Spruce Street side by I hardly know what in the way of new wings and wards. As I had left it, this lower part of Spruce and Pine and the neighbouring streets, had changed less perhaps than any other part of the town—has changed less to-day in mere bricks and mortar. It had preserved the appropriate background for its inheritance of history and traditions. Numerous Colonial houses remained and upon them those of later date were modelled. It had kept also the serenity and repose of the Quaker City's early days, the character, dignity, charm. Many old Philadelphia families had never moved away. It was clean as a little Dutch town with nothing to interrupt the quiet but the gentle jingling of the occasional leisurely horse-car.

ST. PETER'S CHURCHYARD

And what did I find it?—A slum, captured by the Russian Jew, the old houses dirty, down-at-the-heel; the once spotless marble steps unwashed, the white shutters hanging loose; the decorative old iron hinges and catches and insurance plaques or badges rusting, and nobody can say how much of the old woodwork inside burned for kindling; Yiddish signs in the windows, with here a Jewish Maternity Home, and there a Jewish newspaper office; at every door, almost every [Pg 463] window, and in groups in the street, men, women and children with Oriental faces, here and there a man actually in his caftan, bearded, with the little curls in front of his ears, and a woman with a handkerchief over her head, and all chattering in Yiddish and slatternly and dirty as I remembered them in South-Eastern Europe, from Carlsbad and Prague to those remote villages of Transylvania where dirt was the sign by which I always knew when the Jewish quarter was reached. A few patriotic Philadelphians have recently returned hoping to stem the current, and their houses shine with cleanliness. In Fourth Street the dignified Randolph House, which the family never deserted, seems to protest against the wholesale surrender to the foreign invasion. In Pine Street, St. Peter's, with its green graveyard, has survived untarnished the surrounding desecration. But I could only wonder how long the church and these few houses will be able to withstand the triumphing alien, and I abandoned hope when, at the very gate of St. Peter's, a woman with a handkerchief tied over her head stopped me to ask the way to "*Zweit und Pine*."

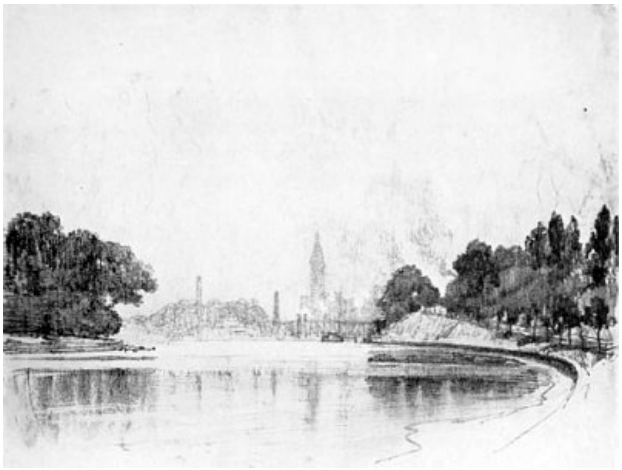
III

I know that the same thing is going on in almost all the older parts of the United States, and the new parts too—I know that some small New England towns can support their two and three Polish newspapers, that New York swarms with people who talk any and every language under [Pg 464] the sun except English, and can boast, if it is a thing to boast of, more Italians than Rome, more Jews than Jerusalem; that San Francisco has its Chinatown, that the Middle West abounds in German and Swedish settlements—in a word, I know that everywhere throughout the country, the native American is retreating before this invasion of the alien. But it is with a certain difference in Philadelphia. Have I not said that one of the absurdities of my native town—I can afford to call them absurdities because I love them—is that for the Philadelphian who looks upon himself as the real Philadelphian, Philadelphia lies between the Delaware and the Schuylkill, and is bounded on the north by Market Street, on the south by Lombard; that in the ancient rhyming list of its streets he recognizes only the line:

"Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce, and Pine"?

Now, when I left home this narrow section was threatening to grow too narrow and it was with some difficulty the Philadelphian kept within it. Up till then, however, it was in no danger except from his own increasing numbers. The tragedy is that the Russian Jew should have descended upon just this section, should now, not so much dispute it with him, as oust him from it—the Russian Jew, a Jew by religion but not by race, who has been found impossible in every country on the Continent of Europe into which he has drifted, so impossible when that country is Holland that the Jews who have been there for centuries collect among themselves the money to send him [Pg 467] post haste on to England and poor America, for even the Dutch Jew cannot stand the Russian Jew—and, from what I have heard, neither can the decent Pennsylvania Jew who has been with us almost from the beginning. Other aliens have been more modest and set up their slums where they interfere less with Philadelphia tradition. I cannot understand, and nobody has been able to explain to me, why the Russian Jew was allowed to push his way in. But the indolent never see the thin end of the wedge, and there are philanthropists whose philanthropy for the people they do not know increases in direct proportion to the harm it does to those they do know. I was told more than once to consider what Philadelphia was doing for the Russian Jew, to remember that he has paid America the compliment of accepting it as the Promised Land, that his race in America has produced Mary Antin, and to see for myself what good Americans were being made

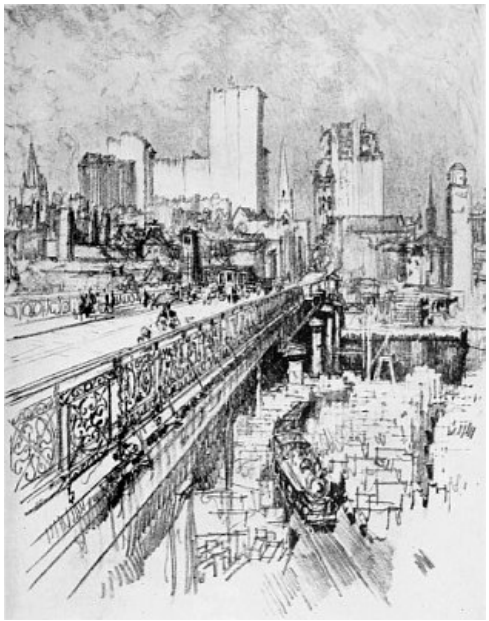
of his children. But though Philadelphia may one day blossom like the rose with Mary Antins, though there might have been an incipient patriot in every one of the small Russian Jews I met being taken in batches across Independence Square to Independence Hall to imbibe patriotism at the fount, I could not help considering rather what the Russian Jew is just now doing for Philadelphia. For it is as plain as a pipe stem to anybody with eyes to see that the Philadelphians to whom Philadelphia originally belonged are being pushed by the Russian Jew out of the only part of it they care to live in.



CITY HALL FROM THE SCHUYLKILL

I wondered at first why so many people had fled to the country, why so many signs "For Sale" or "For Rent" were to be seen about Spruce and Pine and Walnut Streets. Various reasons were given me:—with the Law Courts now in the centre of the town and the new Stock Exchange at Broad and Walnut, and stores everywhere, nobody could live in town; the noise of the trolleys is unbearable; the dirt of the city is unhealthy; soft coal has made Philadelphia grimier than London; the motor has destroyed distance;—excellent reasons, all of them. But it was not until I discovered the Russian [Pg 468]

Jew that I understood the most important. It is the Russian Jew who, with an army of aliens at his back—thousands upon thousands of Italians, Slavs, Lithuanians, a fresh emigration of negroes from the South, and statistics alone can say how many other varieties—is pushing and pushing Philadelphians out of the town—first up Spruce Street, nearer and nearer to the Schuylkill, then across the Schuylkill into the suburbs, eventually to be swept from the suburbs into the country, until who can say where there will be any room for them at all? With the Russian Jew's genius for adapting himself to American institutions, I could fancy him taking possession of, and adding indefinitely to, the little two-story houses that already stretch in well-nigh endless rows to the West and the North, Germantown and West Philadelphia built over beyond recognition. I remember when, one day in a trolley, I had gone for miles and miles between these rows—each little house with the same front yard, the same porch, the same awning, the same rocking-chairs—I had a horrible waking nightmare in which I saw them multiplying—as the alien himself multiplied beyond the most ardent dreams of Mr. Roosevelt,—and creeping out further and further, across the city limits, across the State, across the Middle West, across the prairies, across the Rockies, across the Sierras, until at last they joined East to West in one unbroken line—one great, unbroken, unlovely monument to the enterprise of the new American, and the philanthropy of the old: while only the Russian Jew at the door of the State House, like Macaulay's New Zealander under the shadow of St. Paul's, remained to muse and moralize on the havoc he had wrought. [Pg 471]



CHESTNUT STREET BRIDGE

This may seem a trifle fantastic, but I should find it hard to give an idea of how impossibly fantastic the prevailing presence of the alien in Philadelphia appeared to me. To be sure, we had our aliens a quarter of a century ago. But they were mostly Irish, Germans, Swedes. The Italian at his fruit-stall was as yet rather the picturesque exception, and I can remember how, not very long before I left home, the whole town went to stare at the first importation of Russian Jews, dumped down under I have forgotten what shelter, as if they were curiosities or freaks from Barnum's. But now the aliens are mostly Latins, Slavs, Orientals who do not fit so unobtrusively into our American scheme of things, and who come from the lowest classes in their own countries, so ignorant and degraded most of them that, what with their increasing numbers and [Pg 472] our new negro population from the South, there are people in Pennsylvania who are trying to introduce an educational test at the polls—America having learned the evil of universal suffrage just as England is coquetting with it.

IV

The rest of Philadelphia—the rest of America, for that matter—may be accustomed to this new emigration to my town as well as to all parts of the country. But I had not seen the latter-day alien coming in by every steamer, and gradually, almost imperceptibly, establishing himself. The advantage, or disadvantage, of staying away from home so long is that, on returning, one gets the net result of the change the days and the years bring with them. Those who stay at home are broken in to the change in its initial stages and can accept the result as a matter of course. I could not. To be honest, I did not like it. I did not like to find Philadelphia a foreign town.

I did not like to find Streets where the name on almost every store is Italian. I did not like to find the new types of negro, like savages straight from the heart of Africa some of them looked, who are disputing South Street and Lombard Street and that disgraceful bit of Locust Street with the decent, old-fashioned, self-respecting Philadelphia darkies. I did not like to find the people with foreign manners—for instance, to have my hand kissed for a tip in the hotel by a Lithuanian [Pg 473] chambermaid, though I should add that in a month she had grown American enough to accept the same tip stoically with a bare "Thank You." I did not like to find the foreigner forcing his way not only into the Philadelphian's houses, the Philadelphian's schools, the Philadelphian's professions—professions that have been looked upon as the sacred right of certain Philadelphia families for almost a couple of centuries. I have heard all about his virtues, nobody need remind me of them; I know that he is carrying off everything at the University so that rich Jews begin to think they should in return make it a gift or bequest, as no rich Jew has yet, I believe. I know that the young Philadelphian must give up his sports and his gaieties if he can hope to compete with the young Russian Jew who never allows himself any recreation on the road to success—and perhaps this won't do the young Philadelphian any harm. I know that if the Russian Jew keeps on studying law, the Philadelphia lawyer will be before long as extinct as the dodo—a probability that if it wakes up the Philadelphia lawyer may have its uses. All this, and much besides, I know—also, incidentally, I might add the fact that the Russian Jew, who is not unintelligent, has mastered in a very short time the possibilities of arson and bankruptcy as investments. But if there were no other side to his virtues—and of course there is that other side too—I should not like to think of the new Philadelphian that is to come out of this incredible mixture of Russian Jews and countless [Pg 474] other aliens as little like us in character and tradition.

The new Philadelphian may be a finer creature far than in my hopes for him, finer far than the old Philadelphian I have known—but then he will not be that old Philadelphian whom I do not want to lose and whom it would be a pity to lose in a country for which, ever since Penn pointed the way to the constitution of the United States, he has probably accomplished more than any other citizen.

Personally, I might as well say that I do not believe he will be a finer creature. It seems to me that he is doing away with the old American idea of levelling up and is bent on the levelling down process that is going on all over Europe. And so foreign is he making us, that I would not think J. very far wrong in declaring himself the only real American left, if only he would include me with him.

THE NARROW STREET

CHAPTER XIX: PHILADELPHIA AFTER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY—CONTINUED

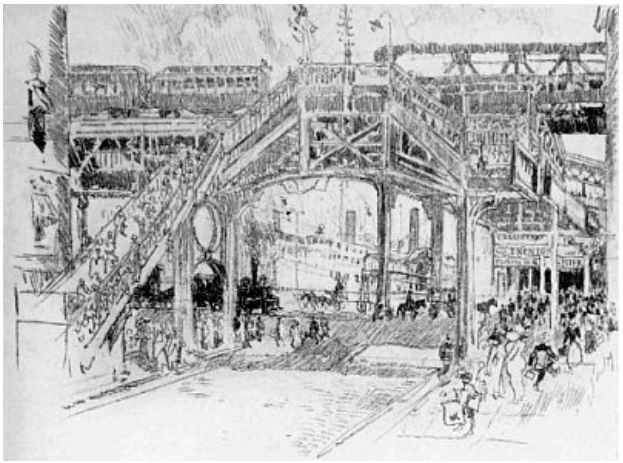
[Pg 477]

I

It was not only the change that oppressed me those first days of my return. As bewildering, as discouraging, were the signs everywhere of the horrible haste with which it has been brought about: a haste foreign to the Philadelphia habit. But the aliens pouring into Philadelphia have increased its population at such a prodigious rate that it has been obliged to grow too prodigiously fast to meet or to adapt itself to the new conditions without the speed that does not belong to it.

I had left it a big, prosperous, industrial town—Baldwin's, Cramp's, Kensington and Germantown mills all in full swing—but it carried off its bigness, prosperity, and industry with its old demure and restful airs of a country town. The old-fashioned, hard-working, Philadelphia business man could still dine at four o'clock and spend the rest of the afternoon looking out of the window for the people who rarely passed and the things that never happened—nobody would be free to dine at four now-a-days, nobody would have the leisure to sit at any hour looking out of the window, except perhaps the Philadelphia clubman who clings to that amiable pastime, as he does, so far successfully, to his Club house, threatened on every side as it is by the advance of the sky- [Pg 478] scraper. The old-fashioned busy Philadelphia crowds, as I remember them, could still take their time in the streets, so that I remember, too, my friend, George Steevens' astonishment because a passer-by he thanked for information could linger to say "You are very welcome." The old-fashioned Philadelphia business, going on at a pace that only New York and Chicago could beat, was still accomplished with so little fuss that the rest of America laughed at Philadelphia for its slowness and sleepiness, and told those old time-worn stories that have passed into folk-lore. It was just this that gave Philadelphia such a distinct character of its own—that it could be laughed at for slowness and sleepiness by the other towns, and all the while be sleepy and slow to such good purpose as to make itself into one of the most prosperous and influential in the country: to be able to work at the American pace and yet preserve its dignity and sedateness.

But the old stories have lost what little point they had. Philadelphia does not look slow and sleepy any longer. Things have changed, indeed, when a modern traveller like Mr. Arnold Bennett can speak of "spacious gaiety" in connection with Philadelphia—with its spacious dulness the earlier traveller was more apt to be impressed. At last, however, it has given up its country-town airs for the airs of the big town it is—given up the calmness that was its chief characteristic for the hurry-flurry of the ordinary American town. And there is scarcely a Philadelphian who regrets it, that is [Pg 481] the saddest part of it—scarcely a Philadelphian who does not rejoice that Philadelphia is getting to be like New York.



THE MARKET STREET ELEVATED AT THE DELAWARE END

I think, of all the innovations, this was the one that distressed me most, though I could understand the difficulty of calm in the face of the multitude of new housing and traffic problems it has had to tackle, at a rate and with a speed that the Philadelphian, left to himself, would never have imposed upon it. Somehow, it has had to keep on putting up those rows of little two-story houses in sufficient numbers to shelter the too rapidly increasing population if it is to maintain its reputation as the City of Homes; somehow, it has had to provide subways, and elevateds, and new suburban lines with no level crossings, and new central Stations and Terminals, and big trolley cars out of all proportion to Philadelphia's narrow streets, and taxis too dear for any but the millionaire to drive in, if the too-rapidly increasing crowds are to be got to work and back again; somehow, new bridges have had to cross the Schuylkill, new streets have had to be laid out, so many new things have had to be begun and done in the too-rapidly growing town, that there is small chance and less time for it to take them calmly or, alas! to keep itself clean and tidy.

II

In my memory Philadelphia was a model of cleanliness under a clean sky, free of the smoke that the use of soft coal has brought with it. Every Saturday every servant girl—"maid," Philadelphia [Pg 482] calls her now—turned out with mops and buckets and hose, for such a washing up of the front for a week that, until the next Saturday, Philadelphia could not look dirty if it tried. But I do not believe that a legion of servant girls, with all the mops, buckets, and hose in the world, could ever wash Philadelphia clean again, to such depths of dirt has it fallen. It could not have been more of a disgrace to its citizens when Franklin deplored the shocking condition of its streets, especially in wet weather, or when Washington had to wade through mud to get to the theatre where he found his recreation. It has become actually the Filthydelphia somebody once called it in jest. Not even in the little Spanish and Italian towns whose dirt the American deplores, have I seen such streets—all rivers and pools and lakes when it rains, ankle-deep in dust when it is dry, papers flying loose, corners choked with dirt, tins of ashes and garbage standing at the gutter side all day long—even London, that I used to think the dirtiest of dirty towns, knows how to order its garbage better than that. We Americans are supposed to be long-suffering, to endure almost anything until the crisis comes. But I thought that crisis had long since come in the Philadelphia streets. Everybody agreed with me, and I was assured that a corrupt government having been got out and a reform government got in, already there was tremendous talk of schemes for garbage—bags to be hauled off full of garbage, dust-tight on the way, and hauled back empty, old paper to [Pg 485] be bought up by the city so that no thrifty citizen would throw a scrap of paper into the street—and as tremendous talk of experiments in garbage, ten patriotic citizens promising to contribute one thousand dollars each to make them. I was assured also that the reform Mayor has done his best and struggled valiantly against the evil, but unfortunately it is not he alone who can vote the money for a wholesale spring-cleaning. It occurred to me that, in the meanwhile, we might be better off if we returned with much less expense, to the hogs that were "the best of scavengers" when William Cobbett visited Philadelphia. Or, at no more than the cost of a ticket to New York, the reformers might at least learn how to keep garbage tins off the front steps of inoffensive, tax-paying citizens at five o'clock in the afternoon when they ask their friends to drink tea in that English fashion which is as novel in my Philadelphia as the difficulty with the garbage.

THE RAILROAD BRIDGES AT FALLS OF SCHUYLKILL

My own opinion was that Philadelphia had lost its head over the magnitude of the task before it. In no other way could I account for the recklessness with which old streets were torn up for blocks and repaired by inches; new streets built and horrible stagnant pools left on their outskirts —the suburbs quite as bad in this respect, so bad that I understand associations of citizens are formed to do what the authorities don't seem able to; boulevards planned and held up when half finished, a monumental entrance designed to the most beautiful Park in the world and, on its [Pg 486] either side, silly little wooden pergolas set up to try the effect, by the dethroned government I believe, and, though nobody, from one end of the town to the other, approves, neither the time nor the money is found to pull them down again—neither the time nor the money found for anything but dirt and untidiness.

III

The people, their manners, their life,—everything seemed to me to have been caught in this mad whirlwind of change and haste. The crowds in the street were not the same, had forgotten the meaning of repose and leisureliness; had at last given in to the American habit of leaving everything until the last moment and then rushing when there was no occasion for rush, and pretending to hustle so that not one man or woman I met could have spared a second to say "You are welcome" for anybody's "Thank you," or, for that matter, to provide the information for anybody's thanks;—indeed, these crowds seemed to me to have mastered their new rôle with such thoroughness that to-day the visitor from abroad will carry away the same idea of Philadelphia as Arnold Bennett, who, during his sojourn there, never ceased to marvel at its liveliness.

THE PARKWAY PERGOLAS

And the crowds have migrated from the old haunts—every sign of life now gone from Third Street and round about the Stock Exchange, where nobody now is ever in a hurry—carts and cars going [Pg 489] at snail's pace, the whole place looking as if time did not count—the old town business quarter deserted for Market Street and Broad Street round the City Hall.

And the crowds do not get about in the same way—no slow, leisurely ride in the horse-car to a *Depot* in the wilds of Frankford, or at Ninth and Green, on the way to the suburbs, but a leap on a trolley, or a rush through thronged streets to the *Terminal* at Twelfth and Market, to the *Station* at Broad and Market. And it was another sign of how Philadelphia had "moved" since the old days

when, in place of the old horse-car, which I could rely upon to go in a straight line from one end of the long street to the other, I took the new trolley and it twisted and turned with me until the exception was to arrive just where I expected to, or, if I only stayed in it long enough, not to be landed in some remote country town where I had no intention of going. I have been told the story of the stay-at-home Philadelphian as puzzled as I, who was promised by a motorman, as uncertain as she where he was going, that at least he could give her a "nice ride through a handsome part of the town." Worse still, the trolley did not stop at the corners where the car used to stop so that I, a native Philadelphian, had to be told where to wait for it by an interloper with a foreign accent. Nor was it crowded at the same hours as the car used to be, so that going out to dinner in a Walnut Street trolley I could sit comfortably and not be obliged to hang on to a strap, with everybody who got in or out helping to rub the freshness from my best evening gown, which would have been my fate in the old days. [Pg 490]

And the crowds were not managed in the old way—the ordinary policeman used to do his best to keep out of sight, and here was the mounted policeman prancing about everywhere, and, at congested corners, adding to the confusion by filling up what little space the overgrown trolleys left in the narrow streets. I am not sure that it was not this mounted policeman—unless it was the coloured policemen and the coloured postmen—I had most difficulty in getting accustomed to. I came upon him every day, or almost every hour, with something of a new shock. Can this be really I, I would say to myself when I saw him in his splendour, can this be really Philadelphia?

IV

The difference I deplored was not confined to the crowds I did not know; it was no less marked in the people I did know, in their standards and outlook, in the way they lived. It is hard to say what struck me most, though nothing more obviously the first few days than that flight to the suburbs which had left such visible proofs as those signs "For Rent" and "For Sale" everywhere in the streets where I was most at home—a flight necessitated perhaps by the inroads of the alien, but only made possible by the annihilation of space due to the motor-car.

MARKET STREET WEST OF THE SCHUYLKILL

Once, when a Philadelphian set up a carriage, it was the announcement to Philadelphia that he had earned the fifty thousand dollars which fulfilled his ideal of a fortune. In my day Fairman Rogers' four-in-hand was the limit, and but few Philadelphians had the money and the recklessness to rival him. Now the Philadelphian does not have to earn anything at all before he sets up his motor-car, and it is the announcement of nothing except that he is bound to keep in the swim. Our children begin where we leave off, as one of my contemporaries said to me. Everybody has a motor-car. Everybody who can has one in London, I know, and there also the signs "To Let" and "For Sale" in such regions as Kensington and Bayswater have for some time back explained to me the way it has turned London life upside down. But in Philadelphia not merely everybody who can, but everybody who can't has one, and the Philadelphian would not do without it, if he had to mortgage his house as its price. I remember how incredulous I was, one of my first Sunday evenings at home, when I was dining with friends in the crowded-to-suffocation dining-room at the Bala Country Club and was given as an excuse for being rushed from my untasted coffee to catch an inconsiderately early last train, that ours was probably the only dinner party in the room without a car to take us back to town. But from that evening on I had no chance for incredulity, my own movements beginning to revolve round the motor-car. If I was asked to dinner and lunch at a distance to which nobody would have thought of dragging me by train in the old days, a motor was sent to whirl me out in no time at all. If I went into a far suburb for an afternoon visit, instead of coming soberly back to town on my return ticket, I would take a short cut by flying over half the near country, often in the car of people I had never seen before, as the most convenient route to the hotel. All Philadelphia life is regulated by the motor-car. It [Pg 493] [Pg 494]

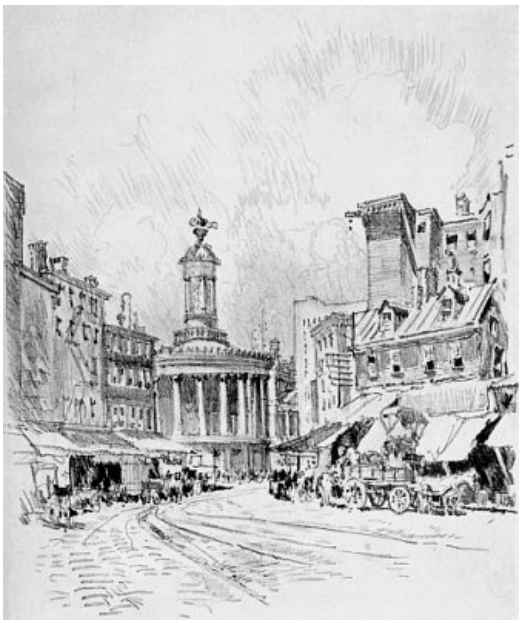
makes a ball or a tea or a dinner ten miles away as near as one just round the corner was in my time, and so half the gaiety is transferred to the suburbs and the suburban country, and, to my surprise, I found girls still going to dances at midsummer.

And the motor has made club life for women indispensable. The woman who comes up to town in her car must have a Club, and there is the Acorn Club in Walnut Street, The New Century, and the College and Civic Clubs, jointly housed at Thirteenth and Spruce, and more clubs in other streets, probably, which it was not my privilege to be invited to; all, to judge by the Acorn, with luxurious drawing-and dining-and smoking-and dressing-and bed-rooms, and women coming and going as if they had lived in clubs all their lives, when a short quarter of a century before there had not been one for them to see the inside of. And for men and women both, the car has brought within their reach those amazing Country Clubs that have sprung up in my absence. I had read of Country Clubs in American novels and short stories, I had seen them on the stage in American plays, but I had never paused to think of them as realities in Philadelphia until I was actually [Pg 495] taken to the Bala and Huntington Valley Clubs, and until I ate their admirable dinners—at Bala, with the crowds and in the light and to the music that would have made me feel I was in a London restaurant, had it not been for the inevitable cocktail—and until I saw with my own eyes the luxurious houses so comfortably and correctly appointed—even to brass bedroom candlesticks on a table in the second-story hall, just as in an old-fashioned English inn, though as far as I could make out there was excellent electric light everywhere—until I also saw with my own eyes the trim lawns, and gardens, and the wide view over the delicate American landscape, and women in the tennis courts, and the men bringing out their ponies for polo, and the players dotted over the golf course.

And whether the Country Clubs have created the sport or the sport has created the Country Clubs, I cannot say, but in the increased attention to sport I was confronted with another difference as startling. Philadelphia, I know, has always been given to sport. It hunted and raced and fished before time and conscience allowed most of the other Colonists in the North the chance to amuse themselves out-of-doors, or indoors either, poor things! And the old sports, barring the least civilized like bull-baiting and cock-fighting, were kept up, and are kept up, and had their Clubhouses, which, in some cases, have survived. But, in my time, these sports had been limited to the few who had country houses in the right districts or the leisure for the [Pg 496] gentlemanly pursuit of foxes and fishes, and their clubs were primitive compared to the palatial Country Clubs, whose luxury women now share with men. If you were in the hunting or fishing set, you heard all about it; but if you were not, you heard little enough. But you did not have to be in any set to keep up with the great Philadelphia game of cricket, which was popular, exclusive as the players in their team might be—all Philadelphia that did not play scrupulously going on the proper occasions to the Germantown Cricket Ground to watch all Philadelphia that did. The one alternative as popular was the pastime of rowing, the exclusiveness here in the rowing men's choice among the Clubs with the little boating clubhouses on the Schuylkill where boats could be stowed. And now? The cricket goes on, as gentlemanly and correct a pastime as ever. And the boating goes on, but with a delightful exclusive old Colonial house, for one Club at least, hidden in thickets of the Park where the stranger might pass within a stone's throw and never discover it, but where the boating party can dine with a privacy and a sumptuousness undreamed of at Belmont, where boating parties dined in my young days. And, in addition, time has been prodigal with golf and tennis and polo; women, who had begun tennis in my time, now beginning golf, games which, I might as well admit, I have no use for and can therefore say little about. And I am told that the University foot-ball matches are among the most important and lavishly patronized [Pg 499] social functions of the year. And in town is the big Racquets Club, in a fine new building, big enough to shelter any number of sports besides. And the Natatorium, in moving from the unpretentious premises in South Broad Street, where it has left its old building and name, to the marble palace that was once George W. Childs's. Oh, the sacrilege! the house where his emperors and princes and lords and authors were entertained,—has converted the swimming lesson into the luxury of sport. And all told, so many, and so exhaustive, and so universal are the provisions for sport that I might have believed the Philadelphian had nothing in the world to do, save to invent amusements to help him through his empty hours.

MANHEIM CRICKET GROUND

And, apparently, it is to provide for the same empty hours that those elaborate lunch places have multiplied on Chestnut Street, some delightful where you feast as only Philadelphia can, some horrible where you sit on high stools at counters and fight for your food; that little quiet discreet tea-places have sprung up in side streets; that gilded restaurants, boasting they reproduce the last London fads and fashions, have succeeded the old no restaurant at all; that hotels as big and strident as if they had strayed off Fifth Avenue increase in number year by year, culminating in the Adelphia, the latest giant, which I have not seen; that the old poky hotels of my day have branched out in roof gardens where on hot summer evenings you can sit up among the sky-scrapers, a near neighbour to William Penn on his tower, and get whatever air stirs over the red- [Pg 500] hot furnace of Philadelphia; that a huge new hotel has appeared up Broad Street where it seems the Philadelphian sometimes goes with the feeling of adventure with which he once descended upon Logan Square. Even business hours are broken into; the lunch of a dozen oysters or a sandwich snatched up anywhere has gone out of fashion; the chop, in the Philadelphia imitation of a London chop-house that seemed luxurious in my Father's day, has become far too simple; and disaster was predicted to me for the Stock Exchange by a pessimistic member who knew that, from the new building that has followed the Courts to the centre of the town, brokers will be running over to lunch at the Bellevue and to incapacitate themselves more or less for the rest of the day, and business will go on drifting, as it has begun to, to New York and will all be done by telephone. And as if the feasting were not enough of a pastime, everywhere lunches, teas and dinners are served to the sound of music, so that distraction and diversion may be counted upon without the effort to talk for them. When I was young, the best Philadelphia could do in the way of combining music and eating—or principally drinking—was at the Mäennerchor Garden at Ninth and Green, where a pretzel might be had with a glass of beer, or a sherry cobbler, or a mint julep—"high-balls" had not been heard of—and the Philadelphia girl who went, though it was under the irreproachable charge of her brother, could feel that she was doing something very [Pg 503] shocking and compromising. But in the new Philadelphia, it is music whenever the Philadelphian eats or drinks in public, which seems to be next to always.



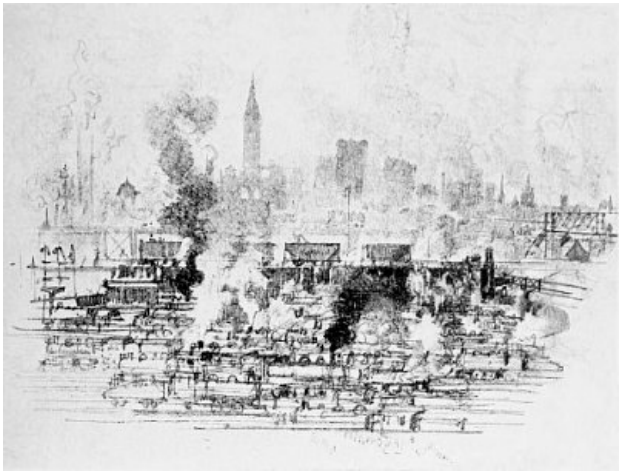
DOCK STREET AND THE EXCHANGE

It may be said that these are harmless innovations, part of the change in town life as lived in any other town as big. But the marvel to me was their conquest of Philadelphia, the town that used to pride itself on not being like other towns, and there they exaggerated themselves in my eyes into nothing short of revolution. The craving for novelty—that was at the root of it all: of the restlessness, the willingness to do what the old-fashioned Philadelphian would rather have been seen dead than caught doing, of the deliberate break with tradition. Nothing now can be left peacefully as it was. I felt the foundations of the world crumble when I heard that the Dancing Class has taken new quarters over in Horticultural Hall and the Assembly in the Bellevue, that Philadelphia consents to go up Broad Street for its opera, quieting its conscience by the compromise of going in carriages and motors and never on foot. There surely was the end of the old Philadelphia, the real Philadelphia. And it made matters no better to be assured that so rapidly does Philadelphia move with the times that the Philadelphian who stays away from home, or who is in mourning, for a year or so, finds on coming back, or out of retirement, that Philadelphia society has been as completely transformed in the meanwhile as Philadelphia streets. Nor did it make matters better to discover the different prices that different standards [Pg 504] have brought in their train. I could see the new pace at which life in public is set, I heard much of the new pace set for it in private—servants' wages prohibitive according to old ways of thinking, provisions risen to a scale beyond belief, every-day existence as dear as in London—in Philadelphia, as elsewhere, people threatened with ruin from, not the high cost of living, but the cost of high living.

V

And the change is not simply in the outward panoply, in the parade of life, it is in the point of view, in the new attitude toward life—a change that impressed itself upon me in a thousand and one ways. I have already referred to my astonishment at finding Philadelphia occupying itself with art and literature. But really there is nothing with which it does not occupy itself. Universal knowledge has come into fashion and it makes me tired just to think of the struggle to keep up to it. Once the Philadelphian thought he knew everything that was necessary to know if he could tell you who every other Philadelphian's grandfather was. But now he, or I should say she—for it is the women who rule when it comes to fashion—is not content unless she knows everything, or thinks she does, from the first chapter in Genesis to the latest novelty on the Boulevards, the latest club gossip in Pall Mall. And how she can talk about it! I have made so many confessions in these pages that it will do no harm to add one more to their number, and to own my discomfiture when, on finding myself one of a group of Philadelphia women, I have been stunned into silence, [Pg 505] in my ignorance reduced to shame and confusion by their encyclopedic, Baedeker-Murray information and their volubility in imparting it. It is wonderful to know so much, but, as the philosopher says, what a comfort, to be sure, a dull person may be at times.

On the whole, it was the new interest in politics that most astonished me. That just when Philadelphia has plunged into incredible frivolity, it should develop an interest in problems it calmly shirked in its days of sobriety—that is astounding if you will. When I left home, politics were still beneath the active interest of the Philadelphian—still something to steer clear from, to keep one's hands clean of. A man who would rather live on the public than do an honest day's work, was my Father's definition of the politician. I remember what a crank we all thought one of my Brother's friends who amused himself by being elected to the Common Council. It was not at all good form—who of self-respect could so far forget himself as to become part, however humble, of the machine, a hail-fellow-well-met among the Bosses and liable to be greeted as Bill or Tom or Jim by the postman on his rounds or the policeman at the corner. Better far let the city be abominably governed and the tax-payers outrageously robbed, than to submit to such indignities. The Philadelphian who realized what he owed to himself and his position was superior to politics. But he is not any longer. I found him up to his eyes in politics—taking the [Pg 506] responsibility of municipal reform, waging war against state corruption, running meetings for Roosevelt and Progress at the last Presidential election. And not only this. The women are sharing his labours—the women who of old hardly knew the meaning of politics, might have been puzzled even to know how to spell the unfamiliar word—they too are busy with civic reform, and turn a watchful but unavailing eye on the garbage, and run settlements in the slums, and qualify as policemen, and demand the vote—parade for it, hold public meetings for it, hob-nob with coloured women for it, run after the discredited English militant for it,—and talk politics on any and every occasion. There were days when I heard nothing but politics—politics at lunch, politics at tea, politics at dinner—think of it! politics at a Philadelphia dinner party, politics over the Soft Shell Crabs and the Shad and the Broiled Chicken and the Ice-cream from Sautter's and the Madeira! It is better and wiser and more improving, no doubt, than the old vapid talk—but then the old vapid talk was part of my Philadelphia, and my Philadelphia was what I wanted to come back to.



THE LOCOMOTIVE YARD, WEST PHILADELPHIA

CHAPTER XX: PHILADELPHIA AFTER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY—CONTINUED [Pg 509]

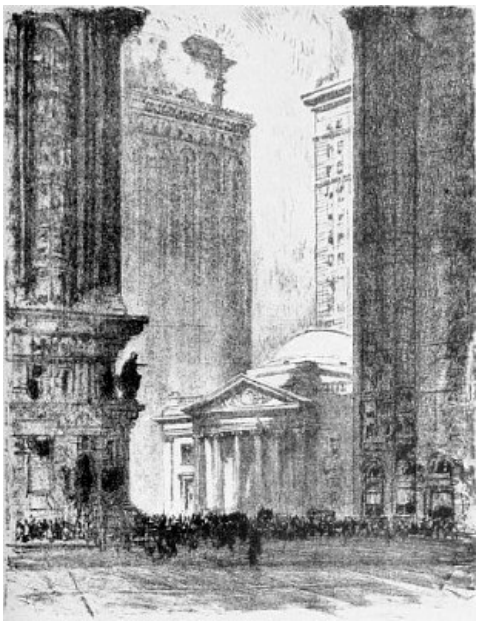
I

Of course I resented all the changes and, equally of course, it was unreasonable that I should. I had not stood stock still for a quarter of a century, why should I expect Philadelphia to?

And little by little, as I got my breath again after my first indignant surprise, as I pulled myself together after my first series of shocks, I began to understand that the wonder was that anything

should be left, and to see that Philadelphia has held on to enough of its character and beauty to impress the stranger, anyway, with the fine serenity that I missed at every turn. Philadelphia does not "bristle," Henry James wrote of it a very few years ago, by which he meant that it does not change, is incapable of changing, though to me it was, in this sense, so "bristling" that I tingled all over with the pricks. But, then, I knew what Philadelphia had been. That was why I was impressed first with the things that had changed, why, also, my pleasure was the keener in my later discovery of the things that had not.

I can laugh now at myself for my joy in all sorts of dear, absurd trifles simply because of their homely proof that the new Philadelphia had saved some relics of the old. What they stood for in my eyes gave value to the little iced Cakes of my childhood; to the frequent street parade, [Pg 510] glorified as it was beyond recognition by the new presence of the mounted police; to the City Troop, gorgeous and splendid as of old, and as of old turning out to decorate every public ceremony; to the nice old-fashioned "ma'am," unheard in England except, I believe, at court; to all the town, including my hotel, getting ready for the summer with matting and gauze and grey Holland. Old associations, old emotions, were stirred by the fragrance of the Cinnamon Bun that is never so fragrant out of Philadelphia, and one of the cruelest disappointments of my return was not to be able to devour it with the untrammelled appetite of youth when it was offered me in an interval between the Soft-Shell Crab and Ice-cream of a Philadelphia lunch and the Planked Shad and Broiled Chicken of a Philadelphia dinner. The row of heads at the Philadelphia Club windows, so embarrassing to me in my youth, borrowed beauty from association. I was thrilled by the decanter of Sherry or Madeira on the dinner table, where I had not seen it served in solitary grandeur since I had last dined in Philadelphia. The old rough kindliness of the people—when they were not aliens—in the streets, in the stores, in the trolleys, went to my heart. And in larger ways, too, the place filled me with pride for its constancy: for the steady development of all that made it great from the beginning—its schools, its charities, its hospitals, its libraries, its galleries; above all, for retaining what it could of its dignified reticence in keeping its private affairs to itself. It may live more in public than it did, but it still does not shriek all its secrets [Pg 513] from the house-top. It does not thrust all its wealth down every man's throat. It still hides many of its luxurious private palaces behind modest brick fronts. It may have broken out in gaudy hotels and restaurants, but Friends still continue to go their peaceful way completely apart in their spacious houses and pleasant gardens. Nor would any other town be so shy in acknowledging to itself, and boasting to others of, its beauty.



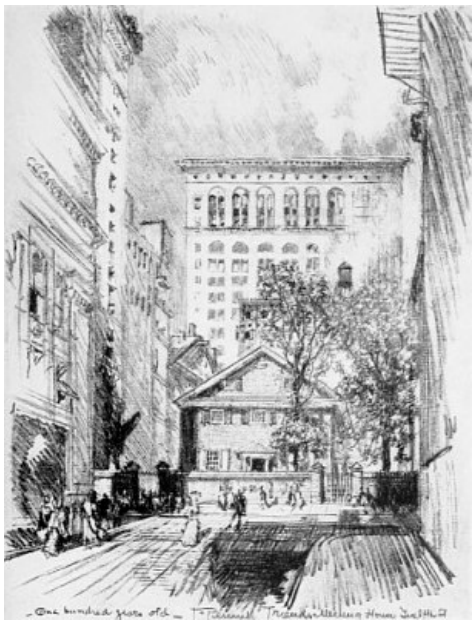
THE GIRARD TRUST COMPANY

II

Philadelphia has always been over-modest as to its personal appearance,—always on the surface, indifferent to flattery. Nobody would suspect it of ever having heard that to a philosopher like Voltaire it was, without his seeing it, one of the most beautiful cities in the universe, that a matter-of-fact traveller like William Cobbett thought it a fine city from the minute he knew it, that all the old travel-writers had a compliment for it, and all the new travellers as well, down to Li Hung Chang, who described it felicitously as "one of the most smiling of cities"—the "Place of a Million Smiles." It was not because it had ceased to be beautiful that it assumed this indifference. As I recall it in my youth, it was beautiful with the beauty Philadelphians searched Europe for, while they were busy destroying it at home—the beauty that life in England has helped me to appreciate as I never did before, for it has given me a standard I had not when I knew only Philadelphia. [Pg 514]

Judged by this standard, I found Philadelphia in its old parts more beautiful than I remembered it. In a street like Clinton, which has escaped the wholesale destruction, or in a block here and there in other streets less fortunate, I felt as I never had before the austere loveliness of their red brick and white marble and pleasant green shade. As never before I realized the Eighteenth-

Century perfection of the old State House and Carpenter's Hall. I know of no English building of the same date that has the dignity, the harmonious proportions, the restrained ornament of the State House,—none with so noble a background of stately rooms for those stately figures who were the makers of history in Philadelphia. And the old churches came as a new revelation. I questioned if I ever could have thought an English Cathedral in its close lovelier than red brick St. Peter's in its walled graveyard on a spring day, with the green in its first freshness and the great wide-spreading trees throwing soft shadows over the grassy spaces and the grey crumbling gravestones. The pleasure it gave me positively hurt when—after walking in the filth of Front Street, where the old houses are going to rack and ruin and where a Jew in his praying shawl at the door of a small, shabby synagogue seemed the explanation of the filth—I came upon the little green garden of a graveyard round the Old Swedes' Church, sweet and still and fragrant in the May sunshine, though the windows of a factory looked down upon it to one side, and out in front, on the railroad tracks, huge heavy freight cars rattled and rumbled and shrieked by, and beyond [Pg 517] them rose the steam stacks of steamers from Antwerp and Liverpool that unload at its door the hordes of aliens who not only degrade, but "impoverish" Philadelphia, as the Irish porter in my hotel said to me. And what pleasure again, after the walk full of memories along Front and Second Streets, with the familiar odours and Philadelphia here quiet as of yore, to come upon Christ Church a part of the street like any French Cathedral and not in its own little green, but with a greater architectural pretension to make up for it, and with a gravestone near the sanctuary to testify that John Penn, one at least of the Penn family, lies buried in Philadelphia. And what greater pleasure in the old Meeting Houses—why had I not known, in youth as in age, their tranquil loveliness?—What repose there, down Arch Street, in that small simple brick building, with its small simple green, one bed of tulips at the door, shut off from the noise and confusion and dirt and double trolley lines of Arch Street by the old high brick wall; and no less in that equally small and simple brick building in South Twelfth Street, an old oasis, or resting place, in a new wilderness of sky-scrapers. With these churches and meeting-houses standing, can Philadelphians deplore the ugliness of their town?

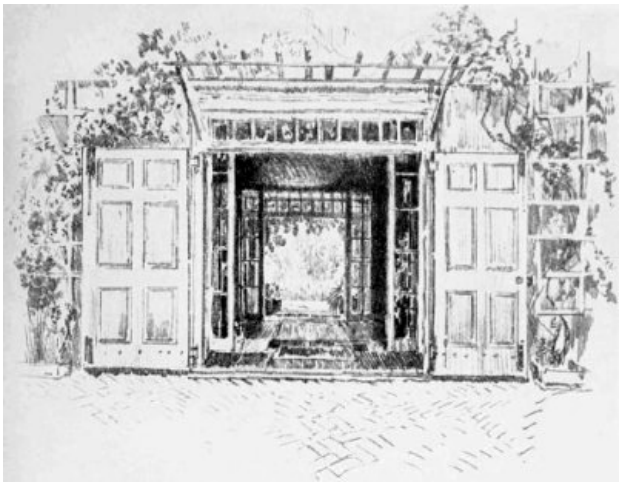


TWELFTH STREET MEETING HOUSE

And the old Eighteenth-Century houses? Would I find them as beautiful? I asked myself. Would they survive as triumphantly the test of my travelled years and more observant eyes? How foolish [Pg 518] the question, how unnecessary the doubt! More beautiful all of them, because my eyes were better trained to appreciate their architectural merit; more peaceful all of them, with the feeling of peace so intense I wondered whether it came of the Colonial architecture or of associations with it.

Germantown may be built up beyond recognition, its Lanes, many of them, turned into Streets for no reason the average man can see, but some of the big old estates, are still green and untouched as if miles away, and the old houses are more guarded than ever from change. One by one, I returned to them:—Stenton restored, but as yet so judicially that Logan would to-day feel at home in its halls and rooms, on its stairway, outside by the dovecote and the wistaria-covered walls,—at home in the garden full of tulips and daisies, and old familiar Philadelphia roses and Johnny-jump-ups, enclosed by hedges, every care taken to plant in it afresh just the blossoms he loved. But what would he have said to the factories opposite? To the rows of little two-story houses creeping nearer and nearer? And the Chew House—could the veterans of the Revolution return to it, as the veterans of the Civil War return every year to Gettysburg, how well they would know their way in the garden, how well, in the wide-pillared hall with the old portraits on the white wall, and in the rooms with their Eighteenth-Century panelling and cornices and fire-places, and in the broad hall upstairs could they follow the movements of the enemy that lost for them the [Pg 521] Battle of Germantown? And Wyck white, cloistered, vine-laden, with fragrant garden and shade-giving trees! And the Johnson House, and the Wistar House, and the Morris House. And how many other old houses beyond Germantown! Solitude, and Laurel Hill, and Arnold's Mansion in

the Park, Bartram's at Gray's Ferry.



WYCK

I thought first I would not put Bartram's to the test, no matter how bravely the others came out of it—Bartram's, associated with the romance of work and the dawn of my new life. But how glad I am that I thought twice and went back to it! For I found it beautiful as ever, though I could reach it by trolley, and though it was unrecognizably spick and span in the little orchard, and under the labelled trees, and by the old house and the old stables, and in the garden where gardeners were at work among the red roses. But the disorder has not been quite done away with in the wilderness below the garden, and there was the bench by the river, and there the outlook up and down—had so many chimneys belched forth smoke and had the smoke been as black on the opposite bank, up the river, in the old days? Certainly there had not been so many ghosts—not one of those that now looked at me with reproachful eyes, asking me what I had done with the years, for which such ambitious plans had been made on that very spot ages and ages ago? [Pg 522]

III

Philadelphia is not responsible for the ghosts; they are my affair; but it has made itself responsible for the beauty, not only at Bartram's but at as many other of the old places as it has been able to lay claims upon, converting them into what the French would call historic monuments. And Philadelphia, with the help of Colonial Dames, and an Automobile Club, and those societies and individuals who have learned at last to love the Philadelphia monuments though still indifferent to the town, has not been too soon in prescribing the desperate remedies their desperate case demands. In the new care of these old places, as well as in the new devotion to the old names and the old families, in the new keenness for historic meetings and commemorations, in the new local lectures on local subjects and traditions, in the very recent restoration of Congress Hall, in all this new native civic patriotism I seemed to see Philadelphia's desperate, if unconscious, struggle against the modern invader of the town's ancient beauty and traditions. The grown-up aliens who can be persuaded, as I am told they can be, to come and listen to papers on their own section of the town, whether it be Southwark, or Manayunk, or Frankford, or Society Hill, or the Northern Liberties, will probably in the end look up the old places and their history for themselves, just as the little aliens will who, in the schools, are given prizes for essays on local history:—offer anything, even a school prize, to a Russian Jew, and he will labour for it, in this case working indirectly for patriotism. [Pg 525]

**THE MASSED SKY-SCRAPERS
ABOVE THE HOUSETOPS**

But I am not sure that the greatest good the Society of Colonial Dames is doing is not in emphasizing the value of the past to those who date back to it. It has helped one group of Philadelphians to realize that there are other people in their town no less old as Philadelphians and more important in the history of Philadelphia, what is called society luckily not having taken possession of the Colonial Dames in Philadelphia as in New York. If all who date back see in the age of their families their passport into the aristocracy of Philadelphia and therefore of America, they may join together as a formidable force against the advance of the formidable alien. Mr. Arnold Bennett was amused to discover that every Bostonian came over in the Mayflower, but he does not understand the necessity for the native to hold on like grim death to the family tree—pigmy of a tree as it must seem in Europe—if America is to remain American. My one fear is lest this zeal, new to me, is being overdone, for I fancy I see an ill-concealed threat of a new reaction, this time against it. What else does the Philadelphian's toying with the cause of the "loyalists" during the Revolution and his belated espousal of it mean, unless perhaps the childish Anglomania which fashion has imposed upon Philadelphia? People are capable of anything for the sake of fashion. The ugliest blot on the history of Philadelphia is its running after the British when they were in possession of the town that winter we ought to try to forget instead of [Pg 526] commemorating its feasts—that winter when Philadelphia danced and Washington and his troops starved. Now Philadelphia threatens another blot as ugly by upholding the citizens who would have kept the British there altogether. However, this is as yet only a threat, Philadelphians are too preoccupied in their struggle for survival.

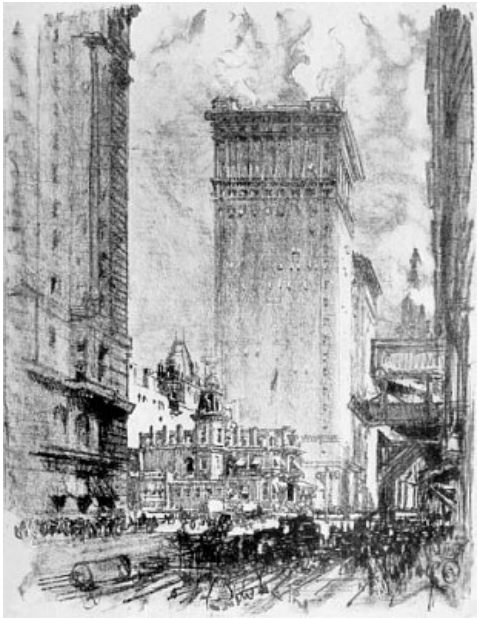
IV

Not only the new patriotism, but the new architecture is Colonial. For long after Colonial days Philadelphia kept to red brick and white facings in town, to grey stone and white porches in Germantown, often losing the old dignity and fine proportions, but preserving the unity, the harmony of Penn's original scheme, and the repose that is the inevitable result of unity. But there were many terrible breaks before and during my time—breaks that gave us the Public Buildings and Memorial Hall and many of the big banks and insurance offices down town, and a long list of regrettable mistakes;—breaks that burdened us with the brown stone period fortunately never much in favour, and the Furness period which I could wish had been less in favour so much too lavish was its gift of undesirable originality, and the awful green stone period of which a church here and a big mansion there and substantial buildings out at the University, too substantial to be pulled down for many a day, rise, a solid reproach to us for our far straying from righteousness; [Pg 529] breaks that courted and won the admiration of Philadelphia for imitations of any and every style that wasn't American, especially if it was English, Philadelphia tremendously pleased with itself for the bits borrowed from the English Universities and dumped down in its own University and out at Bryn Mawr, there as unmistakable aliens as our own Rhodes Scholars are at Oxford.

SUNSET. PHILADELPHIA FROM ACROSS THE DELAWARE

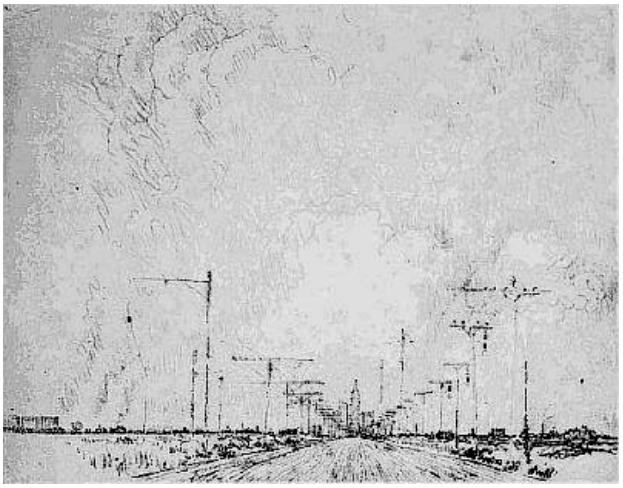
But from the moment Philadelphia began to look up its genealogy and respect it, the revival of Colonial was bound, sooner or later, to follow. It meant a change from which I could not escape, had I deliberately refused to see the many others. I was face to face with it at every step I took, in every direction I went—from the Navy Yard on League Island to the far end of North Broad Street; from Germantown, the old grey stone here returned to its own again, to West Philadelphia; from the University where the Law School building looks grave and distinguished and genuine in the midst of sham Tudor and sham I hardly know what, and deplorable green stone, to the Racquets Club in town; from the tallest sky-scraper to the smallest workman's dwelling—it was Colonial of one sort or another: sometimes with line results, at others with Colonial red brick and white facings and Colonial gables and Colonial columns and Colonial porches so abused that, after passing certain Colonial abortions repeated by the dozens, the hundreds, the thousands, in rows upon rows of two-story houses, all alike to the very pattern of the awning and the curves of the rocking chair on the invariable porch. I had it in my heart to [Pg 530] wish that Philadelphia had never heard the word Colonial. However, on the whole, more good has been done than harm. The original model is a fine one, it belongs to Philadelphia, and in reviving it the Philadelphia architect is working along legitimate lines.

But even as I write this, I realise that it is not to the revival of Colonial that Philadelphia owes all its new beauty. Indeed, the architecture that has done most for it in its new phase is that from which least would be expected by those who believe in appropriateness or utility as indispensable to architectural beauty. A town that has plenty of space to spread out indefinitely has no reason whatever to spread up in sky-scrapers, and this is precisely what Philadelphia has done and, moreover, looks all the better for having done. Its sky-scrapers compose themselves with marvellous effectiveness as a centre to the town, though they threaten by degrees to become too scattered to preserve the present composition; they provide an astounding and ever-varying arrangement of towers and spires from neighbouring corners and crossings; they give new interest as a background to some simple bit of old Philadelphia, as where Wanamaker's rises sheer and high above the little red brick meeting-house in Twelfth Street; they add to the charm of some ambitious bit of new Philadelphia as where the little Girard Trust Building—itself a happy return to standards that gave us Girard College and the Mint and Fairmount Water-Works— [Pg 533] stands low among the clustered towers, just as many a town in the Alps or Apennines lies low in the cup of the hills, and is the lovelier for it; they redeem from ugliness buildings of later periods, as where they give the scale in the most surprising fashion to the Union League; from far up or down the long straight line of Broad Street they complete the perspective as impressively as the Arc de Triomphe completes that other impressive perspective from the Garden of the Tuileries in Paris. They are as beautiful when you see them from the bridges or from the Park, a great group of towers high above the houses, high above the lesser towers and spires, high above the curls and wisps of smoke that now hang over Philadelphia; and from the near country they give to the low-lying town a sky-line that for loveliness and grandeur is not to be surpassed by the famous first view of Pisa across the Italian plain.



THE UNION LEAGUE BETWEEN THE SKY-SCRAPERS

Philadelphia is, in truth, such a beautiful town that I am surprised the world should be so slow in finding it out. The danger to it now is the Philadelphian's determination to thrust beauty upon it at any cost, not knowing that it is beautiful already. There is too much talk everywhere about town-planning as a reform, as a part of the whole tiresome business of elevating the masses. As I have said, Penn talked no nonsense of that kind, nor did Sir Christopher Wren when he made the fine design that London had not the sense to stick to, nor L'Enfant when he laid out Washington. [Pg 534] For the town that gets into the clutches of the reformer, I feel much as Whistler did for art —"What a sad state the slut is in an these gentlemen can help her." A town, like a woman, should cultivate good looks and cannot be too fastidious in every detail. But that is no reason why it should confuse this decent personal care with a moral mission. There is too much reform in Philadelphia just now for my taste, or its good. The idea of the new Parkway; with fine buildings like the new Free Library and the new Franklin Institute, along its route through the town; with the City Hall at one end and the fine new Art Gallery in the Park at the other; promises well, and I suppose that eventually the silly little wooden pergolas will disappear and the new buildings go up in their place. But though I know it sounds like shocking heresy, I should feel more confidence if its completion were in the hands of the old corrupt government we never tired of condemning, which may have stolen some of our money but at least gave us in return a splendidly planned and thoroughly well-kept Park, one of the most beautiful in the world. I believe that not only this monumental, but more domestic experiments are in view, the workman this time to profit—our old self-reliant American workman to have a taste of the benevolent interference that has taken the backbone out of the English workman. Rumours have reached me of emissaries sent to spy out the land in the Garden Cities of Germany and England. But what have we, in our far-famed City of Homes, to learn from other people's Garden Cities? For comfort, is the workman [Pg 537] anywhere better off at a lower rent than in the old streets of neat little two-story brick houses, or in the new streets of luxurious little Colonial abortions? And what does he want with the reformer's gardens when he lives in the green country town of Philadelphia?



UP BROAD STREET FROM LEAGUE ISLAND

V

Philadelphia might have lost more of its old architecture and been less successful with its new, and would still be beautiful, for as yet it has not ceased to respect Penn's wish to see it fair and green. It is not so green as it was, I admit—not so green as in the days of my childhood to which, in looking back, the spring always means streets too well lined with trees for my taste, since in every one those horrid green measuring worms were waiting to fall, crawling, upon me. There are great stretches in some streets from which the trees have disappeared, partly because they do not prosper so well in the now smoke-laden air; partly because every one blown down or injured must be replaced if replaced at all by some thrifty citizen held responsible for whatever damage it may do through no fault of his; partly, I believe, because at one time street commissioners ordered one or two in front of a house to be cut down, charged the landlord for doing it, and found too much profit not to persevere in their disastrous policy. Still, though Philadelphians in summer fly to little European towns to escape the streets they deplore as arid in Philadelphia, I know of no other town as large that is as green. The notes I made in [Pg 538] Philadelphia are full of my surprise that I should have forgotten how green and shady are its streets, how tender is this green in its first spring growth under the high luminous sky, how lovely the wistaria-draped walls in town and the dogwood in the suburbs. Walk or drive in whatever direction I chose, and at every crossing I looked up or down a long green vista, so that I understood the Philadelphia business man who described to me his daily walk from his Spruce Street house to the Reading Terminal as a lesson in botany. On the other side of the Schuylkill, in any of the suburbs, every street became a leafy avenue. There were evenings in that last June I spent in Philadelphia, when, the ugly houses bathed in golden light and the trees one long golden-green screen in front of them, I would not have exchanged Walnut or Spruce Street in West Philadelphia or many a Lane in Germantown, for any famous road or boulevard the world over. Really, the trees convert the whole town into an annex, an approach to that Park which is its chief green beauty and which, to me, was more than sufficient atonement for the corrupt government Philadelphia is said to have groaned under all the years Fairmount was growing in grace and beauty. And beyond the Park, beyond the suburbs, the leafy avenues run on for miles through as beautiful country as ever shut in a beautiful town.

FROM GRAY'S FERRY

VI

[Pg 541]

After all, there is beauty enough left to last my time, and I suppose with that I should be content. But I cannot help thinking of the future, cannot help wondering, now that I see the change the last quarter of a century has made, what the next will do for Philadelphia—whether after twenty-five years more a vestige of my Philadelphia will survive. I do not believe it will; I may be wrong,

but I am giving my impressions for what they are worth, and nothing on my return impressed me so much as the change everywhere and in everything. I think any American, from no matter what part of the country, who has been away so long, must, on going back, be impressed in the same way—must feel with me that America is growing day by day into something as different as possible from his America. For my part, I am just as glad I shall not live to see the Philadelphia that is to emerge from the present chaos, since I have not the shadow of a doubt that, whatever it may be, it will be as unlike Philadelphia as I have just learned to know it again, as this new Philadelphia is unlike my old Philadelphia, the beautiful, peaceful town where roses bloomed in the sunny back-yards and people lived in dignity behind the plain red brick fronts of the long narrow streets.

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[Pg 543]

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