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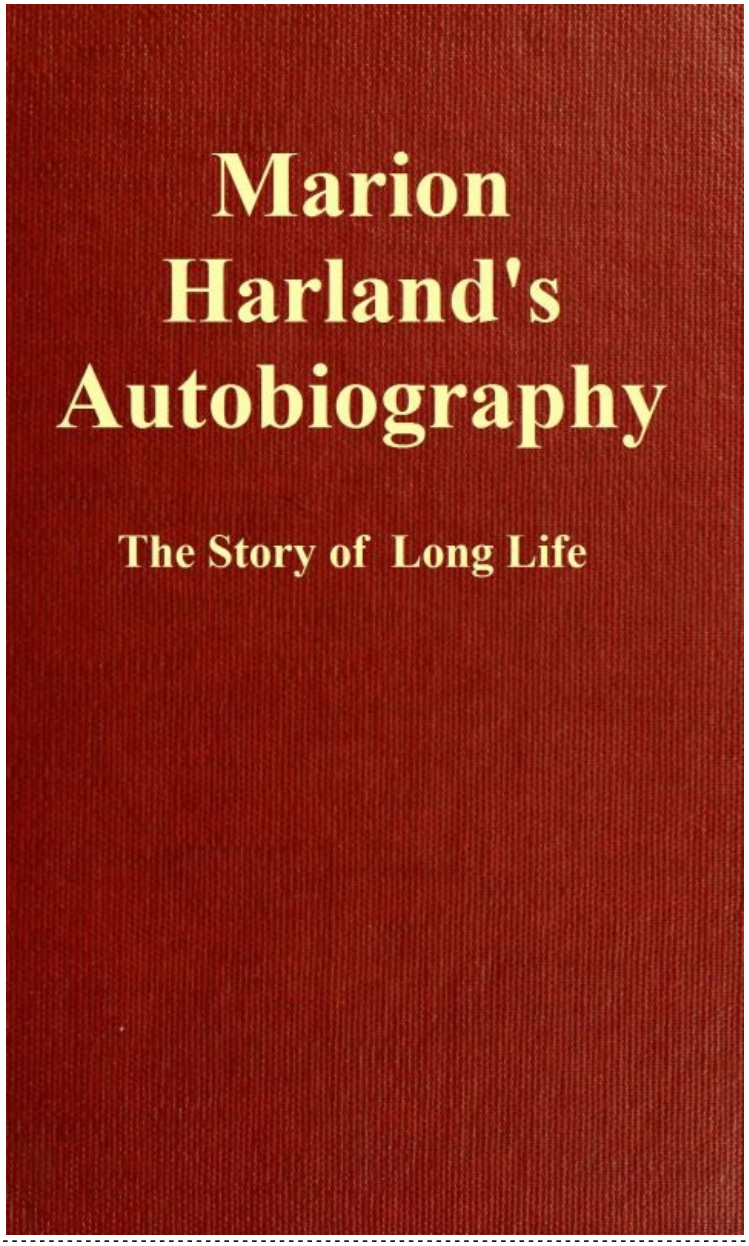


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# Marion Harland's Autobiography

THE STORY OF A LONG LIFE

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
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[ii]


Published April, 1910

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WITH
REVERENT TENDERNESS
THIS SIMPLE STORY OF MY LONG LIFE
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER

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# FOREWORD

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From the time when, as a mere baby, I dreamed myself to slumber every night by "making up stories," down to the present hour, every human life with which I have been associated, or of which I had any intimate knowledge, has been to me a living story. All interest me in some measure. Many enlist my sympathy and fascinate the imagination as no tale that is avowedly fictitious has ever bewitched me.

I hold and believe for certain that if I could draw aside the veil of conventional reserve from the daily thinking, feeling, and *living* of my most commonplace acquaintance, and read these from "Preface" to "Finis," I should rate the wildest dream of the novelist as tame by comparison.

My children tell me, laughingly, that I "turn everything into a story." In my heart I know that the romances are all ready-made and laid to my hand.

In the pages that follow this word of explanation I have essayed no dramatic effects or artistic "situations." "The Story of My Long Life" tells itself as one friend might talk to another as the two sit in the confidential firelight on a winter evening. The idea of reviewing that life upon paper first came to me with the consciousness—which was almost a shock—that, of all the authors still on active professional duty in our country, I am the only one whose memory runs back to the stage of national history that preceded the Civil War by a quarter-century. I, alone, am left to tell, of my own knowledge and experience, what the Old South was in deed and in truth. Other and far

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abler pens than mine have portrayed scenes of those days with skill I cannot emulate. But theirs is hearsay evidence—second-hand testimony as truly as if they wrote of Shakespeare's haps and mishaps in the grammar-school at Stratford-on-Avon, or of Master George Herbert's early love affairs.

True, the fathers told it to the generation following, and the generation has been faithful to the traditions committed to it. What I have to say in the aforesaid gossip over the confidential fire is of what I saw and heard and did—and *was* in that hoary Long Ago.

Throughout the telling I have kept the personal touch. The story is autobiography—not history. I began it for my children, whose importunities for tales of the olden—and now forever gone—"times" have been taken up by the least grandchild.

It was my lot to know the Old South in her prime, and to see her downfall. Mine to witness the throes that racked her during four black and bitter years. Mine to watch the dawn of a new and vigorous life and the full glory of a restored Union. I shall tell of nothing that my eyes did not see, and depict neither tragedy nor comedy in which I was not cast for a part.

Mine is a story for the table and arm-chair under the reading-lamp in the living-room, and not for the library shelves. To the family and to those who make and keep the home do I commit it.

MARION HARLAND.

NEW YORK CITY, *November, 1909.*

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# MARION HARLAND'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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## I

## FOREBEARS AND PATRON SAINT

MY father, Samuel Pierce Hawes, was born in the town of Dorchester, Massachusetts, July 30, 1799.

The homestead, still standing and reckoned among the notable sites of the region, was built in 1640, by Robert Pierce, who emigrated to the New World in 1630, having sailed from Plymouth, England, in the *Mary and John*, in company with others of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. On the voyage, he married Ann Greenaway—registered as "Daughter of Goodman Greenaway," a fellow-passenger.

The family trace their descent, by old domestic and town records, from the Northumberland Percies. Traditions, cherished by the race, affirm that Godfrey of Bouillon was a remote ancestor. It is unquestionably true that "Robert of Dorchester," as he is put down in the genealogy of the Percies, was a blood relative of Master George Percy, John Smith's friend, and his successor in the presidency of the Jamestown colony.

The emigrants had a temporary home in Neponset Village, prospering so far in worldly substance as to justify the erection of the substantial house upon the hill overlooking the [2]
"village," ten years after the landing. So substantial was it, and so honest were the builders, that it has come down in a direct line from father to son, and been inhabited by ten generations of thrifty folk who have left it stanch and weatherproof to this day.

My father's mother, a handsome, wilful girl of seventeen, ran away to be married to one whom her father—"Squire Pierce"—considered a presumptuous adventurer. He was from Maine, a stranger in the neighborhood, and reputed (justly) to be wild and unsteady. When he asked for the girl's hand he was summarily commanded to hold no further communication with her. He had served as a private in the Revolutionary War; he had winning ways and a good-looking face, and Ann had a liberal spice of her sire's unbending will. She would have him, and no other of the youths who sued for her favor.

The family genealogy records that "Squire Pierce," as he was named by his neighbors, received a captain's commission from the parent government at the outbreak of the Rebellion, and on the self-same day one from the Continental Congress appointing him as a colonel in the Massachusetts forces. As "Colonel Pierce," he fought throughout the eight bloody years to which we owe our national life.

In his home he was a despot of the true Puritan, patriarchal type.

For three years after the elopement the name of his daughter's husband was never uttered in his hearing. Nor did she enter the house, until at twenty, her proud spirit bowed but not broken by sorrows she never retailed, she came back to the old roof-tree on the eve of her confinement with her first and only child. He was born there and received the grandfather's name in full. From that hour he was adopted as a son of the house by the stern old Puritan, and brought up at his knees.

With the shrewd sense and sturdy independence characteristic of the true New-Englander, the mother was never forgetful of the fact that her boy was half-orphaned and dependent upon his grandfather's bounty, and began early to equip him for a single-handed fight with the world. [3]

Within a decade I have studied an authentic and detailed genealogy of the Hawes stock from which my grandfather sprang. It is a fine old English family, and the American branch, in which appear the birth and death of Jesse Hawes, of Maine, numbers many men of distinction in various professions. It is a comfort to a believer in heredity to be assured that the tree was sound at heart, in spite of the warped and severed bough.

By the time my father was fourteen, he was at work in a Boston mercantile house, boarding with his employer, Mr. Baker, a personal friend of the Pierces. The growing lad walked out to Dorchester every Saturday night to spend Sunday at home and attend divine service in the "Dorchester Old Meeting-House," the same in which I first saw and heard Edward Everett Hale, over forty years later. The youth arose, in all weathers, before the sun on Monday morning in order to be at his place of business at seven o'clock. When he was sixteen, his employer removed to Richmond, Virginia, and took his favorite clerk with him. From Boston to the capital of the Old Dominion was then a fortnight's journey by the quickest mode of travel. The boy could hardly hope to see his mother even once a year.

At twenty-five he was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, established and built up by Rev. John Holt Rice, D.D., who was also the founder of Union Theological Seminary, now situated in Richmond. The young New-Englander was, likewise, a teacher in the Sunday-school—the first of its kind in Virginia, conducted under the auspices of Doctor Rice's church—a partner in a flourishing mercantile house, and engaged to be married to [4] Miss Judith Anna Smith, of Olney, a plantation on the Chickahominy, five miles from the city.

I have a miniature of my father, painted upon ivory a few years after his marriage. It is that of a handsome man, with deeply set gray eyes, very dark hair, and a well-cut, resolute mouth. The head is nobly shaped, the forehead full and broad. His face was singularly mobile, and deeply lined, even in youth.

In intellect he was far above the average business man. His library, at that early date, was more than respectable. Some of the most valuable early editions of the English classics that enrich my book-shelves have his book-plate upon the fly-leaves. He had, moreover, a number of standard French books, having studied the language with a tutor in the evenings. The range of his reading was wide and of a high order. Histories, biographies, books of travel, and essays had a prominent place in his store of "solid reading." That really good novels were not included in this condemnation we learn from a brief note to his betrothed, accompanying a copy of Walter Scott's *Pirate*. He apologizes for the profanity of certain characters in semi-humorous fashion, and signs himself, "Your friend, Samuel."

Doctor Rice, whose wife was my mother's first cousin, appreciated young Hawes's character and ability; the parsonage was thrown open to him at all times, and within the hospitable precincts he first met his future wife.

She was a pretty, amiable girl of eighteen, like himself an omnivorous reader, and, like him also, a zealous church-worker.

Her father, Capt. William Sterling Smith, was the master of the ancestral estate of Olney, rechristened in the latter part of the eighteenth century by an ardent admirer of William Cowper. I am under the impression that the change of name was the work of my grandmother, his second [5] wife, Miss Judith Smith, of Montrose, and a second cousin of "Captain Sterling," as he was familiarly called.

Late in the seventeenth century, William Smith, of Devonshire, a lineal descendant of the brother and heir of Capt. John Smith of Pocahontas fame, married Ann Sterling in England, and, emigrating to America, pitched his moving tent, first in Gloucester, then in Henrico County. His cousin, bearing the same name, took up land in Powhatan, naming his homestead for the hapless Earl of Montrose. The questionable custom of the intermarriage of cousins prevailed in the clan, as among other old Virginia families.

My maternal grandmother was petite, refined in feature, bearing, and speech, and remarkable in her day for intellectual vivacity and moral graces. Her chief associates of the other sex were men of profound learning, distinguished for services done to Church and State. Among them were the founders of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia. The Smiths had seceded from the Established Church of England before Thomas Jefferson rent it from the State.

There lies at my elbow a time-worn volume bound in unpolished calf-skin, and lettered on one side, "D. Lacy's Letters"; on the reverse, "Friendship Perpetuated." It contains one hundred and forty-two letters, copied from the original epistles and engrossed in exquisitely neat and minute characters. They represent one side of a correspondence maintained by the scribe with my grandmother before and after her marriage. The writer and copyist was the Rev. Drury Lacy, D.D., then a professor in Hampden Sidney College, and destined to become the progenitor of a long line of divines and scholars. The Hoges, Lacys, Brookeses, and Waddells were of this lineage. The epistles are Addisonian in purity of moral teaching and in grammatical structure, Johnsonian in verboseness, and interfused throughout with a pietistic priggishness all their own. [6] We are glad to carry with us through the perusal (in instalments) of the hundred and forty-two, the tales current in that all-so-long-ago of the genial nature and liveliness of conversation that

made him a star in social life. One wonders, in hearing of the “perpetuation” of the brotherly-and-sisterly intimacy, begun months before he wedded the “Nancy” of the Montrose group, who, from all I have been able to gather, was a very commonplace personage by comparison with “Judith”—one marvels, I say, that the affection never ripened into a warmer sentiment. They had themselves better in hand evidently than the “affinities” of the twentieth century.

Old people I knew, when a child, delighted in relating how, when “Mr. Lacy” held meetings in country churches in Powhatan and Prince Edward, and his sister-in-law was in the congregation, everybody listened for the voices of those two. His was strong, flexible, and sweet, and he read music as he read a printed page. While she, as an old admirer—who up to his eightieth year loved to visit my mother that he might talk of his early love—used to declare, “sang like an angel just down from heaven.”

She added all womanly accomplishments to musical skill and literary tastes. An embroidered counterpane, of which I am the proud owner, is wrought in thirteen varieties of stitch, and in patterns invented by herself and three sisters, the only brother contributing what may be classed as a “conventional design” of an altar and two turtle-doves perched upon a brace of coupled hearts—symbolical of his passion for the beauty of the county, Judith Mosby, of Fonthill, whom he married. Our Judith held on the peaceful tenor of her way, reading all the books she could lay her shapely hands upon, keeping up her end of correspondences with Lacys, Rices, Speeces, Randolphs, and Blaines, and gently rejecting one offer after another, until she married at thirty- [7]
three—an advanced stage of spinsterdom, then—honest Capt. Sterling Smith, the widower-father of three children.

Her husband was the proprietor of broad acres, a man of birth and fair education, high-minded, honorable, and devoted to his delicate wife. Nevertheless, the dainty *châtelaine* must, sometimes, have missed her erudite admirers, and wished in her heart that the worthy planter were, intellectually, more in tune with herself.

My own mother’s recollections of her mother were vivid, and I never wearied of hearing them. My grandmother’s wedding night-gown, which I have, helps me to picture her as she moved about the modest homestead, directing and overseeing servants, key-basket on arm, keeping, as she did, a daily record of provisions “given out” from store-room and smoke-house, writing down in her hand-book bills-of-fare for the week (my mother treasured them for years), entertaining the friends attracted by her influence, her husband’s hospitality, and his two daughters’ charms of person and disposition.

This gown is of fine cambric, with a falling collar and a short, shirred waist. The buttons are wooden moulds, covered with cambric, and each bears a tiny embroidered sprig. Collar and sleeves are trimmed with ruffles, worked in scallops by her deft fingers. The owner and wearer was below the medium height of women, and slight to fragility. Her love of the beautiful found expression in her exquisite needlework, in copying “commonplace-books” full of poetry and the music she loved passionately, and most healthful of all, in flower-gardening. Within my memory, the white jessamine planted by her still draped the window of “the chamber” on the first floor. Few Virginia housewives would consent to have their bedrooms up-stairs. “Looking after the servants” was no idle figure of speech with them. Eternal vigilance was the price of home [8]
comfort. A hardy white-rose-tree, also planted by her, lived almost as long as the jessamine—her favorite flower.

In the shade of the bower formed by these, Mrs. Judith Smith sat with her embroidery on summer days, her little name-daughter upon a cricket beside her, reading aloud by the hour. It was rather startling to me to learn that, at thirteen, the precocious child read thus *Pamela*, *The Children of the Abbey*, and *Clarissa* to the sweet-faced, white-souled matron. Likewise *The Rambler*, *Rasselas*, Shakespeare, and *The Spectator* (unexpurgated). But Young’s *Night Thoughts*, Thomson’s *Seasons*, *Paradise Lost*, Pope’s *Essays*, and the Book of Books qualified whatever of evil might have crept into the tender imagination from the strong meat, spiced. Cowper was a living presence to mother and girl. My mother could repeat pages of *The Tas* from memory fifty years after she recited them to her gentle teacher, and his hymns were the daily food of the twain.

The Olney family drove in the heavy coach over heavy roads five miles in all weathers to the First Presbyterian Church of Richmond. My grandfather had helped raise the money for the building, as his letters show, and was one of the elders ordained soon after the church was organized.

Thither they had gone on Christmas Sunday, 1811, to be met on the threshold by the news of the burning of the theatre on Saturday night. My mother, although but six years old, never forgot the scenes of that day. Doctor Rice had deviated from the rutted road of the “long prayer” constructed by ecclesiastical surveyors along the lines of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (“A, C, T, S”)—to talk as man to man with the Ruler of the universe of the terrible judgment which had befallen the mourning city. He had even alluded to it in his sermon, and it was discussed in awe-stricken tones by lingering groups in the aisles when service was over. [9]
Then, her little hand locked fast in that of her mother, the child was guided along the valley and up the steep hill to the smoking ruins, surrounded by a silent crowd, many of them in tears. In low, impressive accents the mother told the baby what had happened there last night, and, as the little creature began to sob, led her on up the street. A few squares farther on, my grandfather and a friend who walked with him laughed slightly at something they said or saw, and my grandmother said, sorrowfully:

“How can you laugh when sixty fellow-creatures lie dead over there—all hurried into Eternity without warning?”

I have never passed the now-old Monumental Church without recalling the incident engraved upon my childish mind by my mother’s story.

In the volume of “D. Lacy’s Letters” I found, laid carefully between the embrowned leaves for safest keeping, several letters from Capt. Sterling Smith to his “dear Judy,” and one from her to him, written while she was on a visit to Montrose, her birthplace, with her only son. We have such a pretty, pathetic expression of her love for husband and child, and touches, few but graphic, that outline for us so clearly her personality and environment, that I insert it here:

“Montrose, *September 5th, 1817.*
“(Ten o’clock at night.)

“My dear Mr. Smith,—I am sitting by my dear Josiah, who continues ill. His fever rises about dark. The chills are less severe, and the fever does not last as long as it did a week ago. Still, he suffers much, and is very weak. He has taken a great deal of medicine with very little benefit. His gums are sore. The doctor thinks they are touched by the calomel. He was here this morning, and advised some oil and then the bark.

“We have been looking for you ever since yesterday. Poor fellow! He longs [10]
to see you—and so do I! I was up last night, and I have been to-night very often—indeed, almost constantly—at the door and the window, listening for the sound of your horse’s feet. I have written by post, by John Morton, and by Mr. Mosby. I think if you had received either of the notes I should see you to-night, unless something serious is the matter. I am so much afraid that you are ill as to be quite unhappy.

“My love to my dear girls and all the family. My dear! my heart is sore! Pray that God may support me. I am too easily depressed—particularly when you are not with me. I *long* to see you! I hope I shall before you receive this. God bless you!

“Your very affectionate—your own

Judy.

“(Saturday morning.)

“We are both better. Josiah’s fever is off, but he is very weak.”

That the wife should begin the love-full epistle, “My dear Mr. Smith,” and sign it, “your own Judy,” seems the queerer to modern readers when it is considered that her husband was also her cousin, and had married her niece as his first wife. Few wives called their lords by their Christian names a hundred years back, and the custom is not yet fully established in the Southern States.

The few letters written by my grandfather that have been preserved until now show him to have been a man of sincere piety, sterling sense, and affectionate disposition. One herewith given betrays what a wealth of tenderness was poured out upon his fairy-like wife. It likewise offers a fair sketch of the life of a well-to-do Virginia planter of that date.

His wife was visiting her Montrose relatives.

“Olney, *March 30th, 1814.*

“With inexpressible pleasure I received yours by Mr. Mosby. I rejoice that the expected event with our dear sister has turned out favorably, and that [11]
you, my dear, are enjoying better health.

“I hope that you will not be uneasy about my lonely situation. Every one must know that it cannot be agreeable, but when I consider that you may be benefited by it, and even that your health may be restored (which we have reason to hope for), what would I not forego to secure so great a blessing!

“I have kept close at home, except when I went to meeting on Sabbath, and to town to-day to hear from you. During the day I have been busy, and at night have enjoyed the company of good books until ten or eleven o’clock, then gone to bed and slept tolerably well. I eat at the usual times, and have as good health as usual. Thus situated, I will try to be as comfortable as I can until God shall be pleased to bring us together again.

“Some of our black people are still sick. Amy is much better, and speaks plainly. Rose is but poorly, yet no worse. Nanny is in appearance no better. Becky has been really sick, but seems comfortable this evening. The doctor has ordered medicine which will, I hope, restore her to health. Oba was a little while in the garden on Monday, but has been closely housed ever since. His cough is very bad, and I suppose him unable to labor.

“I wish to come for you as soon as possible, and I would, if I could, rejoin

you to-morrow. The election would not keep me, but I have business I wish to attend to this week, and also to attend the meeting of the Bible Society at the Capitol on Tuesday. I hope to see you on Wednesday. I wish you to be prepared to come home with me soon after that. With regard to Betsy, I don't expect she will be ready to come home with us, and, if she could, I dread riding an ill-gaited horse thirty miles. Mr. Mosby's carriage is to go to Lynchburg in a few days, and he talks of returning home by way of Prince Edward, and bringing the two Betsies home. The carriage will be empty. I shall persuade him to be in earnest about it.

"Now, my dear, I must conclude with committing you to the care of our [12]
Heavenly Father. May He keep you from every evil! Give my love to the dear family you are with. May you be a comfort to them, and an instrument in the hands of God to do them good! Kiss my little ones for me, and tell them I love them!

"Your own affectionate,
"Wm. S. Smith."

The matter-of-fact manner in which the writer hints at the ride of thirty miles upon the ill-gaited horse he would have to bestride if the women, babies, and maid filled the family chariot, and his intention of making Mr. Mosby "earnest" in the scheme of despatching his empty carriage to Lynchburg—a distance of one hundred and forty miles—returning by way of Prince Edward, eighty miles from Olney—to fetch "the two Betsies" home, was a perfectly natural proceeding in the eyes of him who wrote and of her who read. There was not so much as a stage-coach route between the two towns. Heavy as were the carriages that swung and creaked through the red mud-holes and corduroy roads that did duty for thoroughfares all over the State, they were on the go continually, except when the mud-holes became bottomless and the red clay as sticky as putty. Then men and women went on horseback, unless the women were too old for the saddle. The men never were.

It was, likewise, an everyday matter with our planter that five of his "black people" should be down "sick" at one time. The race had then, as they have to our day, a penchant for disease. Every plantation had a hospital ward that was never empty.

A letter penned three years earlier than that we have just read:

"We are going on bravely with our subscription for building a meeting-house. Yesterday was the first of my turning out with subscription-paper. I got [13]
162 dollars subscribed, with a promise of more. We have now about 1800 dollars on our subscription-list, which sum increases at least 100 dollars a day. I hope, with a little help that we have reason to expect from New York, we shall soon be able to begin the work, which may the Lord prosper in our hands!"

The "meeting-house," when constructed, was popularly known as the "Pineapple Church," from the conical ornament topping the steeple. As Richmond grew westward and climbed up Shockoe Hill, the First Presbyterian Church was swept up with the congregation to another site. The deserted building was bought by the Episcopalians, and christened "Christ Church." As long as it stood it was known by the "old-timers" as the "Old Pineapple."

The daughters of Captain Sterling's first wife were Mary and Elizabeth (the "Betsy" of his letters). She married Rev. Thomas Lumpkin, whom she met on one of her visits to Prince Edward County, where her aunt, Mrs. James Morton, lived in the vicinity of Hampden Sidney College. Her husband lived but seven months from the wedding-day, and she returned to Olney and the fostering care of her father and the second mother, who was ever her fast and tender friend. There, in the house where she was born, she laid in her stepmother's arms a baby-girl, born four months later. The posthumous child became the beloved "Cousin Mary" of these memoirs. She had been the petted darling of the homestead five years when her mother married again, and another clergyman, whom I shall call "Mr. Carus." He was a Connecticut man who had been a tutor in the Olney household before he took orders. For reasons which will appear by-and-by, I prefer to disguise his name. Others in his native New England bear it, although he left no descendants.

From my mother I had the particulars of the death-scene in that first-floor "chamber" in the [14]
homestead, when, on a sultry August day (1820), "the longest, saddest day I have ever known"—said the daughter—the dainty, delicate creature who was soul and heart to the home passed away from earth.

My mother has told me how the scent of white jessamine flowed into the room where grief was hushed to hearken for the failing breath.

Dr. Rice's niece leaned over the pillow in which the girl of fourteen smothered her sobs in clinging to the small hand so strangely cold.

"She does not breathe!" the weeper heard the friend whisper. And in a moment more, "Her heart does not beat!"

I have dwelt at length upon the character and life of my maternal grandmother because of my

solemn conviction that I inherit what humble talent is mine from her. I cannot recall the time when everything connected with her did not possess for me a sweet and weird charm; when the fancy that this *petite* woman, with a heart and soul too great for her physique, was my guardian angel, did not stay my soul and renew my courage in all good emprises.

Her profiled portrait hangs before me as I write. The features are finely chiselled and high-bred; the expression is sweet. She wears a close cap with a lace border (she was but fifty-three at death!), and a crimped frill stands up about a slender neck.

My fantasy may be a figment of the imagination. I cherish it with a tenacity that tells me it is more. That my mother shared it was proved by her legacy to me of all the books and other relics of her mother she possessed at the time of her own decease, and the richer legacy of tales of that mother's life and words, her deeds of mercy and love, which cannot but make me a better woman.

The mortal remains of my patron saint lie in the old family burying-ground. War, in its rudest shape, swept over the ancestral acres for two years. Trees, centuries old, were cut down; ruffian soldiery camped upon and tramped over desolated fields; outbuildings were destroyed, and the cosey home stripped of porches and wings, leaving it a pitiful shell. Captain Sterling had fought at Germantown and Monmouth, leading his Henrico troopers in the train of Washington and Gates. And Northern cannon and Southern musketry jarred his bones after their rest of half a century in the country graveyard! [15]

Yet—and this I like to think of—the periwinkle that opens its blue eyes in the early springtime, and the long-stemmed narcissus, waving its golden censers above the tangled grasses, spring from the roots *her* dear hands buried there one hundred years ago.

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## II [16]

## LAFAYETTE—REVOLUTIONARY TALES—PARENTS' MARRIAGE

My father's wooing, carried on, now at Dr. Rice's house in town, now at Olney, progressed propitiously. During the engagement, Lafayette visited Richmond. My father was a member of the once-famous volunteer company, the Richmond Blues, and marched with it when it was detailed as a body-guard for the illustrious guest of the nation. My mother walked at the head of her class of Sunday-school children in the procession of women and girls mustered here to do him honor, as was done in Trenton and other towns. She kept among her treasured relics the blue-satin badge, with Lafayette's likeness stamped on it in silver, which she wore upon her left shoulder. The Blues were arrayed in Continental uniform, with powdered hair. So completely was my father metamorphosed by the costume that, when, at the close of the parade, he presented himself in Dr. Rice's drawing-room to pay his devoirs to his fiancée, she did not recognize him until he spoke.

I have heard the particulars of that day's pageant and of Lafayette's behavior at the public reception awarded him by a grateful people, so often that I seem to have been part of the scene in a former incarnation. So vivid were my reminiscences that, when a bride and a guest at Redhill, the former home of Patrick Henry, I exchanged incidents and sayings with the great orator's son, Mr. John Henry, who had been on the Committee of Reception in 1824. In the enthusiasm of his own recollections of the fête he inquired, naïvely: [17]

"Do you, then, remember Lafayette's visit to America so well?"

The general burst of merriment that went around the table, and Wirt Henry's respectful, half-distressed—"Why, father! she wasn't born!" brought both of us back to the actual and present time and place.

A large platform erected upon the Capitol Square was filled with distinguished guests and officials. From this Lafayette reviewed the regiments of soldiers, and here he stood when the schools of the city sent up as their representative a pretty little girl, eight or ten years of age, to "speak a piece" written for the occasion by a local bard. The midget went through the task bravely, but with filling eyes and trembling limbs. Her store of factitious courage exhaled with the last line reeled off from the red lips, and, with a scared, piteous look into the benign face brought upon a level with hers by the table upon which she had been set, like an animated puppet, she cast herself upon the great man's decorated breast and wept sore. He kissed and cuddled and soothed her as he might pet his own grandchild, and not until she could return his smile, and he had dried her tears upon his laced handkerchief, did he transfer her to other arms.

Major James Morton, of "Willington," Prince Edward County, who married my grandmother's sister Mary, of Montrose, had served under Lafayette and came down to Richmond to do honor to his former chief. The Major's *sobriquet* in the army was "Solid Column," in reference to his "stocky" build. Although he had been on Washington's staff, he did not expect to be recognized, after the lapse of thirty years and more, by the renowned Frenchman, who had passed since their parting through a bloodier revolution than that which won freedom for America.

General Lafayette was standing at the head of the ball-room (which was, I think, in the Eagle Hotel), where he received the crowds of citizens and military flocking to pay their respects, when [18]

he espied his whilom comrade on the outskirts of the throng. Instantly stepping outside of the cordon of aids and attendants, the Marquis held out both hands with:

"Vy, old So*lee*d Col*uu*me! I am 'appy to see you!"

A marvellous memory and a more marvellous facile tongue and quick wit had the distinguished leader of freedom-lovers! There lived in Richmond, until the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, a stately gentlewoman of the very old school whom we, of two younger generations, regarded with prideful veneration, and with reason. For Lafayette, who had seen her dance at the aforesaid ball, had pronounced her, audibly, "the handsomest woman he had seen in America." Time had handled her disrespectfully by the time I heard the tale. But I never questioned the truth of it until I found in three other cities as many antique belles upon whom he had set a seal of the self-same pattern.

We were generously fed with authentic stories of Revolutionary days in my far-off childhood. I have sat at Major Morton's feet and learned of the veteran much that nobody else wots of in our rushing times. I recall his emphatic denial of the assertion made by a Fourth-of-July orator to the effect that so grievous was the weight of public cares upon the Commander-in-Chief, he was never seen to smile during those eventful eight years of struggle and suspense.

"Not a word of truth in it, sir!" Thus old Solid Column to the man who reported the speech to him. "I was with him at Valley Forge, sir, and nobody there tried harder to keep up the spirits of the men. I recollect, particularly, one bitter cold day, when a dozen or so of the officers were [19] amusing themselves and trying to get warm by jumping up and down, leaping high up in the air and trying to clap their heels together twice before they struck the ground in coming down. General Greene was sure he could do it, but he was fleshy and never light on his feet, besides being naturally sober. He was a Quaker, you know, and was turned out of meeting for joining the army. Well, on this particular day he took his turn with the others in jumping. And a poor hand he was at it! He couldn't clap his heels together once on the way down, let alone twice. By-and-by he made a tremendous effort and pitched over, head down and heels up—flat on the snow. General Washington was watching them from where he stood in his tent door, and when General Greene went down—how the General laughed! He fairly held his sides!

"'Ah, Greene!' he called out. 'You were always a lubberly fellow!'

"I am not saying he wasn't one of the gravest men I ever saw, as a rule, but he often smiled, and he did laugh sometimes."

My grandfather's uncle and godfather, Sterling Smith, was one of our family Revolutionary heroes. My mother, who had a fair talent for mimicry, had an anecdote of the old war-horse's defence of Washington against the oft-repeated charge of profanity upon the field of Monmouth:

"'He did not swear!' the veteran would thunder when irreverent youngsters retailed the slander in his hearing—and with malice prepense. 'I was close behind him—and I can tell you, sir, we rode *fast*—when what should we meet, running away, licketty-split, from the field of battle, with the British almost on their heels, but Gen'ral Lee and his men?

"'Then, with that, says Gen'ral Washington, speaking out loud and sharp—says he, "Gen'ral Lee! in God's name, sir, what is the meaning of this ill-timed prudence?"

"'Now, you see, Gen'ral Lee, he was mighty high-sperrited always, and all of us could hear [20] what was going on. So he speaks up as haughty as the Gen'ral had done, and says he:

"'"I know of no one who has more of that most damnable virtue than your Excellency!"

"'So, you see, young man, it was Gen'ral Lee that swore, and not Gen'ral Washington! Don't you ever let me hear that lie again!'"

A Revolutionary reminiscence of my mother's (or mine) is always renewed by the sight of an Old Virginia plantation-gate, swinging gratingly on ponderous hinges and kept shut by the fall of a wooden latch, two yards long, into a wooden hook set in the gate-post. This latch is usually nearly half-way down the gate, and a horseman approaching it from the outside must dismount to lift the heavy bar, or be practised in the trick of throwing himself well over the top-rail to reach the latch and hold it, while he guides his horse through the narrow opening.

My grandfather, "Captain Sterling," was at the head of a foraging-party near Yorktown when they were chased by British troopers. The Americans scattered in various directions and escaped for the most part, being familiar with the country by-ways and cross-roads. Their captain was closely pursued by three troopers to a high plantation-gate. The Virginian opened it, without leaving the saddle, shot through, shut the gate, and rammed down the latch into the socket *hard*. The pursuers had to alight to raise the latch, and the delay gave the fugitive time to get away.

My parents were married at Olney, in Henrico County, January 25, 1825.

The bride—not yet nineteen years of age—wore a soft, sheer India muslin, a veil falling to the hem of the gown, and white brocade slippers embroidered with faint blue flowers. The [21] bridegroom's suit was of fine blue cloth, with real silver buttons. His feet were clad in white-silk stockings and low shoes—"pumps" as they were called—with wrought-silver buckles. Those shoes and buckles were long preserved in the family. I do not know what befell them finally. The ceremony was performed by the brother-in-law whom I have called, for the sake of convenience,

the Reverend Mr. Carus.

The girl had laughingly threatened that she would not promise to “obey,” and that a scene would follow the use of the obnoxious word in the marriage service. The young divine, with this in mind, or in a fit of absent-mindedness or of stage-fright, actually blundered out, “Love, honor—and obey, *in all things consistent!*”

As may be imagined, the interpolation produced a lively sensation in the well-mannered company thronging the homestead, and took rank as a family legend. How many times I have heard my mother quote the saving clause in playful monition to my masterful father!

The bride’s portion, on leaving home for the house her father had furnished for her in town, was ten thousand dollars in stocks and bonds, and two family servants—a husband and wife.

The following summer the wedded pair visited the husband’s mother in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The journey from Richmond to New York was by a packet-ship, and lasted for two weeks. My poor little mother was horribly seasick for a week each way. To her latest day she could not hear of “Point Judith” without a qualm. She said that, for a time, the association “disgusted her with her own name.” The mother-in-law, hale and handsome at forty-five, had married, less than a year before, Deacon John Clapp, a well-to-do and excellent citizen of Roxbury, and installed the buxom, “capable” widow, whose father was now dead, as the mother of four children by a former marriage, and as mistress of a comfortable home. She had not come [22]
to him portionless. The sturdy “Squire,” mindful of her filial devotion to him in his declining years, had left her an equal share of his estate with her sisters. The brother, Lewis Pierce, had succeeded to the homestead.

Mrs. Clapp appeared in the door of her pretty house, radiant in her best black silk and cap of fine lace (she never wore any other), her husband at her side, the little girls and the boy in the background, as the stage bringing her son and new daughter from Boston stopped at the gate.

At their nearer approach she uttered an exclamation, flung up her hands before her eyes, and ran back into the house for the “good cry” the calmest matron of the day considered obligatory upon her when state family occasions demanded a show of “proper feeling.”

The worthy Deacon saved the situation from embarrassment by the heartiness of his welcome to the pair, neither of whom he had ever met before.

The second incident linked in my mind with the important visit is of a more serious complexion. I note it upon Memory’s tablets as the solitary exhibition of aught approaching jealousy I ever saw in the wife, who knew that her lover-husband’s heart was all her own, then and as long as it beat. I give the story in her own words:

“A Miss Topliffe and her mother were invited to take tea with us one evening. I had gathered from sundry hints—and eloquent sighs—from your grandmother that she had set her heart upon a match between her son and this young lady. She even went to the length of advising me to pay particular attention to my dress on this evening. ‘Miss Topliffe was very dressy!’ I found this to be true. She was also an airy personage, talkative to your father, and supercilious to me. A few days afterward we were asked to tea at the Topliffes. I had a wretched evening! Miss Topliffe was [23]
rather handsome and very lively, and she was in high feather that night, directing most of her conversation, as before, to my husband. She played upon the piano, and sang love-songs, and altogether made herself the attraction of the occasion. I felt small and insignificant and dull beside her, and I could see that she amused your father so much that he did not see how I was pushed into the background.

“I said never a word of all this to him, still less to my mother-in-law, when she told me, next day, that ‘every one of his friends had hoped my son would marry Miss Topliffe. The match would have been very agreeable to both families. But it seems that it was not to be. The ways of Providence are past finding out!’

“Then she sighed, just as she might have mourned over a bereavement in the family. I have *hated* that girl ever since!”

“But, mother,” I essayed, consolingly, “you knew he loved you best all the time!”

“Of course, child, but *she* didn’t! There was the rub!”

I can respond now. It always is the bitter drop at the bottom of the cup held to the lips of the wife who cannot resent her lord’s innocent flirtation with “that other woman.” She knows, and he is serenely conscious of his unshaken loyalty, but the other woman has her own beliefs and hugs them.

In May, 1826, my brother William Edwin was born in the cosey home on the slope of Church Hill overlooking the “Pineapple Church.” More than forty years afterward, in the last drive I had with my mother, she leaned forward in the carriage to point out the neat three-story brick dwelling, now in the heart of the business section of the city:

“That was the house in which I spent the first three years of my married life!”

Then, dreamily and softly, she related what was the peaceful tenor of those first years. Her [24]
father was alive, and she saw him often; her sister, “Aunt Betsy,” and her children kept the old home-nest warm for him; the young couple had hosts of friends in town and country, and both

were as deeply interested, as of yore, in church-work.

Edwin was two years old when a single bolt from the blue changed life for her.

My father's partner was a personal and trusted friend before they went into business together. They had kept bachelor's hall in partnership up to the marriage of the junior member of the firm. It transpired subsequently that the senior, who was the financial manager of the concern, had "cooked" accounts and made up false exhibits of the status of the house to coax the confiding comrade to join his fortunes with his. The tale is old and as common to-day as when my father discovered that his own savings and my mother's wedding-portion would be swallowed up in the payment of his partner's debts.

It was dark and bitter weather that swept down upon the peaceful home and blighted the ambitions of the rising young merchant.

The man who had brought about the reverse of fortune "took to drink." That was likewise as common then as now. My father paid his debts, wound up the business honestly, and braced himself to begin the world anew.

In his chagrin at the overthrow of plans and hopes, he somewhat rashly accepted the proposal that the fresh beginning should be in the country. Richmond was full of disagreeable associations, and country merchants were making money.

Country "storekeeping" was then as honorable as the calling of a city merchant. In fact, many town-houses had rural branches. It was not unusual for a city man to set up his son in one of these, thus controlling the trade of a larger territory than a single house could command. There [25] were no railways in Virginia. Merchandise was carried all over the state in big, covered wagons, known in Pennsylvania as "Conestogas." Long-bodied, with hooped awnings of sail-cloth lashed over the ark-like interior to keep out dust and rain, and drawn by six powerful draught-horses, the leaders wearing sprays of bells, they were a picturesque feature of country roads. Fortunes were amassed by the owners of wagon-lines, the great arks keeping the road winter and summer, and well laden both ways. Planters had their teams and wagons for hauling tobacco and other crops to town, and bringing back stores of groceries and dry-goods at stated periods in the spring and autumn; but between times they were glad to avail themselves of the caravans for transportation of butter, eggs, poultry, potatoes, dried fruits, yarn, cotton, and other domestic products to the city, to be sold or bartered for articles they could not raise.

In such a wheeléd boat the furniture and personal belongings of our small family were transported from Richmond to Dennisville, Amelia County, a journey of two dreary days.

Husband, wife, and baby travelled in their own barouche, my father acting as coachman. Sam and Milly, the colored servants, had preceded them by two days, taking passage in the Conestoga. One November afternoon, the carriage drew up at the future home of the three passengers. The dwelling adjoined the store—a circumstance that shocked the city woman. The joint structure was of wood, mean in dimensions and inconvenient in plan. Dead leaves were heaped about the steps. As Baby Edwin was lifted from the carriage to the ground, he stood knee-deep in the rustling leaves, and began to cry with the cold and the strangeness of it all. Not a carpet was down, and the efforts of the faithful servants to make two rooms home-like for "Miss [26] Jud' Anna" increased the forlornness of the situation by reminding her of the habitation and friends she had left behind.

It was a comfortless winter and spring. I fancy it was as delightless to the husband as to the wife—just turning her twenty-first year, and learning for the first time in her sheltered life the taste of privation. She loved her church, her father and her sister and dear old Olney—unchanged while she dwelt so far apart from them and it and home-comforts; she was fond of society, and in Richmond she had her merry circle close at hand. In Dennisville she had, literally, no neighbors, and without the walls of her house no palliatives of homesickness. The cottage was small; her servants were trained, diligent, and solicitous to spare her toil and inconvenience; her husband and her distant friends kept her supplied with books, and as the period of her second confinement drew near she yielded more and more to natural lassitude, spent the summer days upon the sofa or in bed, reading, and rarely left the house on foot.

In direct consequence, as she ever afterward maintained, of this indolent mode of life, she went down to the gate of death when her first daughter, Ann Almeria (named for two grandmothers), was born in June.

Providentially, an able specialist from another county was visiting a friend upon a neighboring plantation, and the local practitioner, at his wits' end, chanced to think of him. A messenger was sent for him in hot haste, and he saved the life of mother and child. The baby was puny and delicate, and was a source of anxiety throughout her childhood.

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## III [27]

## A COUNTRY EXILE—DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN—CHANGE OF HOME—A FIRESIDE TRAGEDY—"COGITO, ERGO SUM."

I, the third child born to my parents, was but a few months old when my little brother was taken by my father to Roxbury and left there with his grandmother.

This singular and painful episode in our family history illustrates more clearly than could any mere description, the mode of thought and action prevalent at that date respecting the training and education of children.

Our parents lived in an obscure country village, a mere hamlet, destitute of school and social privileges. The few families who, with them, made up the population of the hamlet were their inferiors in breeding and education; their children were a lawless, ill-mannered set, and the only school near them was what was known as “an old field school” upon the outskirts of a plantation three miles away. Little Edwin, a bright, intelligent laddie, was taught to read and write by his mother before he was five. He loved books; but he was restless for the lack of playfellows of his own age. His father was bent upon giving him all the learning that could be crammed into one small head, and cast about for opportunities of carrying out the design. The grandmother begged to have one of the children for a long visit; schooling of an advanced type was to be had within a stone’s-throw of her door, and the boy, if intrusted to her, would have a mother’s care. My father [28]
urged the measure upon his weaker-willed wife. She opposed it less and less strenuously until the boy came in from the street one day with an oath in his mouth he had learned from one of the Dennisville boys.

“That night, upon my knees, and with a breaking heart, I consented to let him go North,” the mother told me, falteringly, when I was a woman grown.

The father hurried him off within the week—I imagine lest she might change her mind—and remained in Roxbury three weeks with him to accustom him to his new abode. His letters written during this absence are cheerful—I am disposed to say, “obstinately optimistic.” I detect, too, a touch of diplomacy in the remarks dropped here and there, as to his mortification at finding Edwin so “backward in his education by comparison with other children of his age,” and the bright prospects opening for his future in the “excellent school of which everybody speaks highly.”

The day before his father left him, Edwin accompanied him to Boston, and books were bought for his sister, with a pretty gift for his mother. He had grown quite fond of his grandmother, so the father reported when he arrived at home, and the kind-hearted “Deacon was as good as another boy.”

Letters came with gratifying regularity—fortnightly—from Roxbury. The boy was going to school and making amends for his “backwardness” by diligence and proficiency. I have laid away in our family Bible quaintly worded “Rewards of Merit”—printed forms upon paper which crackles under the fingers that unfold it—testifying to perfect recitations and good behavior. The boy’s name and the testimonials are filled in by his woman teacher in legible, ladylike script. The fortnightly epistles told of the child’s health and “nice” behavior. I fancy that more stress was laid upon the last item by his grandmother than upon the first. My father expressed himself as [29]
satisfied with the result of the experiment. The mother mourned secretly for the merry voice and bonny face of her darling. At the end of three months the longing leaped the bounds of wifely submission, and she won from her husband the admission that home was not home without his boy. They would go in company to Roxbury next summer and bring him back with them. If he were to be sent from home to school, they would commit him to the Olney or Richmond kinspeople. Roxbury was a cruel distance from central Virginia.

A month later two letters were brought to my father’s counting-room with the Richmond mail. One told of Edwin’s dangerous illness, the second of his death and burial. His malady—brain-fever—was set down by the grandmother to “the visitation of God.” In view of his rapid progress in learning, and the strict discipline of the household in which he studied the lessons to be recited on the morrow, and without a blunder, we may hold a different opinion, and one that exonerates the Deity of direct interference in the work.

Be this as it may, the precious five-year-old had died so far from his mother’s arms that, had she set out immediately upon receipt of the news of his illness, a month would have elapsed between the departure of the letter from Roxbury and her arrival there, if she had travelled day and night. His earthly education was finished.

The stricken father, staring at the brace of fatal letters—couched, you may be sure, in duly pietistic phrase and interlarded with Scripture texts—had the terrible task of breaking the news to the mother whose happy dream and talk were all of “when we go North for our boy.”

He carried the letters home. His wife was not in “the chamber,” where a colored nurse—another family servant—was in charge of the two little girls. Hearing her footsteps approaching [30]
presently, the strong man’s heart failed him suddenly. He retreated behind the open door, actually afraid to face the gentle woman to whom his will was law.

Suspecting a practical joke, my light-hearted mother pulled back the door, the knob of which he had clutched in his desperate misery, saw his face and the letters in his hand, and fell in a dead faint at his feet.

In the summer of 1863 I visited the little grave with my husband. Civil War raged like a sea of blood between North and South. The parents had not seen Edwin’s last resting-place in several years. I knew the way to the secluded corner of the old Dorchester Cemetery where, beside the

kind old step-grandfather who loved the boy while living, lies the first-born of our Virginia home. The stone is inscribed with his name and the names of his parents, the dates of his birth and death, and below these:

"Our trust is in the Lord."

None of our friends in Roxbury and Dorchester knew so much as the child's name. The headstone leaned one way, the footstone another, and a desolate hollow, telling of total neglect, lay between. Yet right above the heart of the forgotten boy was a tumbler of white flowers, still fresh. By whom left we never knew, although we made many inquiries. Dr. Terhune had the grave remounded and turfed, the stones cleaned and set upright, and at the second visit that assured us this was done, we covered the grave with flowers.

In my next "flag-of-truce" letter, I wrote to let his mother know what we had seen and done, and of the bunch of white flowers left by the nameless friend.

Our grandmother treasured and sent home to his mother, after a while, the child's clothing and every toy and book that had been his, even a hard cracker bearing the imprint of the tiny teeth he [31]
was too weak to set firmly in the biscuit.

The preservation of the odd relic was the only touch of poetry I ever discerned in the granite nature of my father's mother.

With him the sorrow for his boy lasted with his life. Thirty years afterward I heard Edwin's name from his lips for the first time.

"No other child has ever been to me what he was!" he said. "And the pain is as keen now as it was then."

Then he arose and began pacing the room, as was his habit when strongly moved, hands behind his back, head depressed, and lips closely folded.

He loved the child so passing well that he could sacrifice his own joy in his companionship to what he believed to be the child's better good.

After this bereavement the Dennisville life became insupportably sad. I think it was more in consequence of this than for pecuniary profit that my father, the next year, removed his family to Lunenburg.

My mother could never speak of her residence in Amelia County without a pale shudder. Yet that it was not wasted time, I have evidences from other sources.

Part of a letter written to her at Olney in the early spring succeeding the removal to Dennisville shows with what cheerful courage my father set about church and neighborhood work. Next to his home and the loved ones gathered there, the church of which he was a loyal son had his best energies and warmest thought.

> "You cannot imagine how solitary I am. I could not have thought that the absence of my dear wife and child would create so great a vacuum in my life. I do not wish to hasten your return from your friends, but you may rest assured that I shall be heartily glad when you come home. I got home on Sunday morning, and found Mr. White here in quiet possession of the house. [32]
> His wife did not come with him on account of the bad roads.
>
> "He gave us for a text John xv: 25:—'They hated me without a cause.'
>
> "The congregation was nearly, if not quite, as large as when he preached the first time, and very attentive. Many express a wish to hear him again. He gave notice that he would on the third Sunday in March preach, and also mentioned that an effort would be made to establish a Sabbath-school and Bible-class. It is really encouraging to see how readily many of the people fall into the measure, without going from home, too. Fathers have given their names to me, wishing to send their children, and several others I have heard of who appear anxious to embrace the opportunity. Doctor Shore and Mr. White dined with me yesterday, and quite unexpectedly I had the pleasure of Doctor Shore, Mr. Bland, and Mr. Lancaster at dinner with me to-day. So you see that I now get the society of all the good folks while you are away. But do not be jealous, for Doctor S. had not heard of your absence, and apologized for Mrs. Shore and Mrs. Hardy not calling on you, saying that he considered it as his and their duty so to do, and they would not be so remiss for the future. You cannot imagine what a rain we have had for the last twelve hours, accompanied with thunder and lightning. All the creeks about us are impassable, so that we live, I may say, in a corner with but one way to get out without swimming, and that is to go to Prince Edward. We can get there when we can go nowhere else. I have got a hen-house *full* of eggs, and have been working right hard to-day to make the hens and an old Muscovy set on them, but they are obstinate things, and will have their own way, so I have given it up as a bad job. Don't forget to ask Mr. Carus for some of the *big* pumpkin seed. By-the-by, Mrs. Branch had found out before I returned who I was, where I lived, what I did, and, in fact, knew almost as much about me as I did

myself. These wagoners are great telltales! To-morrow I pen a pig for you. The calves and cows are in good order. I will try to have some fresh butter for you. *Bose is in excellent health*, and the rats are as plentiful as ever. You must [33] kiss our little one for me, and take thousands for yourself. I again repeat that time hangs heavy on my hands when you are away, but I would not be so selfish as to debar you the pleasure of a few days' society with those who are dear to us both."

The "Mr. White" mentioned in this letter became an eminent clergyman as Rev. William Spotswood White, D.D. The services described here were held in a private house in Dennisville, for the nearest place of regular worship was some miles away in Nottoway County. In this church my father was ordained an elder. He was, also, superintendent of the Sunday-school established through his personal influence. The pupils and teachers were collected from the surrounding plantations, and the new-comer to the sleepy neighborhood made life-long friends with the "best people" of the region.

Quite unconsciously, he gives us, in this résumé of every-day happenings, glimpses into a life at once primitive and refined. The roads are all afloat, but three men draw rein at his door on one day, and dine with him while his wife is away—"an unexpected pleasure." He busies himself with chickens, eggs, and pigs, cows and calves, reports the health of the house-dog, the promise of Sabbath-school and church, and runs the only store in that part of the county successfully. And this was the first experience of country life for the city-bred man and merchant!

The Lunenburg home was not even a "ville." A house that had been a rural inn, and, across the road, a hundred yards down its irregular length, "the store," formed, with the usual outbuildings, the small settlement three days distant from Richmond. My father and mother boarded for a few months with Captain and Mrs. Bragg, who lived in the whilom "House of Entertainment" on the roadside.

I was but two years old when there occurred a calamity, the particulars of which I have heard [34] so often that I seem to recollect them for myself:

One cold winter day my mother left her little daughters with their toys at the end of the large bedroom most remote from a roaring wood-fire; told them not to go nearer to it, and took her work down to Mrs. Bragg's chamber. The gentle hostess had a baby but a week old, and her boarder's call was one of neighborly kindness. On the stairs she met Lucy Bragg, a child about my sister's age—five—a pretty, merry baby, and our only playfellow. My mother's discipline was never harsh. It was ever effectual, for we seldom disobeyed her. She stopped Lucy on the stairs to warn her not to play near the fire.

We played happily together for an hour or two, before Lucy complained of being cold and went up to the fireplace; stood there for a moment, her back to the fire and hands behind her, prattling with the children at the other end of the room. Suddenly she screamed and darted past us, her clothing on fire.

My mother heard the shrieks from the distant "chamber" on the ground floor, and, without arousing the sleeping patient, slipped noiselessly from the room and ran with all her might toward the stairs. Half-way up she met a child wrapped in flames, which she was beating with her poor little hands while she shrieked for help. My mother flashed by her, escaping harm on the narrow stairway as by a miracle. One glance into her own room showed her that her girls were safe; she tore a blanket from the bed and was back so quickly that she overtook the burning figure on the lowermost stair, and wrapped her in the blanket. Captain Bragg appeared below at the same instant, wound the cover about the frantic, struggling creature, and extinguished the fire.

Little Lucy died that night. Her mother and the baby followed her to the grave in a week.

The tragedy broke up the Bragg household, and we found a temporary home in the family of [35] Mr. Andrew McQuie (pronounced "McWay"), two miles from the store. The McQuies were prosperous planters, and the intimacy begun that winter continued as long as the older members of the clan lived. We girls learned to call her "Grandma," and never remitted the title and the affection that prompted it.

Our apartments were in the "Office," a detached brick building in the corner of the house-yard —a common appendage to most plantation-homesteads. At some period of the family history a father or son of the house had practised law or medicine, and used the "office" in that capacity. It never lost the name.

And here, on a windy wintry evening, I awoke to the consciousness of my Individuality.

I do not know how better to express the earliest memory I have of being—and thinking. It was a living demonstration of the great truth shallow thinkers never comprehend—"*Cogito, ergo sum*."

I had fallen asleep, tired with play, and lulled into drowsiness by the falling rain outside. I lay among the pillows of the trundle-bed at the back of the room, and, awakening with a cry of fright at finding myself, as I thought, alone, was answered by my mother's voice.

She sat by the fire in a low rocking-chair, and, guided by her reassuring tone, I tumbled out of bed and ran toward her. In the area lighted by the burning logs, I saw her, as in another sphere.

To this hour I recall the impression that she was thinking of something besides myself. Baby as I was, I felt vaguely that she was not “all there,” even when she took me upon her lap. When she said, kindly and in her own sweet way, “Did my little girl think her mother had left her alone in the dark?” she did not withdraw her eyes from the ruddy fire.

Something warned me not to speak again. I leaned my head against her shoulder, and we [36] studied the fire together. Did the intensity of her musing stir my dormant soul into life? I cannot say. Only that I date my conscious personal existence from that mystic hour. The picture is before me to-night, as I hear my daughter singing her boy to sleep in the next room, and the lake-wind rattles the vines about my window. The sough of the heated air over the brands and embers; the slow motion of the rocker as we swayed to and fro; my mother’s thoughtful silence, and my small self, awed into speechlessness by the new thing that had come to me; my pulpy brain interfused with the knowledge that I was a thinking entity, and unable to grapple with the revelation—all this is as distinct as things of yesternight.

I have heard but one experience that resembled this supreme moment of my infancy. My best-beloved tutor related to me when I was twelve years old that he “recollected when he began to think.” The sensation, he said, was as if he were talking to himself and could not stop. I had that day heard the epigrammatic “*Cogito, ergo sum*,” and I told of my awakening from a mere animal to spiritual and intellectual life.

I do not comprehend the mystery better now than on that never-to-be-forgotten evening. I but know that the miracle *was!*

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## IV [37]

## A BERSERKER RAGE—A FRIGHT—THE WESTERN FEVER—MONTROSE—A MOTHER REGAINED

Up to this point of my story, what I have written is hearsay. With the awakening recorded in the last chapter, my real reminiscences begin.

The next vivid impression upon my plastic memory has its setting in the McQuie yard. My mother had been to Richmond on a visit and brought back, as a present from a woman who was said to be “good,” a doll for my sister. Perhaps she considered me too young to be intrusted with the keeping of the rare creation of wax and real hair. Perhaps she did not recollect my existence. In either case, as I promptly settled within myself, she was not the good woman of my mother’s painting.

Not that I had ever cared for “dead dolls.” When I could just put the wish into words, my craving was for a “real, live, *skin* baby that could laugh and talk.” But this specimen was so nearly alive that it opened its eyes when one pulled a wire concealed by the satin petticoat, and shut them at another tweak. Moreover, the (alleged) good woman in the beautiful city I heard as much of as of heaven, had sent my sister the gift, and none to me. Furthermore, and worst of all, my sister paraded the gift before my angry, miserable eyes, and, out of my mother’s hearing, taunted me with the evident fact that “nobody cared for a little girl whose hands were dirty and whose hair was never smooth.” I was barely three years old. My sister was a prodigy of learning [38] in the estimation of our acquaintances, and nearer six than five. I took in the case with extraordinary clearness of judgment and soreness of heart, and meditated revenge.

Watching an opportunity when mother, nurse, and sister were out of the way, I stole into the office-cottage, possessed myself of the hated puppet, who had been put into my bed for an afternoon nap—lying there for all the world like “a sure-enough baby,” with her eyes fast shut—and bore her off behind the house. There I stripped off her gay attire; twisted a string about her neck; contrived—nobody could ever tell how—to fasten one end of the cord to the lowest bough of a peach-tree, armed myself with a stout switch, and lashed every grain of sawdust out of the dangling effigy.

I recollect that my sister, rushing to the scene of action, dared not approach the fury into which I had been transformed, but stood aloof, screaming and wringing her hands. I have no recollection of my mother’s interference, or of the chastisement which, I have been told, was inflicted with the self-same rod that had mangled the detested doll into a shapeless rag. In my berserker rage I probably did not hear scolding or feel stripes.

My father rented the house vacated by the Braggs, finding the daily ride to and from the store too long in the short winter days. Soon after our return to our old quarters, another boy was born to the bereaved parents—my brother Herbert. He was but a few days old when “Grandma” McQuie and her two daughters called to inquire after mother and child, and carried me off with them, I suppose to get me out of the way of nurse and mother. My whole body was a-tingle with excitement when I found myself snugly tucked up in shawls on the back seat of the roomy chariot, beside the dear old lady, and rolling down the road. We had not gone far before she untied and took off my bonnet, and tied over my curly head a great red bandanna handkerchief [39] “to keep your ears warm.” The warm color and the delicious cosiness of the covering put an idea into my head. I had heard the story of Red Riding Hood from my colored nurse, and I had already

the trick of “playing ladies,” as I named the story-making that has been my trade ever since. I was Red Riding Hood, and my grandmother was taking me away from the wolf. The woods we presently entered were full of fairies. They swung from the little branches of shrubs that brushed the carriage-windows, and peeped at me from behind the boles of oak and hickory, and climbed to the top of sweetbrier sprays writhing in the winter wind. One and all, they did obeisance to me as I drove in my state coach through the forest aisles. I nodded back industriously, and would have kissed my hand to them had not Grandma McQuie told me to keep it under the shawl.

My companions in the carriage paid no attention to my smiles and antics. They were busy talking of their own affairs, and probably did not give the silent child a look or thought. A word or a curious glance would have spoiled the glorious fun that lasted until I was lifted in Mr. McQuie’s arms at his hospitable door.

I never spoke of the “make believe.” What child does?

The Bragg house was roomy and rambling, and nobody troubled herself to look after me when I would steal away alone to the stairs leading to the room we had occupied while Mrs. Bragg and Lucy were alive, and sit on the steps which still bore the stains of the scorching flames that had licked up poor Lucy’s life, and dreaming over the details as I had had them, over and over, from my sister and ’Lizabeth, the colored girl whose life-work was to “look after” us three.

Just opposite the door of our old room was one that was always closed and locked and bolted. [40]
It shared in the ghoul-like interest I gave to the scorched stairs, and there was reason for this. The furniture of Mrs. Bragg’s chamber was stored here. Through a wide keyhole I could espy the corner of a bureau, and all of a Boston rocker, cushioned and valanced with dark-red calico. This, I assumed in the fancies which were more real than what I beheld with the bodily eyes, had been the favorite seat of the dead woman.

One wild March day, when the rain thundered upon the roof over my head, and the staircase and hall echoed with sighs and whistlings, my eye, glued to the awful keyhole, saw the chair begin to rock! Slowly and slightly; but it actually swayed back and forth, and, to the horrified fancy of the credulous infant without, there grew into view a shadowy form—a pale lady about whose slight figure flowed a misty robe, and who held a baby in her arms.

One long, wild look sufficed to show me this. Then I sped down the stairs like a lapwing, and into the dining-room, where sat ’Lizabeth holding my baby brother. I rushed up to her and babbled my story in panting incoherence. I had seen a ghost sitting in Mrs. Bragg’s rocking-chair, getting a baby to sleep!

The exemplary nurse was adequate to the occasion thrust suddenly upon her. Without waiting to draw breath, she gave me the lie direct, and warned me that “Mistis wouldn’t stan’ no sech dreadful stories. Ef so be you wan’ a whippin’ sech as you never had befo’ in all yer born days, you jes’ better run into the chamber an’ tell her what you done tole me, Miss Firginny!”

I did not go. Suppression of the awful truth was preferable to the certainty of a chastisement. Our parents were strict in their prohibition of all bugaboo and ghost stories. That may have been the reason we heard so many. It certainly accounts for our reticence on subjects that crammed [41]
our brains with fancies and chilled the marrow in our young bones.

The wind, finding its way between sashes and under the ill-fitting doors of the old house, no doubt set the chair in motion. My heated imagination did the rest. Five minutes’ talk with my mother or one hearty laugh from my father would have laid the spectre. She loomed up more and more distinctly before my mental vision because I kept the awesome experience locked within my own heaving heart.

Another thrilling incident, framed in memory as a fadeless fresco upon the wall of a locked temple, is the Bragg burial-lot, in which lay Lucy, her mother and baby-brother, and Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Bragg’s mother, who had followed her daughter to the grave a few weeks before we returned to the house. A low brick wall enclosed the plot, which was overgrown with neglected shrubbery and briers. On a certain day I set my small head like a flint upon the execution of no less an enterprise than a visit to the forbidden ground and a peep through the gates at the *graves!* I had never seen one. I do not know what I expected to behold of raw-head-and-bloody-bones horror. But ’Lizabeth’s hobgoblin and vampire recitals had enkindled within me a burning curiosity to inspect a charnel-house. Visions of skeletons lying on the bare ground, of hovering spectres and nameless Udolphian marvels, wrought me up to the expedition. The graveyard was a long way off—quite at the bottom of the garden, and the walk thither was breast-high in dead weeds. I buffeted them valiantly, striding ahead of my companions—my protesting sister, ’Lizabeth, and the baby borne upon her hip—and was so near the goal that a few minutes would show me all there was to see, when I espied *Something* gliding along the top of the wall! Something that was white and stealthy; something that moved without sound, and that wore [42]
projecting ribbon bows upon a snowy head!

’Lizabeth emitted a bloodcurdling shriek:

“Ole Mis’ Moore! Sure’s you born! Don’ you see her cap on her hade?”

We fled, helter-skelter, as for our four lives, and never stopped to look behind us.

The apparition did resemble the crown of a mob-cap with knots of black ribbons at the sides. I saw, almost as plainly as I had beheld her daughter’s wraith, the form hidden by the wall, picking

her way over the brier-grown enclosure.

I do not know how much longer we lived at the Bragg house. Sure am I that I never paid a second call upon the denizens of the half-acre defended by the brick wall.

Years afterward, my mother told me the true tale of the old lady's pet cat that would not leave her mistress's grave, having followed in the funeral train down the long alley, and seen the coffin laid in the ground on the day of the funeral. The dumb beast haunted the burying-ground ever after, living on birds and field-mice, and starved to death in a deep snow that lay long on the frozen ground the second winter of her watch.

Why the four-year-old child did not lose what wits were hers by nature, or become a nerveless coward for the rest of her days, under the stress of influences never suspected by her parents, was due, probably, to a strain of physical and mental hardihood inherited from a dauntless father.

It must have been shortly after this incident that, coming into the dining-room one morning, I heard my mother say to my father:

"My dear, Frank has the Western fever!"

Frank Wilson, a nice boy, the son of a neighboring planter, was my father's bookkeeper and an inmate of our house. He was very kind to me, and had won a lasting place in my regard as the [43] maker of the very best whistles and fifes of chincapin bark of any one I had ever known. They piped more shrilly and held their shape longer than those turned out by my father and by various visitors who paid court to my young lady cousins through me. So I looked anxiously at the alleged sufferer, startled and pained by the announcement of his affliction. He was eating his breakfast composedly, and answered my father's "Good-morning—and is that true, my boy?" with a pleasant laugh. There was not a sign of the invalid in look, action, or tone.

"I can't deny it, sir!"

I slipped into my chair beside him, receiving a caressing pat on the hand I laid on his arm, and hearkened with greedy ears for further particulars of the case, never asking a question. Children of that generation were trained to make their ears and eyes do duty for the tongue. I comprehended but a tithe of the ensuing conversation. I made out that the mysterious fever did not affect Frank's appetite and general health, but that it involved the necessity of his leaving us for a long time. He might never come back. His proviso in this direction was, "If I do as well as I hope to do out there."

When he had excused himself and left the table, my father startled me yet more by his answer to my mother's remark: "We shall miss him. He is a nice boy!"

Her husband stirred his coffee meditatively for a moment before saying, without looking up:

"I am not sure that I have not a touch of that same fever myself."

With the inconsequence of infancy, I did not connect the speech with our breaking up the Lunenburg home the next autumn and setting out for what was explained to us girls as a round of visits to friends in Richmond and Powhatan.

We call ours a restless age, and the modern American man a predatory animal, with an [44] abnormal craving for adventure. Change and Progress are the genii who claim his allegiance and sway his destiny. In sighing for the peace and rest of the "former times" we think were "better than these," we forget (if we ever knew) that our sires were possessed by, and yielded to, unrest as intense and dreams as golden as those that animate the explorer and inventor of the twentieth century. My father was in no sense a dreamer of day dreams of the dazzling impossible. He was making a fair living in the heart of what was, even then, "Old Virginia." He had recouped his shattered fortunes by judicious business enterprise, and the neat share of her father's estate that had fallen to my mother at his demise in 1829, placed her and her children beyond the reach of poverty. The merchant was respected here as he had been in Amelia, for his intelligence, probity, courtesy, and energy. His place in society and in church was assured. Yet he had caught the Western fever. And—a mightier marvel—"Uncle Carus," the clerical Connecticut Yankee, the soul of conservatism, who had settled in the downiest of nests as the incumbent of Mount Carmel, a Presbyterian church built upon the outskirts of the Montrose plantation, and virtually maintained by that family—sober, ease-loving Uncle Carus—had joined hands with his wife's brother-in-law in the purchase of Western lands and the scheme of emigration.

The two men had travelled hundreds of miles on horseback during the last year in quest of a location for the new home. My father's letters—worn by many readings, and showing all over the odd and unaccountable brown thumbmarks of time—bear dates of wayside post-offices as well as of towns—Lynchburg, Staunton, and Charlottesville. Finally they crossed the Ohio line, and after due deliberation, bought a farm in partnership. The letters are interesting reading, but too many [45] and too long to be copied in full.

Every detail of business and each variation of plans were communicated as freely as if the wife were associated with him in commercial as in domestic life.

Once, when he is doubtful what step to take next, he writes, playfully: "Some men need a propelling power. It might be well for you to exert a little of the 'government' with which some of our friends accredit you, and move *me* in the right direction."

When, the long journey accomplished and the purchase of the farm completed, he returned home, he encountered no opposition from his wife, but much from neighbors and friends. A letter written to her from Lunenburg, whither he had returned to close up his affairs, leaving her with her brother at Olney, describes the numerous tokens of regret and esteem of which he is the recipient. The climax of the list comes in the humorous tale of how an old-fashioned neighbor, Mrs. L——, "says it troubled her so much on New Year's night that she could not sleep. She actually got up after trying vainly to court slumber, *lighted her pipe*, and smoked and thought the matter over. She was not reconciled, after all.... When I take my departure it will be with feelings of profound regret, and full confidence in the friendship of those I leave behind."

The land bought in Ohio by the two victims of the "Western fever" is now covered by the city of Cleveland. If the two New-Englanders could have forecast the future, their heirs would be multi-millionaires.

Behold us, then, a family of two adults and three babies—the eldest not yet seven years old—*en route* from Richmond to Montrose, travelling in a big barouche, with a trunk strapped on the rack behind, in lumbering progress over thirty-seven miles of execrable roads, just now at their worst after a week of autumnal rains.

[46] The damp discomfort of the journey is present with me now. The sun did not shine all day long; the raw air pierced to the bones; the baby was cross; my mother was not well, and my sister and myself were cramped by long sitting upon the back seat. Our horses were strong, but mud-holes were deep, the red clay was adhesive, and the corduroy causeways jarred us to soreness. It was late in the day when we turned from the highway toward the gate of the Montrose plantation. We were seen from the house, and a colored lad of fifteen or thereabouts ran fleetly down the avenue to open the great outer gate. He flung it wide with a hospitable intent that knocked poor Selim—the off-horse—flat into the mud. Once down, he did not offer to arise from the ruddy ooze that embedded one side. He had snapped the harness in falling, but that made no difference to the fagged-out beast. The accident was visible from the porch of the house, an eighth of a mile away, and four men hastened to the rescue.

The foremost was, I thought, the handsomest man I had ever seen. He was tall, young, as dark as a Frenchman (having Huguenot blood in his veins), and with a marvellously sweet smile. Coming up to my pale mother, as she stood on the miry roadside, he kissed her, picked up the baby, and bade "Cousin Anna" lean upon his other arm. My father insisted upon relieving him of the child; but the picture of my delicate mother, supported in the walk up the drive by the gallant youth—her favorite cousin of all the clan—Josiah Smith, of Montrose—will never leave the gallery of pictures that multiplied fast from this date.

I did him loving honor to the best of my poor ability as the "Uncle Archie" of "Judith." I cannot pass him by without this brief tribute.

[47] A second and younger cousin, who seemed uninteresting beside my new hero, took charge of my sister and myself, and we trudged stiffly on to the ancient homestead. An avalanche of feminine cousins descended upon us as we entered the front gate, and swept us along through porch and hall and one room after another, to the "chamber," where a beautiful old lady lay in bed.

Her hair was dark as midnight; so were her eyes; her cap, pillows, gown, and the bed-coverings were snowy white. Her face was that of a saint. This was "Aunt Smith," the widowed mistress of Montrose. She was of the Huguenot Michaux stock, the American founders of a colony on James River. During a widowhood of twenty years she had, by wise management, relieved the estate from embarrassment, brought up and educated six children, and established for herself a reputation for intelligence, refinement, and piety that is yet fragrant in the minds of those who recollect Montrose as it was in its palmy days.

She was often ailing, as I saw her now. Accustomed as I am to the improved physical condition of American women, I wonder *what* was amiss with the gentlewomen of that generation; how they lived through the protracted seasons of "feeling poorly," and their frequent confinement to bed and bed-chambers. The observation of that winter fixed in my imagination the belief that genteel invalidism was the normal state of what the colored servants classified as "real ladies." To be healthy was to approximate vulgarity. Aunt Smith was as much in her bed as out of it—or, so it seemed to me. Her eldest child, a daughter and the most brilliant of the family, had not had a day of perfect health since she had an unhappy love-affair at twenty. She was now nearly forty, still vivacious, and the oracle of the homestead. My dearest "Cousin Mary," resident for the winter at Montrose with her mother, was fragile as a wind-flower, and my own mother fell ill a few days after our arrival at her mother's birthplace, and did not lift her head from the pillow for three months.

[48] I have no data by which to fix the relative times of any happenings of that long, long, dreary winter. It dragged by like an interminable dream. My father was absent in Ohio for some weeks of the first month. He had set out on a second journey to his Promised Land when his wife fell ill. He hurried back as soon as the news overtook him. But it took a long time for the letter of recall to find him, and as long for him to retrace his steps—or his horse's.

I have but a hazy recollection of his telling me one day that I was five years old. I had had other birthdays, of course, but this was the first I remember. It was equally, of course, the 21st of December. There was no celebration of the unimportant event. If anybody was glad I was upon

the earth, I had no intimation of the fact. I should not mark the anniversary as of any note, now, had not it been fixed in my brain by a present from my father of *The New York Reader*, a hideous little volume, with stiff covers of straw pasteboard pasted over with blue paper. My father took me upon his knee, and talked to me, seriously and sorrowfully, of my crass ignorance and disinclination to "learn." I was five years old, and—this low and mournfully, as one might state a fact disgraceful to the family connection—I "did not even know my letters!" The dear mother, who lay sick up-stairs, had tried, over and over, to teach me what every big girl of my age ought to know. He did not believe that his little daughter was a dunce. He hoped that I loved my mother and himself well enough to try to learn how to read out of this nice, new book. Cousin Paulina Carus—a girl of sixteen, at home from school on sick-leave, indefinitely extended—had offered to teach me. He had told her he was sure I would do better than I had done up to this time. He was mortified when people asked him what books I had read, and he had to tell the truth. He did not believe there was another "nice" child in the county, five years old, who did not know her a, b, c's. [49]

I was wetting his frilled shirt-front with penitential tears long before the sermon was finished. He wiped them with a big silk handkerchief—red, with white spots scattered over the expanse—kissed me, and set me down very gently.

"My little girl will not forget what father has been saying. Think how pleased mother will be when she gets well to find that you can read a chapter in the Bible to her!"

The story went for fact in the family that I set myself zealously about the appointed task of learning the alphabet in consequence of this lecture. I heard it told, times without number, and never contradicted it. It sounded well, and I had a passion for heroinism, on never so small a scale. And grown people should know what they were talking of in asserting that "Virginia made up her mind, the day she was five years old, that she would turn over a new leaf, and be no longer a dunce at her books." It may be, too, as I now see, that the solemn parental homily (I always dreaded the lecture succeeding a whipping more than the stripes)—it may be, I grant, that something was stirred in my fallow intellect akin to the germination of the "bare grain" under spring showers. If this were true, it was a clear case of what theologians term "unconscious conversion." Were I to trust to my own judgment, based upon personal reminiscence, I should say that I went to bed one night not—as the phrase goes—"knowing B from a bull's foot," and awoke reading. Perhaps Dogberry was nearer right than we think in averring that "reading and writing come by nature." And that my time was ripe for receiving them.

I had outgrown my dislike of *The New York Reader*, wearing most of the blue paper off the straw, and loosening not a few of the tiny fibres beneath; I could read, without spelling aloud, the stories that were the jelly to the pill of conning the alphabet and the combinations thereof; the spring had really come at last on the tardy heels of that black winter. The grass was lush and warm under my feet; the sweetbrier and multiflora roses over the Montrose porches were in bloom, and the locust-trees were white with flowers and resonant with the hum of bees, when, one day, as I played in the yard, I heard a weak, sweet voice calling my name. [50]

Looking up, I saw my mother in a white gown, a scarlet shawl wrapped about her shoulders, leaning from her bedroom window and smiling down upon me.

I screamed with ecstasy, jumping up and down, clapping my hands, and crying to my dusky playfellows, Rose and Judy:

"Look! Oh, look! I have a mother again—as well as anybody!"

Close upon the blessed apparition came her championship of her neglected "middle child," against the impositions of "Mea," Anne Carus, and a bigger niece of Aunt Smith who was much at the homestead. On a happy forenoon the mother I had received back from the edge of the grave called me to her bedside, for, although convalescent, she did not rise until noon.

Pointing to a covered basket that stood by her bed, she bade me lift the lid. Within, upon white paper, lay a great handful of dried cherries, a sheet of "peach leather," and four round ginger-cakes, the pattern and taste of which I knew well as the *chef d'œuvre* of the "sweeties" manufactured by Mam' Peggy, the Montrose cook.

"I heard that the bigger children had a tea-party last night after you had gone to bed," she said, smilingly tender. "It isn't fair that my little daughter should not have her share. So I sent Jane"—her maid—"down for these, and saved them for you." [51]

No other "goodies" were ever so delicious, but their finest flavor was drawn from the mental repetition of the exultant: "I have a mother again—as well as anybody!"

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## V [52]

## OUR POWHATAN HOME—A COUNTRY FUNERAL—"OLD MRS. O'HARA."

My mother's illness of nearly four months deflected the current of our lives. My father,

convinced probably of the peril to her life of a Western journey, and wrought upon by the persuasions of her relatives, bought the "good-will and fixtures" of a store at Powhatan Court House, a village seven miles nearer Richmond than Montrose, and thither we removed as soon as the convalescent was strong enough.

Her husband wrote to her from Richmond *en route* for "the North," where he was to purchase a stock of the "goods" upon which the territory environing his new home was dependent for most of the necessaries and all of the luxuries of life.

> "I am very solicitous as to your early restoration to health. Be careful not to rise too early, and keep a strict watch over your appetite. It is not safe to indulge it, yet there is danger in the opposite course....
>
> "I attended a prayer-meeting at Mr. Hutchinson's on Thursday evening, and had the pleasure of hearing a lecture from Mr. Nettleton. It was a pleasant meeting. I wish you had been with me! To-day (Sunday) I heard Mr. Plumer and Mr. Brown, both of whom were interesting. Mr. Plumer's subject was the young ruler *running* to Our Saviour and kneeling down with the inquiry, 'What must I do to be saved?'...
>
> "Your brother was at church yesterday. His wife has a fine boy a month old. You have probably heard of the event, although I did not until my arrival here. [53]
> I am told he says it is 'the prettiest thing that was ever seen,' and feels quite proud of this, their first exhibition.
>
> "There is great difficulty in getting to New York this spring. The Delaware was closed by ice for two months, and up to the middle of March this was eighteen inches thick. Merchants have been detained in Baltimore from two to seven days, waiting for stages to go on. The number of travellers was so large that they could not be accommodated sooner. The steamboat runs from Richmond to Baltimore but once a week, and leaves on Sunday morning. Several of my acquaintances went on to-day. They were urgent that I should go with them, but my determination is not to travel on the Sabbath. I shall, therefore, take the land route to Balto....
>
> "Goods are reported to be very scarce and high in all the Northern cities. They are high in this place, and advancing every day. Groceries are dearer than I have seen them since 1815, and it is thought they will be yet dearer.
>
> "'That will do!' I hear you say, 'as I am not a merchant.' Well, no more of it! I must charge you again to be very, *very* careful of yourself. Kiss our little children for father. I shall hurry through my business here as soon as possible and hasten my return to my home.
>
> "May the Lord bestow on you His choicest blessings and grant a speedy return of health! Remember me in your prayers. Adieu, my Love!
>
> "Your own S."

The sere and yellow sheet is marked on the outside, in the upper left-hand corner, "*Single*," in the lower, "*Mail*," and in the upper right-hand, "12 *cents*."

This was in the dark ages when there was but one steamer per week to Baltimore, and there were not stages enough to carry the passengers from the Monument City to New York; when the railway to Fredericksburg was a dream in the minds of a few Northern visionaries, and the magnetic telegraph was not even dreamed of. My mother has told me that, in reading the newspaper aloud to her father in 1824, she happened upon an account of an invention of one [54]
George Stephenson for running carriages by steam. Captain Sterling laughed derisively.

"What nonsense these papers print! You and I won't live to see that, little girl!"

I heard the anecdote upon an express train from Richmond to New York, his "little girl" being the narrator.

In those same dark ages, strong men, whom acquaintances never accused of cant, or suspected of sentimentality, went to evening prayer-meetings, and accounted it a delight to hear two sermons on Sunday; laid pulpit teachings to heart; practised self-examination, and wrote love-letters to their own wives. If this were not the "Simple Life" latter-day philosophists exploit as a branch of the New Thought Movement, it will never be lived on this low earth.

Our first home in the little shire-town (then "Scottville") was at "Bellevue," a red brick house on a hill overlooking the hamlet. Separated from Bellevue by two fields and the public highway, was "Erin Hill," built by one of the same family, which had, it is needless to observe, both Irish and French blood in it.

Erin Hill was for rent just when Uncle Carus decided to bring his family from Montrose—where they had lived for ten years—to the village.

This is the fittest time and place in which to sketch the pastor of Mount Carmel Church. *Martin Chuzzlewit* was not written until a score of years later. When it was read aloud in our family circle, there was not a dissenting voice when my mother uttered, in a voice smothered by inward

mirth, “Mr. Carus!” as Mr. Pecksniff appeared upon the stage.

The portrait was absurdly striking. The Yankee Pecksniff was good-looking after his kind, which was the dark-eyed, well-featured, serenely-sanctimonious type. He wore his hair longer [55] than most laymen cut theirs, and it curled naturally. His voice was low and even, with the pulpitine cadences hit off, and at, cleverly by Doctor Holmes as “a tone supposed by the speaker to be peculiarly pleasing to the Almighty.”

His smile was sweet, his gait was felinely dignified, and a pervasive aroma of meekness tempered his daily walk and conversation. His wife, “Aunt Betsy,” was the saintliest soul that ever rated herself as the least important of God’s creatures, and cared with motherly tenderness for everything else her Creator brought within her modest sphere of action. In all the years of our intimate association I never saw her out of temper or heard a harsh word from the lips in which nestled and abode the law of kindness. She brought him a tidy little slice of her father’s estate, which he husbanded wisely. He was economical to parsimony, and contrived to imbue wife and children with a lively sense of the need of saving in every conceivable way “against a rainy day.”

At ten years of age I asked my mother, point-blank, what salary the church paid Uncle Carus. She answered as directly:

“Three hundred dollars a year. But he has property of his own.”

Whereupon, without the slightest idea of being pert, I remarked, “If we were to get a *really* good preacher, I suppose he would have to be paid more.” And my mother responded as simply: “No doubt. But your Uncle Carus is a very faithful pastor.”

I put no questions, but I pondered in my heart the purport of a dialogue I got in snatches while reading on the back porch one afternoon, when a good-hearted neighbor and my mother were talking of the school to be opened in the village under the tuition of Cousin Paulina, the eldest daughter of Aunt Betsy and her second husband.

She was now in her eighteenth year, a graduate of a somewhat noted “female” seminary, [56] decidedly pretty, with a quick temper and a talent for teaching.

“It is a pity,” said the friendly visitor, “to tie her down to a school-room when she is just at the age when girls like to see company and go round with other young people. It isn’t as if they were obliged to put her to work.”

My mother replied discreetly, yet I detected a sympathetic tone in her speech.

The talk came into my mind many a time after the sessions of the school began, and I saw, through the window, young men and girls walking, riding, and driving past, the girls in their prettiest attire, the young men gallantly attentive, and all enjoying the gala-time of life that comes but once to any of us.

If the dark-eyed, serious, eighteen-year-old teacher felt the deprivation, she never murmured. I think her mother had taught her, with her first word and trial-step, to believe that her “father knew best.”

The school—the first I ever attended—was in the second story of an untenanted house on a side-street, rented from a villager. It was kept for ten months of the year. A vacation of a month in May, and another in September, divided two terms of five months each. I climbed the carpetless stairs to the big upper room six or eight times daily for five days a week, for forty weeks, and never without a quailing of nerve and sinking of heart as I strode past a locked door at the left of the entrance.

Inside of that door I had had my first view of Death.

I could not have been six years old, for it was summer, or early autumn, and I was walking my doll to sleep up and down the main alley of the garden, happy and bareheaded, and unconsciously “feeling my life in every limb,” when my mother called to me from the window to “come and be dressed.”

“I am going to take you and your sister to a funeral,” she continued, as a maid buttoned me up [57] in a clean white frock, put on my Sunday shoes, and brushed the rebellious mop of hair that was never smooth for ten minutes in the day.

“May I take my doll?” asked I, “sh-sh-ing” her in a cuddling arm. I was trying very hard to love lifeless dolls.

“Shame on you, Miss Firginny!” put in the maid, for all the world as if I had spoken in church. “Did anybody ever see sech another chile fur sayin’ *things?*” she added to my mother.

Mea looked properly shocked; my mother, ever light of heart, and inclined to let unimportant mistakes pass, smiled.

“We don’t take dolls to funerals, my daughter. It would not be right.”

I did not push inquiries as to the nature of the entertainment to which we were bound, albeit the word, already familiar to me by reason of two or three repetitions, was not in my vocabulary an hour ago. Content and pleased in the knowledge that an outing was on foot, I put my doll to bed in a closet under the stairs used by Mea and myself as a “baby-house,” shut the door to keep

Argus and Rigo—sprightly puppies with inquisitive noses—from tearing her limb from limb, as they had rent her immediate predecessor, and sallied forth. The roadside was thick with sheep-mint and wild hoarhound and tansy. I bruised them in dancing along in front of my mother and my sober sister. The bitter-sweet smell arose to my nostrils to be blent forever in imagination with the event of the day.

A dozen or more carriages were in the road before the shabby frame house I had heard spoken of as "old Mrs. O'Hara's," but which I had never entered. Eight or ten horses were tethered to [58] the fence, and a group of men loitered about the door. As we went up the steps I saw that the parlor was full of villagers. Some were sitting; more were standing in a kind of expectant way; all were so grave that my spirits fell to church-temperature. Something solemn was going on. Just inside of the parlor door the mother of my most intimate girl-friend sat in a rocking-chair. She had on a black silk dress and her best bonnet. Every woman present wore black. I saw Mrs. D. beckon up Major Goode, an elderly beau who was a notable figure in the neighborhood, and whisper audibly to him, "If you want more chairs, you may send over to our house for them."

It was evidently a great function, for Mrs. D. was a notable housekeeper, and her furniture the finest in the place. Her drawing-room chairs were heavy mahogany, and upholstered with black horsehair. Her house, altogether the best within a radius of several miles, was not a hundred yards from the O'Hara cottage; but that she should make the neighborly offer thrilled me into nameless awe.

My mother moved forward slowly, holding my hand fast in hers, and I was led, without warning, up to a long, black, open box, set upon two chairs, one at each end. In the long, black box lay a woman I had never seen before. She was awfully white; her eyes were shut; she looked peaceful, even happy; but she was not asleep. No sleeping creature was ever so moveless and marble-pale. Her terrible stillness impressed me most painfully by its very unlikeness to the heaving, palpitating crowd about her. A mob-cap with a closely fluted border framed the face; she was dressed in a long cambric gown of a pattern entirely new to me. It lay in moveless plaits as stiff as paper from her chin to her feet, which it hid; it was pinked in tiny points at the bottom of the skirt and the cuffs; the hands, crossed at the wrists as no living hands are ever laid, were [59] bound at the crossing with white satin ribbon. Under the moveless figure was a cambric sheet, also pinked at the edges, that fell straight to the floor over the sides of the coffin.

I must have pinched my mother's hand with my tightening fingers, for she eyed me in grave surprise, not unmixed with reproof, in taking a seat and drawing me to her side. There was no place for children to sit down. I am sure that she had not an inkling of the unspeakable fright that possessed my ignorant mind.

From that day to this I have never gone to a funeral when I could possibly keep away from it upon any decent pretext. When constrained by circumstance to be one of the party collected about a coffin, I invariably have a return, in some measure, of the choking horrors of that awful day. For days, sometimes for weeks afterward, the dread is an obsession I cannot dispel by any effort of will. Argue and struggle as I may, I am haunted night and day by the memory of the woman whom I never saw while she lived.

As if the brooding hush, so deadly to my childish senses; the funeral sermon, delivered in Uncle Carus's most sepulchral chest tones, and the wild, wailing measures of

"Why should we mourn departing friends?"

sung to immemorial "China"—were not enough to rivet the scene forever upon my soul, a final and dramatic touch was superadded. Two men brought forward a long, black top, which they were about to fix in place upon the dreadful box, when a young woman in black rushed from a corner, flung herself upon her knees beside the coffin, and screamed: "Mother, mother! You sha'n't take her away!" making as if she would push back the men.

"Harriet! Harriet!" remonstrated a deep voice, and Major Goode, the tears rolling down his [60] cheeks, stooped and lifted the daughter by main force. "This won't do, child!"

Fifteen years later, sitting in the calm moonlight upon the porch-steps at "Homestead," the dwelling of my chum, Effie D., I heard from Mrs. D.'s lips the story of Mrs. O'Hara. Her cottage, subsequently our school-house, had been pulled down long ago as an eyesore to the fastidious mistress of Homestead. At least I got that section of the old lady's life that had to do with the gray-haired Major Goode, a veteran of the War of 1812. Both the actors in the closing scene seemed, in the review of my childish impressions of the funeral, to have been too old to figure in the tale.

"You can understand why nobody in the village could visit her," concluded the placid narrator to whom I am indebted for numberless traditions and real life-romances. "The funeral was another matter. Death puts us all upon a level."

There was the skeleton of a *chronique scandaleuse* in the bit of exhumed gossip.

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## VI

[61]

## OLD-FASHIONED HUSBAND'S LOVE-LETTER—AN ALMOST HOMICIDE—"SLAUGHTERED MONSTER"—A WESLEYAN SCHOOLMISTRESS.

"ROXBURY, *July 26th, 1838.*

"MY DEAR WIFE,—Your esteemed letter of the 20th is at hand, and it has relieved my mind to hear that you are all doing so well. I suppose you expect a history of my movements here. Well, on Saturday morning went to Boston; in the evening took mother and called on all my Dorchester friends—stayed with some five minutes, with others fifteen, etc. Sunday, went to church; very dry sermon in morning; evening attended Mr. Abbot's church; was much pleased with the preaching—text—'And there came one running and kneeling to Him, and said,' etc. At night attended at same place what they call a 'Conference Meeting'—quite an interesting time. Monday, went to Brookline—visited sisters. Tea at Mr. Davis's; music of the best kind in abundance. Tuesday to Boston in morning, evening at home to receive company. Quite a pleasant afternoon; a good many Dorchester friends calling. Wednesday morning as usual in the city; evening held a grand *levee:* the street filled with chaises and carriages; some twenty or more to tea. Really, my visit has created quite a sensation among our good friends; some met yesterday afternoon who have not seen each other for ten or more years. Don't you think I had better come here oftener to keep up the family acquaintance? for it seems to require some extraordinary event to set these good folks to using their powers of locomotion. By-the-by, you must not be jealous, but I had a lady kiss me yesterday, for the first time it was ever done here, and who do you think it was? My cousin Mary, of whom you have heard me speak. I have [62] so much love given in charge for you, my own dear wife, that it will be necessary to send a part of it in this letter for fear that I should not be able to travel with it all. I am especially directed to bear from a lady two kisses to you from her, and they shall be faithfully delivered when we are permitted to meet. You don't know how many inquiries have been made after you, and regrets expressed that you did not come on with me. Mother says, 'Tell Anna I should like for Samuel to stay longer, but know that he is wanting at home, so will not say a word at his leaving.' She sends much love to her daughter Anna. Father keeps coming in, and from his movements I judge he is waiting for me to finish. You know he is clock-work, so adieu once more. Give my love to the girls, and all at the parsonage. Kiss the children for father. I must now close my letter by commending you to the care and protection of Him who preserves, guides, and directs us in all things. May His choicest blessing rest on you, my dear wife, and on the children of our love! Adieu, my dear wife.

"Your husband,
"SAMUEL."

Thus cheerily runs the old-fashioned family epistle. The writer, who never demitted the habit of going to church twice every Sunday, and sometimes thrice, does not comment upon the coincidence that he hears again a sermon from the text used and "improved" by a Virginia divine, two years ago. His mind was full of other things just now. This one of his annual visits to his mother was a glad holiday. The world was going smoothly with him, and the hearty congratulations of townspeople and kindred were a-bubble. His mother was happy in her second marriage. The good deacon was "father" to her son and his wife, and filled the rôle well.

My father's namesake son, Samuel Horace, was born earlier in the summer.

Although the month was June, the weather must have been cold or damp, for a low wood fire [63] burned upon the hearth one afternoon as I crept into the "chamber" to get a peep at the three-days-old baby, and perchance to have a talk with my mother. The nurse, before leaving the room on an errand, had laid the infant upon a pillow in a rocking-chair (I have it now!) There was no cradle in the house, and one had been ordered from Richmond. My mother was asleep, and, I supposed, had the baby beside her. Stealing noiselessly across the floor, I backed up to the Boston rocker, in childish fashion, put my hands upon the arms of the chair, and raised myself on tiptoe, when the child (aroused, I fancy, by his guardian angel, prescient of the good he would accomplish in the world he had just entered, and compassionate of the remorseful wight whose life would be blighted by the impending deed) stretched out his arms and yawned. I saw the movement under my lifted arm, and dropped flat upon the rug. I must have crouched there for half an hour, a prey to horrible imaginings of what might have been. My mother did not awaken, and the baby went to sleep again. The shock would have been terrific to any child. To a dreamer like myself, the visions that flitted between me and the red embers were as varied as they were fearful. Lucy Bragg's tragic death had killed her mother and the baby-boy. If I had crushed our new baby, my own sweet mother would have died with him. I saw myself at their funeral, beside the coffin holding them both, and my father shrinking in abhorrence from the murderess. Forecasting long years to come, I pictured a stricken and solitary woman, shunned by innocent people who had never broken the sixth commandment, and cowering beside a brier-grown grave, crying as I had read somewhere, "Would to God I had died when I was born!"

I do not think I shed a tear. Tears were dried up by the voiceless misery. I know I could not sleep that night for hours and hours. I know, too, that I never told the shameful thing—the almost murder—to a living creature until it was ten years old. [64]

I appreciate, most clearly of all, that my baby-brother became from that hour, in some sort, my especial property. The peculiar tenderness that has characterized our feeling for each other, the steadfast affection and perfect confidence in our mutual love that have known no variableness or shadow of turning, for all our united lives, may not have been rooted in the vigil of unutterable horror and unspeakable thankfulness. I look back upon it as a chrism.

Later in the year, another incident that might have been a tragedy, stirred the even flow of domestic life. We had finished prayers and breakfast, and my father was half-way down the avenue on his way to the village when we saw him stop suddenly, retrace his steps hurriedly, enter the yard, and shout to the colored butler who was at the dining-room window. The man ran out and came back shortly, dragging Argus and Rigo into the hall with him, shutting the front door. My father was taking down his gun from the hooks on the wall of the hall, and, without a word, began to load it.

One of the earliest of our nursery lessons was, “Never ask questions of busy people!” My mother set the example of obedience to this precept now by silence while her husband, with set lips and resolute eyes, rammed down a charge of buckshot into the barrel, and, saying, “Keep the children in the house!” ran down the steps and down the avenue at the top of his speed toward the big gate opening upon the village street a hundred yards away.

From the front windows we now saw a crowd of men and boys, tramping down the middle of the highway, firing confusedly and flinging stones at a great yellow dog trotting ahead of them, and snapping right and left as he ran. Before my father reached the gate, the dog had turned sharply to the right down a cross-street skirting our lower grounds. A low fence and a ditch divided the meadow from the thoroughfare. My father kept on our side of the fence, raising his gun to cover the brute, which, as we could now see, was slavering and growling hoarsely. A cry arose from the crowd, and my mother groaned, as the dog, espying the man across the ditch, rushed down one side of it and up the other, to attack the new foe. My father held his hand until the dog was within a few feet of him, then fired with steady aim. The brute rolled over to the bottom of the ditch—dead. [65]

That evening we were allowed to walk down the field to see the slaughtered monster. That was what I named him to myself, and forthwith began a story in several chapters, with my father as the hero, and an astonishing number of beasts of prey as *dramatis personæ*, that lasted me for many a night thereafter.

The title I had chosen was none too large for the dog as he lay, stark and still, his big head straight with his back, his teeth showing savagely in the open jaws. A trickle of water was dammed into a pool by his huge bulk.

I held my father’s hand and laid my cheek to it in reverence I had not words to express, when my mother said:

“You ran a terrible risk, love! What if your gun had missed fire, or you had not hit him?”

“I had settled all that in my mind. I should have stood my ground and tried to brain him with the butt.”

“As your forefathers did to the British at Bunker Hill!” exulted I, inwardly.

Be sure the sentence was not uttered. The recollection of the inner life, in which I was wont to think out such sayings, has made me more tolerant with so-called priggish children than most of their elders are prone to be.

One paragraph of our next letter has a distinctly modern flavor. By substituting millions for thousands in the estimate of the defalcation, we might date it in this year of our Lord. [66]

“Richmond, *April 11th, 1839.*
“(Saturday night.)

> “My dear Wife,—The general subject, and, in fact, the only one which at present occupies the minds of the citizens here, is the late discovery of defalcations of my old friend D., first teller of the Bank of Virginia, for the sum, as reports say, of nearly, or quite half a million. He has absconded, but some individuals here have had part of the cash; among the number is the great speculator, W. D. G., who has ruined and also severely injured many persons in this place by borrowing, or getting them to endorse for him. I never have before witnessed so general an excitement here. Mr. G. has been arrested to-day, and taken before the mayor. It is now nine o’clock, and the court is still in session. It is probable he will be sent to the higher court for trial, etc. I expect a good many of our plain country folks will be afraid of Bank of Virginia notes when they hear of the loss. I hope it will make some of them shell out and pay me all that they owe. I should like to find a few thousands waiting for me on my return home. I expect to-morrow to attend the Sabbath-school at the Second Church, conducted by Mr. Reeve. It is said to be the best school in the city. Tell Herbert I have bought a book called

*Cobwebs to Catch Flies*, and I hope it will be the means of catching from him many good lessons. He must learn fast, as I have bought for him *Sanford and Merton*, with plates, and when he can read he shall have it for his own. May I not hope for a letter from you on Tuesday?—for it seems a long time since we parted."

Mrs. Bass, the meek widow of a Methodist clergyman, succeeded the eighteen-year-old girl in the conduct of the neighborhood school. It is doubtful if we learned anything worth relating from her. I am sure we learned nothing evil. She was very kind, very gentle, very devout; she wore a [67]
widow's cap and a bombazine gown, and she was the only woman I ever heard pray until I was over fourteen years of age. There were a dozen girls in the class, which met in a one-roomed building in a lot adjoining her garden. We had no public schools at that date in Virginia. We were all paid pupils, and carefully selected from families in our own class. Those from Presbyterian families outnumbered the rest, but no objection was made by our parents to the "methods" of the Wesleyan relict. The tenets of the two churches were the same in the main. Discrepancies in the matter of free agency, predestination, and falling from grace were adjudged of minor importance in the present case. Mrs. Bass was not likely to trench upon them in the tuition of pupils of tender age. I more than suspect that there would have been a strong objection made to intrusting us to a Baptist, who would not lose an opportunity of inculcating the heresy that "baptize" meant, always and everywhere in the Bible, immersion. And every school was opened daily by Bible-reading. To this our black-robed, sweet-faced instructress joined audible petitions, and in our reading and the lessons that followed she let slip no chance of working in moral and religious precepts.

Let one example suffice:

One of our recitations was spelling, with the definitions, from Walker's Dictionary. Betty Mosby, a pretty girl with a worldly father and a compliant mother, had learned to dance, and had actually attended a kind of "Hunt Ball," given in the vicinity by her father's sister. She had descanted volubly upon the festivities to us in "play-times," describing her dress and the number of dances in which she figured with "grown-up gentlemen," and the hearts of her listeners burned within us as we listened and longed.

On this day the word "heaven" fell to me to spell and define. This done, the "improvement" [68]
came in Mrs. Bass's best class-meeting tone:

"Heaven! I hope and pray you may get there, Virginia! You ought not to fail of the abundant entrance, for your parents are devout Christians and set you a good example, but from him to whom much is given shall much be required. Next! 'Heavenly!'"

Near the foot of the column stood "Hell."

Anne Carus rendered it with modest confidence, spelling and defining in a subdued tone befitting the direful monosyllable. That she was a minister's daughter was felt by us all to lend her a purchase in handling the theme. Mrs. Bass was not to be cheated of her "application":

"HELL!" she iterated in accents that conveyed the idea of recoiling from an abyss. "Ah-h-h! I wonder which of my little scholars will lie down in everlasting burnings?"

"Mercy! I hope I won't!" cried Betty Mosby, with a shiver of well-acted terror.

She was a born sensationalist, and quick to voice sensation.

The teacher's groan was that of the trained exhorter:

"I can't answer for that, Betty, if you *will* dance and go to balls!"

That was her "Firstly." There were at least six heads and two applications in the lecture "in season" trailing at its heels.

We took it all as a matter of course. Each teacher had ways of his, and her own. Those of our relict were innocent, and our parents did not intermeddle. We were very happy under her tutelage. On Saturdays she had a class in "theorem painting." That was what she called it, and we thought it a high-sounding title. Decorators know it as one style of frescoing. Pinks, roses, dahlias, tulips, and other flowers with well-defined petals, also birds and butterflies, were cut out [69]
of oiled paper. Through the openings left by removing the outlined pattern, paint was rubbed upon card-board laid underneath the oiled paper. I have somewhere still a brick-red pink thus transferred to bristol-board—a fearful production. I knew no better than to accept it thankfully when Mrs. Bass had written on the back, "To my dear pupil, M. V. H., from her affectionate Teacher," and gave it to me with a kiss on the last day of the term.

She gave up the school and left the county at the close of that term, going to live with a brother in another part of the State. I heard, several years later, that she had "professed sanctification" at a Lynchburg camp-meeting. Nowadays, they would say she "had entered upon the Higher Life."

She must have found, long ago, the abundant entrance into that Highest Life where creeds and threatenings are abolished. Her benign administration was to me a summer calm that held no presage of the morrow's storm.

# VII

## MY FIRST TUTOR—THE REIGN OF TERROR

[70]

LATE in the October vacation the tranquil routine of our household was stirred by news of import to us children. We were to have a tutor of our own, and a school-room under our roof in true Old Virginia style—a fashion transplanted from the mother-country, eight generations before.

Our father "did not believe in boarding-schools," holding that parents shirked a sacred duty in putting the moral and mental training of their offspring into the hands of hirelings, and sending them away from home at the formative age, just when girls and boys are most in need of the mother's love and watchful care of their health and principles. Yet he fully appreciated the deficiencies of the small private schools we had attended, and would not hearken for a moment to the suggestion that we should be entered as day-scholars in the "Old-Field School," which prefigured the Co-educational Institute of to-day. "Nice" girls and well-born boys attended a school of this kind, and lads were prepared for college there. The master was himself a college graduate. And the school was within easy distance of Scottville.

"Too much of an *omnium gatherum* to suit my taste!" I had overheard my father say to a friend who urged the advantages of this place, adding that B. L. was "a good teacher and fair classical scholar." "He may be proficient in the classics, but he spells the name of one dead language, 'Latten.' I saw it in his own handwriting. I doubt not that he can parse in that tongue. *I* believe [71] him capable of talking of the 'three R's.' My children may never become accomplished, but they shall be able to write and speak—and *spell*—their mother-tongue correctly!"

Besides Mea and myself there were to be in the home-class ten other pupils, the daughters of personal friends of like mind with the independent thinker, and my brother Herbert, lately inducted into the integuments distinctive of his sex, was to have his trial taste of schooling. Our mother had taught us all to read and to write before committing our scholastic education to other hands. I fancy we may attribute to her training in the rudiments of learning the gratifying circumstance that one and all of her children have spelled—as did both parents—with absolute correctness.

The big dining-room in the left wing of the rambling house to which we had removed from Bellevue when the owner desired to take possession of it, was to be divided by a partition into school-room and hall; a room opening from the former would be the tutor's chamber, and an apartment in another wing was to be the dining-room. Among other charming changes in house and family, Dorinda Moody, a ward of my father's of whom I was particularly fond, was to live with us and attend "our school."

I trod upon air all day long, and dismissed the fairy and wonder tales, with which I was wont to dream myself to sleep nightly, for visions of the real and present. "Our Tutor"—a title I rolled as a sweet morsel under my restless tongue—was a divinity student from Union Theological Seminary, in Prince Edward County. The widow of the founder of this school of the prophets, and the former pastor of my parents, lived in the immediate neighborhood of the seminary, and was the intermediary in the transaction. Through her my father was put into communication with the [72] faculty—scholars and gentlemen all of them!!—who agreed in recommending the student whom I have dubbed "Mr. Tayloe" in my *Old-Field School-Girl*. (The significance of the twin exclamation-points will be manifest in the next few pages.)

The sun had shivered out of sight below the horizon on a raw November day when I returned home after a tramp over soaked and sere fields, attended by my young maid and her elder sister —"bright" mulattoes—and was met in the end-porch by their mother, my mother's personal attendant and the supervisor of nursery-tenants. She was the prettiest mulatto I have ever seen, owing her regular features and long hair, as she was proud of telling, to an Indian ancestor. He had entailed upon her the additional bequest of a peppery temper, and it was on deck now. She was full of bustle and tartly consequential.

"Lordy, Miss Virginny! whar have you been traipsin' so late with jus' these chillun to look after you? It's pretty nigh plum dark, an' you, a young lady, cavortin' roun' the country like a tom-boy!"

She hauled me into the house while she talked, and pulled off my shawl and hood, scolding vehemently at the sight of my muddy shoes, and promising Molly and Paulina a whipping apiece for not bringing me back sooner.

I cared not one whit for her scolding after I heard the news with which she was laden.

Mr. Tayloe had come! My dream-castle had settled into stability upon rock bottom.

Ten minutes afterward the school-room door was pushed open timidly, and a childish figure appeared upon the threshold. I was rather tall for my years, and as lean and lithe as a greyhound. My touzled hair had been wet and sleeked by Mary Anne's vigorous fingers. I wore a brown "Circassian" frock and a spandy clean white apron. The room was comfortably furnished with desks and chairs, now pushed to the wall, the carpeted area about the hearth being intended as a [73] sitting-room for the tutor. There were a table, a desk, and four or five chairs. The room was bright with lamp and firelight. In front of the red hearth sat my father and a much smaller man.

His diminutive stature was the first of a series of shocks I was destined to receive. I had

expected him to be tall and stately. Village wags—with none of whom he was popular—spread the story that he intermitted his studies for a year in the hope that in the interim he might grow tall enough to see over the front of a pulpit.

My father looked over his shoulder and held out his hand.

"Come in, my daughter," in kindly, hearty accents. And, as I obeyed, "Mr. Tayloe, this is my second daughter—Miss Mary Virginia."

The hero of my dreams did not rise. There was naught amiss or unusual in the manner of the introduction. I was "Miss Virginia" to men of my father's age, as to youths and boys. I was used to see them get up from their seats to speak to me, as to a woman of treble my years. I looked, then, almost aghast at the man who let me walk up to him and offer my hand before he made any motion in recognition of the unimportant fact of my presence. His legs were crossed; his hands, the palms laid lightly together, were tucked between his legs. He pulled one out to meet mine, touched my fingers coldly, and tucked both hands back as before.

"How do you do, Mr. Tayloe?" quoth I, primly respectful, as I had been trained to comport myself with strangers.

He grunted something syllabic in response, and, chilled to the backbone of my being, I retreated to the shadow of my father's broad shoulder. He passed his arm about me and stroked what he used to call my "Shetland pony mane." He seldom praised any one of us openly, but he [74] was a fond father, and he and the "tom-boy" were close comrades.

"I hope you will not find this young lady stupid, Mr. Tayloe," he went on, the strong, tender hand still smoothing the rebellious locks. "She is a bit flighty sometimes, but she has packed away a good deal of miscellaneous information in this curly pate. I hope she may become a steady student under your care. What she needs is application."

Receiving no answer beyond a variation of the grunt, the tutor staring all the time into the heart of the fire, the dear man went on to tell of books that had been read aloud in the family, as a supplementary course to what we had learned in school, referring to me now and then when he did nor recall title or subject. I fancy, now, that he did this to rid us both of the embarrassment of the first interview, and to draw out the taciturn stranger who was to guide my mind in future. Loyal as was my worshipful admiration of my father, I could not but feel, although I could not have formulated the thought, that the trend of talk was not tactful.

Nevertheless, I glowed inwardly with indignation that the third person present never once took his eyes from the roaring fire, and that his face, round, fair, and almost boyish in contour, wore a slight smile, rather supercilious than amused, his brows knitting above the smile in a fashion I was to know more of in the next ten months.

I have drawn Mr. Tayloe's portrait at full length in *An Old-Field School-Girl*, and I need not waste time and nervous tissue in repetition of the unlovely picture. He was the Evil Genius of my childhood, and the term of his tutelage may be called the dark underside of an otherwise happy school-life. Looking back from the unclouded heights of mature age, I see that my childish valuation of him was correct. He was, in his association with all without the walls of the school- [75] room—always excepting the servants, who took his measure amazingly soon—a gentleman in bearing and speech. He was, I have heard, well-born. He had gained rank as a student in the university of which he was a graduate.

At heart and in grain he was a coarse, cruel tyrant, beloved by none of his pupils, hated by my brother Herbert and myself with an intensity hardly conceivable in children of our tender years. I owe him one evil debt I can never forget. Up to now I had had my little gusts of temper and fleeting grudges against those who angered me. Save for the episode of the doll-whipping recorded in an earlier chapter, I had never cherished—if I had felt—an emotion of vindictiveness or a desire for revenge. This man—this embryo minister of the gospel of love and peace—aroused in me passions that had slumbered unsuspected by all—most of all, by myself.

From the beginning he disliked me. Perhaps because he chose to assume, from the manner of my introduction to him, that I was a spoiled, conceited child who ought to be "taken down." Perhaps because, while I flushed up hotly under rebuke and sarcasms that entered lavishly into the process of "taking down," I never broke down abjectly under these, after the manner of other pupils. Our father had the true masculine dislike for womanish tears. He had drilled us from babyhood to restrain the impulse to cry. Many a time I was sent from the table or room when my eyes filled, with the stern injunction, "Go to your room and stay there until you can control yourself!" I thought it harsh treatment, then. I have thanked and blessed him for the discipline a thousand times since. Our tutor, I verily believed then, and I do not doubt now, gloated in the sight of the sufferings wrought by his brutality. I can give it no milder name. I have seen him smile—a tigerish gleam—when he had scolded the ten outsiders—the "*externes*," as the French [76] call them—into convulsive weeping. Mea and I felt the lash of his tongue quite as keenly as the rest, but our home-drill stood us in good stead.

He rarely found fault with her. She was a comely girl, nearly fourteen, and womanly for that age, exemplary in deportment, and an excellent student. It could never be said of her that she "lacked application." If one thing were more hateful to me than his surliness and sneers to me, it was his cubbish gallantry to my pretty sister. He pronounced her openly the most promising of his scholars, and volunteered to give her private lessons in botany. Such tokens of preference

may have been the proof of a nascent attachment on his part, or but another of his honorable ways of amusing himself. It was a genuine comfort to me to see that she met his gallantries with quiet self-possession and cool indifference remarkable in a country girl who knew nothing of "society" and flirtation.

I was the black sheep of the flock, as he took pains to say twice or a dozen times a week, in the hearing of the school. To me he imparted privately the agreeable information that I "would never be anything but a disgrace to my parents; that, in spite of what my father might say to the contrary, I was stupid by nature and incorrigibly lazy." He rang the changes upon that first unfortunate interview until I was goaded to dumb frenzy. The persecution, begun with the opening day of the term, was never abated. He would overhear from his chamber window snatches of talk between my mates and myself, as we played or sat in the garden below—merry, flippant nothings, as harmless as the twitter of the birds in the trees over our heads. When we were reassembled in the school-room he would make my part in the prattle the text of a lecture ten minutes long, holding the astonished, quivering child up to ridicule, or stinging her to the [77] quick with invectives. When he lost his temper—which happened often—he spared nobody. He went out of his way to attack me. Lest this should read like the exaggeration of fancied slights to the self-willed, pert youngling he believed me to be, let me cull one or two sprigs of rue from the lush growth that embittered ten months of my existence:

I cut my finger to the bone one morning (I carry the scar still). My mother bound it up in haste, for the school-bell was ringing. I got into my seat just in time for the opening exercises. A chapter was read—verse by verse—in turn by the pupils, after which the prospective divine "offered" a prayer. He stood with his eyes shut and his forehead knitted into a frown. We knelt with our backs to him before our chairs around the room. It seems but natural to me, in reflecting upon that perfunctory "exercise," that our reading "in course" should never, during Mr. Tayloe's reign, have gone beyond the Old Testament. We read that exactly as it came—word for word. There was nothing of the New Testament in his walk or conversation.

On this day we had a chapter in Kings—First or Second—in which occurred a verse my father would have skipped quietly at our family worship. Sarah L. was the biggest girl in the class—in her sixteenth year, and quite grown up. She dexterously slipped past the bit of Bible history, taking the next verse, as if by accident.

"Go back and read your verse!" thundered the young theologue. "I will have no false modesty in my school."

My cheeks flamed as redly with anger as Sarah's had with maiden shame, as I followed suit with the next passage. I resented the coarse insult to a decent girl, and the manner thereof. I was faint with the pain of the wounded finger, and altogether so unnerved that my voice shook and [78] fell below the pitch at which we were taught to read aloud.

Out barked the bulldog again over the top of the open Bible he held:

"What ails Miss High-and-Mighty to-day? In one of your tantrums, I see. Read that verse again, and loud enough to be heard by somebody besides your charming self!"

Where—will be asked by the twentieth-century reader—was parental affection all this while? How could a fearless gentleman like your father submit for an hour to the maltreatment of his young daughter and the daughters of friends who confided in his choice of a tutor?

My answer is direct. We never reported the worst of our wrongs to our parents. To "tell tales out of school" in that generation was an offence the enormity of which I cannot make the modern student comprehend. It was a flagrant misdemeanor, condemned by tradition, by parental admonition, and by a code of honor accepted by us all. I have known pupils to be expelled for daring to report at home the secrets of what was a prison-house for three-fourths of every working-day. And—strangest of all—their mates thenceforward shunned the tale-tellers as sinners against scholastic and social laws.

"If you get a flogging at school, you will get another at home!" was a stock threat that set the seal of silence upon the culprit's lips. To carry home the tale of unjust punishment meted out to a school-fellow would be a gross breach of honorable usage.

The whole system smacked of inquisitorial methods, and gave the reactionary impetus to the pendulum in the matter of family discipline and school jurisdiction which helped on the coming of the Children's Age in which we now live.

The despotism of that direful period, full of portents and pain, may have taught me fortitude. It [79] awoke me to the possibilities of evil hitherto undreamed of in my sunny life. I have lain awake late into the night, again and again, smarting in the review of the day's injuries, and dreading what the morrow might bring of malicious injustice and overt insult, and cudgelling my hot brain to devise some method of revenge upon my tormentor. Childish schemes, all of them, but the noxious seed was one with that which ripens into murder in the first degree.

One absurd device that haunted and tempted me for weeks was that I should steal into the tutor's room some day, when he had gone to ride or walk, and strew chopped horsehair between the sheets. The one obstacle to the successful prosecution of the scheme was that we had no white horses. Ours were dark bay and "blooded chestnut." No matter how finely I might chop the hairs, which would prick like pins and bite like fleas, the color would make them visible when the

sheets were turned down.

It was a *crime!*—this initiation of a mere infant into the mysteries of the innate possibilities of evil in human nature. I had learned to *hate* with all my heart and soul. In all my childish quarrels I had never felt the temptation to lift my hand against a playmate. I understood now that I could smite this tyrant to the earth if I had the power and the opportunity. This lesson I can never forget, or forgive him who taught it to me. It was a new and a soiled page in the book of experience.

Despite the continual discouragement that attended the effort to keep my promise to study diligently, I worked hard in school, partly from love of learning, partly to please my parents—chiefly, it must be confessed, because I shrank, as from the cut of a cowhide, from the pitiless ridicule and abuse that followed upon the least lapse from absolute perfection in recitation.

Mathematics was never my strong point, and the tutor quickly detected this one of many weak [80]
joints in my armor. There was meaning in the grin with which he informed me one day, not long after Christmas, that he had set a test-sum for each of the second class in arithmetic.

“If you can do that sum without, any, help, from, anybody,” slowly, the grin widening at each comma, “you may go on with the next chapter in arithmetic. If not, you will be turned back to Simple Division. Of course, *you* will do yours, if nobody else can work out the answer!”

Sneer and taunt stung and burned, as he meant they should. I took the slate from his hand, and carried it to my desk before glancing at it. It was a *horrible* sum! I knew it would be, and I forthwith made up my mind not to try to do it. He might turn me back to Addition, for all I cared. The worm had turned and stiffened in stubborn protest.

At recess I discovered that not another girl of the six in our class had an imposition half so severe as my enemy had set for me. The effect was totally unlike what he had anticipated. My spirit leaped to arms. I would do that sum and keep up with my class—or *die!*

I bore the slate off to my room as soon as school was out that afternoon, and wrought mightily upon the task until the supper-bell rang. My work covered both sides of the slate, and after supper I waylaid my sister in the hall and begged her to look at what I had done. She was the crack arithmetician of the school, and I could trust her decision. She sat down upon the stairs—I standing, wretched and suspenseful, beside her—and went patiently over it all.

Then she said, gently and regretfully: “No, it is not right. I can’t, of course, tell you what is wrong, but you have made a mistake.”

With a hot lump in my throat I would not let break into tears, I rushed off up-stairs, rubbed out every figure of my making, and fell to work anew upon the original example. Except when I [81]
obeyed the summons to prayers, I appeared no more below that night. My sister found me bent over the slate when she came up to bed, and said not a word to distract my attention. By ten o’clock the room was so cold that I got an old Scotch plaid of my father’s from the closet, and wrapped myself in it. Still, my limbs were numb and my teeth chattered when, at *one o’clock* in the morning, I laid the slate by, in the joyous conviction that I had conquered in the fight. I had invented a proof-method of my own—truly ingenious in a child with no turn for mathematics—but this I did not suspect. I honestly believed, instead, that it was an inspiration from Him to whom I had been praying through all the hours of agonized endeavor. I thanked the Author before I slept.

When the class was called upon to show their sums next morning, it appeared, to my unspeakable amazement and rapture, that my example and one other—that done by Sarah L., who was backward in figures, although advanced in years—were right, and all the others wrong.

The gentle shepherd of our fold took up my slate again when the examination was over, and eyed it sourly, his head on one side, his fingers plucking at his lower lip, a trick which I knew prefaced something particularly spiteful. Surely I had nothing to fear now? Having wrung from him the reluctant admission that my work was correct, I might rest upon my laurels.

I had underrated his capacity for evil-doing. When he glared at me over the upper frame of the big slate, the too-familiar heart-nausea got hold upon me.

“*You*”—he seldom deigned to address me by my proper name—“pretend to tell me that nobody helped you with this sum?”

“Nobody!” I uttered, made bold by innocence.

“Ha-a-a-a!” malevolence triumphant in the drawl waxing into a snarl. “As I happened to see you and your sister last night in the hall, and heard you ask her to show you how to do it, that [82]
tale won’t go down, my lady.”

“She didn’t help me—” I began, eagerly.

“*Silence!*” thumping the slate upon the table, and scowling ferociously. “How dare you *lie* to me?”

I glanced at Mea in an agony. She arose in her place, pale to the lips, albeit she had never felt his wrath, but her voice was firm:

“I only told her the sum was not right. I did not tell her what part of it was wrong.”

The blending of snarl and smile was something to be recollected for all time. The smile was for her, the snarl for me.

“It is natural that your sister should try to defend you. But will you please tell me, Miss Pert, what more help you could have wanted than to be told by somebody who knew—as your sister did—that your sum was wrong? Of course, you could rub out and begin again. But for her you would not have tried a second time. Bring that sponge here!”

I obeyed.

“Take that slate!”

He made as if he would not contaminate his hand by passing it to me, laying it on the table and pointing a disdainful finger at it.

Again I obeyed.

“Now, Miss Deceitful, wipe every figure off that slate, and never try any such cock-and-bull story upon me again as long as you live! I am too old a bird to be caught with *your* chaff!”

He laughed aloud in savage glee, dismissed the class with a wave of his hand, and called up the next.

I was turned back to Short Division, with the added stigma of intentional deception and cheating shadowing me.

Nearly fifteen years after our first tutor withdrew his baleful presence from our home, my husband was urging upon my brother Herbert the claims of the ministry of reconciliation as the profession to which the younger man was evidently called by nature and by Providence. Herbert looked up with the frank smile those who knew him will never forget. It was like the clear shining of the sweetest and purest soul ever committed to mortal keeping. [83]

“‘Plato! thou reasonest well!’ There is but one argument you have not bowled over. I registered an oath—as bitter as that Hamilcar exacted of Hannibal—when I was a boy, that I would thrash that cur Tayloe within an inch of his life as soon as I should be big enough to do it. And it wouldn’t be quite the thing to flog a brother clergyman. If anything could keep me out of the pulpit, it would be the fact that he is in it. That fellow’s cruelties scarred my memory for life, although I was not seven years old when I knew him.”

In dismissing the disagreeable theme, I offer this bit of testimony to the truth of my story of the reign of terror neither of us ever forgave.

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# VIII

[84]

## CALM AFTER STORM—OUR HANDSOME YANKEE GOVERNESS—THE NASCENT AUTHOR

Among the treasured relics of my youth is a steel engraving in a style fashionable sixty years agone.

It appeared in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, then in the heyday of well-merited popularity. My mother was one of the earliest subscribers. Every number was read aloud in the family circle gathered on cool evenings about my mother’s work-stand. We had no ready-made furniture. This piece was made to order, of solid mahogany, and is, in the seventy-fifth year of a blameless life, in active use in my eldest daughter’s household.

Cousin Mary, living on Erin Hill, in her stepfather’s house, took *Graham’s Magazine*—*Godey’s* only rival. She likewise subscribed for the *Saturday Evening Courier*, and exchanged it regularly with my mother for the *Saturday Evening Post*—all published in Philadelphia. The *New York Mirror*, edited by N. P. Willis, George P. Morris, and Theodore S. Fay, was another welcome guest in both families. For Sunday reading we had the *New York Observer*, *The Watchman and Observer*, *The Presbyterian*—religious weeklies that circulated in the neighborhood for a fortnight, and were then filed for future reference. We children had *Parley’s Magazine* sent to us, as long ago as I can recollect, by our grandmother. After the death of her second husband, the good old deacon, and her removal to Virginia, which events were coeval with the Tayloe dynasty, our father subscribed for *Parley’s*.

We had all the new books that he adjudged to be worth buying and reading, watching eagerly for anything from Dickens, Marryat, and Cooper, and devouring with avidity not excited by any novel, Stephens’s *Travels in Arabia Petrea* and in *Central America*, Bruce’s *Travels in Abyssinia*, and the no less enchanting tales Mungo Park was telling the world of his adventures in the Dark Continent. [85]

“The chamber” was a big room on the first floor, and adjoined the dining-room—so big that the wide high-poster, curtained and ceiled with gayly figured chintz, in a far corner, left three-fourths of the floor-space unoccupied. My mother’s bureau (another heirloom) looked small beside the bed; a lounge was between the front windows; rocking-chairs stood here and there; thick

curtains, matching the bed-hangings, shut out wintry gusts, and a great wood fire leaped and laughed upon the pipe-clayed hearth from the first of November to the middle of March. A blaze of dry sticks was kindled there every morning and evening up to July 4th. The younger children were dressed and undressed there on cool days. Our mother held, in advance of her contemporaries, that an open fire was a germ-killer.

Why do I single out that particular engraving for a place in these reminiscences?

It graced the first page of the November number of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The evening was wild with wind and blustering rain, the fire roaring defiance as the loosely fitting sashes rattled and the showers lashed the panes. There were five of us girls, and each had some bit of handiwork. To sit idle while the reading went on was almost a misdemeanor.

Dorinda Moody, Virginia Lee Patterson, Musidora Owen, Mea, and myself were classmates and cronies. My mother was reader that evening, and as she opened the magazine at the frontispiece, [86]
Virginia Patterson and I called out:

"Why, that is a picture of Miss Wilson!"

We all leaned over the stand to look at the engraving, which my mother held up to general view.

"It *is* like her!" she assented.

The young lady across the table blushed brightly in uttering a laughing disclaimer, and my mother proceeded to explain the extreme improbability of our hypothesis. Then she read the story, which, to the other girls, settled the matter. It was called "Our Keziah," and began by telling that the title of the portrait was a misnomer. It was no "fancy sketch," but a likeness of "Our Keziah."

Silenced but not convinced, I restrained the impulse to tell my mates that stories might be made out of nothing. I knew it, and so did my only confidante, the handsome governess from Massachusetts, who had been installed in our school-room since June.

Mr. Tayloe had gone back to the theological factory to prosecute the studies that were to fit him to proclaim the gospel of love and peace. On the last day of the session he had preached us a short sermon, seated in his chair at the head of the room, twirling the seal dangling from his watch-chain; his legs crossed, the left hand tucked between them; his brows drawn together in the ugly horseshoe we knew well and dreaded much.

He must have descanted darkly upon the transitoriness of earthly joys and the hard road to heaven, for every girl in school was in tears except Mea and myself.

As for my wicked self, as I privately confessed subsequently to my father's young partner, "Thad" Ivey—"I could think of nothing but Franklin's grace over the whole barrel." In the ten months of his incumbency of the tutorship, the incipient divine had never so much as hinted to one of us that she had a soul.

"I suppose I ought to say that it is like returning thanks over the empty barrel," I subjoined, [87]
encouraged by my interlocutor's keen relish of the irreverent and impertinent comment upon the scene of the afternoon. "Thad" and I were great friends, and I had an idea that our views upon this subject did not differ widely.

Mrs. Willis D., our nearest neighbor, was with my mother, and when the tear-bedraggled procession from the school-room filed into the porch where the two friends were sitting with three other of the villagers, and Virginia Winfree threw herself into her aunt's arms with a strangled sob of: "Oh, Aunt Betty, he did preach *so* hard!"—the dry-eyed composure of the Hawes girls was regarded with disfavor.

"Your daughters have so much fortitude!" remarked one, mopping her girl's eyes with a compassionate handkerchief.

Another, "They show wonderful self-control for their age."

Even our sensible mother was slightly scandalized by what she "hoped," deprecatingly, "was not want of feeling."

Tears were fashionable, and came easily in those early times, and weeping in church was such a godly exercise that conversation or exhortation upon what was, in technical phrase, "the subject of religion," brought tears as naturally as the wringing of a moist sponge, water.

"What did you cry for?" demanded I, scornfully, of Anne Carus, when I got her away from the porch party. "You hate him as much as I do!"

"Oh—I don't—know!" dubiously. "People always cry when anybody makes a farewell speech."

So the Reverend-that-was-to-be Tayloe took his shadow from our door and his beak from out my heart. The quotation is not a mere figure of speech.

The handsome Yankee governess opened the door of a new life for me. Some of the parents [88]
complained that she "did not bring the children on as fast as Mr. Tayloe had done." Me, she inspired. I comprehended, as by a special revelation, that hard study might be a joy, and gain of

knowledge rapture. With her I began Vose's *Astronomy*, Comstock's *Natural Philosophy*, and Lyell's *Elements of Geology*, and revelled in them all. Her smile was my present reward, and when she offered to join me in my seemingly aimless rambles in the woods and "old fields," I felt honored as by a queen's favor. We sat together upon mossy stumps and the banks of the brook I had until then called "a branch" in native Virginian dialect—talking! talking! talking! for hours, of nymphs, hamadryads, satyrs, and everything else in the world of imagination and nature.

She wrote poetry, and she kept a diary; she had travelled in ten states of the Union, and lived in three different cities; and she never tired of answering questions as to what she had seen in her wanderings. Her nature was singularly sweet and sunny, and I never, in all the ten months of our intimacy, saw in language and deportment aught that was not refined and gentle.

With her I began to write school "compositions." The "big girls" wrote them under the Tayloe régime—neat little essays upon "The Rose," "The Lily," "Morning," "Night," and all of the Four Seasons. Never a syllable had I lisped to one of them of the growing hoard of rhymes, tales, and sketches in the shabby, corpulent portfolio I had fashioned with my own fingers and kept in the bottom of a trunk under flannel skirts and last year's outgrown frocks.

I brought them out of limbo to show to Miss Wilson, by timid degrees, and new manuscripts as fast as they were written. She praised them, but not without discrimination. She suggested [89] topics, and how to treat them. I never carried an imperfect lesson to her in class. Intellect and heart throve under her genial influence as frost-hindered buds under May sunshine.

"The Fancy Sketch" was so like her it was natural I should refuse to believe the resemblance accidental. It was as plain as day to my apprehension that the unknown artist had seen her somewhere, and, unseen by her, had dogged her footsteps until he fixed her face in his mind's eye, then transferred it to canvas.

It was a shock when the probability of his pursuit of her to Virginia, avowing his passion and being rewarded by the gift of her hand, was dissipated by the apparition of a matter-of-fact personage, McPhail by name, who was neither poet nor artist. He had been betrothed to our governess for ever so long. He spent a fortnight at the "Old Tavern," opposite our house, and claimed all of the waking hours she could spare from school duties.

The finale of the romance was that she went back to the North at the end of her year's engagement with us, and married him, settling, we heard, in what sounded like an outlandish region—Cape Neddick, on the Maine coast.

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[90]

# IX

## A COLLEGE NEIGHBORHOOD—THE WORLD WIDENS—A BELOVED TUTOR—COLONIZATION DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENT—MAJOR MORTON

"Ricehill, *February 3d, 1843.*

"Dear Dorinda,—I suppose mother has told you of our privileges and pleasant situation. I only want some of my friends to enjoy it with me to make me perfectly happy. Oh, how I wish you were here to go to the debating society with me and to hear the young men preach! I went to college last night to hear some speeches delivered by the Senior Class. They have questions given, and one takes one side and one another. The two best speeches were made on the question 'Is a love of fame more injurious than beneficial?' One young man took the affirmative, and one the negative. They made the best speeches. Then the question was whether 'the execution of Charles I. was just or not.' Both of these speakers needed prompting; that is, one of those who had spoken or was to speak took the speaker's speech which he had written off, and, if he forgot, set him right again. The young man who performed this office was very well qualified for it; he spoke in a low, distinct tone, and seemed to find no difficulty in reading the writing. They speak again in about six weeks. But the chief enjoyments I have are the religious privileges. I can go to the prayer-meeting at the Seminary every Wednesday, and can hear three sermons every Sunday. Don't you wish you were here, too? Aunt Rice and sister went to the Court House last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Ballantine's lecture, and as they did not come back very soon the young men came in to supper. While sister and Aunt Rice were away I wrote an account of Mr. Hoge's and Mr. Howison's sermons. Well, when Mr. [91] Howison came in, 'Well, Miss Virginia, have you been by yourself all this evening?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Did you not feel very lonely?' 'Not at all.' 'Why, what have you been doing?' 'I have been writing.' He paused, laughed, and then said, 'And what have you been writing?' And when I told him, I wish you could have seen him! He looked at me for a while as if he did not understand me, and then laughed heartily. He is very easy to laugh, but his manners are as different from Mr. Tayloe's as can be—but hush! what am I drawing

comparisons for? I do not feel in the least restrained where he is, and can talk to him better than to any other gentleman here. Would not you like to have such a teacher?

"*Feb. 6th.*—I wonder when father will come up; I have been looking for him every day for more than a week. Mr. Nevius was here the other day. I inquired after you, but he had never seen you when he went to Mr. Miller's. I was quite disappointed, and I wish you would show yourself next time—that is, if you can.

"I very often think of the times we ate roasted corn and turnips in the midst of the corn-field; don't you remember the evening when the supper-bell rang and we hid our corn among the leaves of the corn that was growing? I never knew how much I loved you or any of my friends until I was separated from them. Mr. Nevius brought a letter for sister from Anne Carus. She still writes in that desponding style you know she was so remarkable for in school, but I am glad to see from her letter that she has come to the conclusion to be contented with her lot.

"I hope you do not indulge in such feelings, and, indeed, you have no reason to do so, for you are only six miles from your mother and friends, and you are with your brother, and I think you will find a valuable friend in Malvina. How do you like your new teacher and situation? If you are ever home-sick, study hard and forget it.

"I have made many pleasant acquaintances here, and among them Mr. Tayloe's flame! I do not think they are engaged, but he goes there very frequently, and the students plague him half to death about her, and he never [92] denies it. He boards here. She has a fair skin, blue eyes, and almost red hair, but she is very pretty 'for all that.' She is about seventeen. There is a little girl about my own age here, who takes your place in my affections while *here;* she is a granddaughter of Professor Wilson, and lives in his house. Her name is Louisa Caruthers. I will speak to Lou about you, for you *must* be acquainted. But a truce to this nonsense! Do not show this letter to any one of Mr. Miller's family, for I feel restrained if I think that my letters are to be shown to any except my particular friends. I will not show yours. Show this to mother, your mother, E. D., and V. Winfree. Give my respects to all Mr. M.'s family, take some of my best love for yourself, and divide the rest among my friends.

"Now farewell, do not forget me, and I will ever be

"Your sincerely attached friend,
"M. V. H."

The foregoing priggish and stilted epistle begins the next chapter of my life-story.

After Miss Wilson's departure, and divers unsuccessful attempts to obtain a successor to his liking, my father determined upon a bold departure from the beaten path of traditional and conventional usage in the matter of girls' education.

The widow of Reverend Doctor Rice lived in the immediate neighborhood of Union Theological Seminary, founded by her husband, and of which he was the first president. The cluster of dwellings that had grown up around the two institutions of learning—Hampden-Sidney College and the School of Divinity—made, with the venerable "College Church," an educational centre for a community noted for generations past for intelligence and refinement. Prince Edward, Charlotte, and Halifax were closely adjacent counties peopled by what nobody then ridiculed as some of the "first families" of the state. Venables, Carringtons, Reades, Bouldins, Watkinses, Randolphs, Cabells, Mortons, Lacys—had borne a conspicuous part in state, church, and social [93] history. The region was aristocratic—and Presbyterian. There was much wealth, for tobacco was the most profitable crop of Central and Southern Virginia, and the plantations bordering the Appomattox River were a mine of riches to the owners. Stately mansions—most of them antedating the Revolutionary War—crowned gently rolling hills rising beyond the river, each, with its little village of domestic offices, great stables, tobacco-barns, and "quarters," making up an establishment that was feudal in character and in power.

Every planter was college-bred and a politician.

The local atmosphere of "College Hill" was not unlike that of an Old World university town. The professors of the sister institutions of learning occupied houses in the vicinity of seminary and college, and the quaint church, the bricks mellowed to red-brown by time stood equidistant from both.

One feature of the church impressed my youthful imagination. "Cousin Ben," of Montrose—afterward the senior professor in the seminary, and as Rev. B. M. Smith, D.D., known throughout the Southern and Northern Presbyterian Church as a leader in learning and in doctrine—had, when a student of Hampden-Sidney, brought from Western Virginia a sprig of Scotch broom in his pocket. "The Valley"—now a part of West Virginia—was mainly settled by Scotch-Irish emigrants, and the broom was imported with their household stuff. The boy set the withered slip

in the earth just inside of the gate of the church-yard. In twenty years it encompassed the walls with a setting of greenery, overran the enclosure, escaped under the fence, and raced rampant down the hill, growing tall and lush wherever it could get a foothold. In blossom-time the mantle of gold was visible a mile away. The smell of broom always brings back to me a vision of that ugly [94] (but dear) red-brown church and the goodly throng, pouring from doors and gate at the conclusion of the morning service, filling yard and road—well-dressed, well-born county folk, prosperous and hospitable, and so happily content with their lot and residence as to believe that no other people was so blessed of the Lord they served diligently and with godly fear. Without the church-yard were drawn up cumbrous family coaches, which conveyed dignified dames and dainty daughters to and from the sanctuary. Beyond these was a long line of saddle-horses waiting for their masters—blooded hunters for the young men, substantial cobs for their seniors. None except invalided men deigned to accept seats in carriages.

As may be gathered from the formally familiar and irresistibly funny epistle, indited when I had been four months an insignificant actor in the scene I have sketched, “religious privileges” was no idle term then and there. Our social outings were what I have indicated. There were no concerts save the “Monthly Concert of Prayer for Foreign Missions” (held simultaneously in every church in the state and Union); not a theatre in Virginia, excepting one in Richmond, banned for the religious public by the awful memories of the burning of the playhouse in 1811. “Dining-days,” which their descendants name “dinner-parties,” were numerous, and there was much junketing from one plantation to another, a ceaseless drifting back and forth of young people, overflowing, now this house, now that, always certain of a glad welcome, and contriving, without the adventitious aid of cards or dancing, to lead joyous, full lives.

Once a week the community turned out, *en masse*, for church-going. They were a devout folk—those F. F. V.’s, at which we mock now—and considered it a public duty not to forsake the assembling of themselves together for worship, prayers, and sermons. These latter were [95] intellectual, no less than spiritual pabulum. Oratory had not gone out of fashion in these United States, and in Virginia it was indigenous to the soil. Pulpit eloquence was in its glory, and speech-making at barbecues, anniversaries, and political gatherings, in court-rooms and upon “stumps,” was an art learned by boys in roundabouts and practised as long as veterans could stand upon their shrunken calves.

People flocked to church to attend reverently upon divine service, and, when the benediction was pronounced, greeted friends and neighbors, cheerily chatting in the aisles and exchanging greetings between the benches they had occupied during the services—men and women sitting apart, as in the Quaker meeting-house—as freely as we now salute and stroll with acquaintances in the *foyer* of the opera-house.

Such were some of the advantages and enjoyments included in the elastic phrase “religious privileges,” vaunted by the epistolary twelve-year-old.

“Rice Hill” was a commodious dwelling, one mile from the seminary, and not quite so far from the college. Doctor Rice had literally spent and been spent in the work which had crowned his ministry—the foundation and endowment of a Southern School of Divinity. At his death, friends and admirers, North and South, agreed that a suitable monument to him would be a home for the childless widow. She had a full corps of family servants, who had followed her to her various residences, and she eked out her income by supplying table-board to students from college and seminary. Thus much in explanation of the references to the coming in of “the gentlemen” in the “evening”—rural Virginian for afternoon.

A kindly Providence had appointed unto us these pleasant paths at the impressionable period of our lives. The goodliest feature in that appointment was that Robert Reid Howison, [96] subsequently “LL.D.,” and the author of a *History of Virginia*, and *The Student’s History of the United States*, became the tutor of my sister and myself.

He came to us at twelve o’clock each day, and we dined at half-past two. Hence, all our studying was done out of school-hours. The arrangement was eccentric in the extreme in the eyes of my father’s acquaintances and critics. Other girls were in the class-room from nine until twelve, and after recess had a session of two hours more. That this, the most *outré* of “Mr. Hawes’s experiments,” would be a ludicrous failure was a foregone conclusion. Whereas, the cool brain had reckoned confidently upon the fidelity of the tutor and the conscientiousness of pupils accustomed to the discipline of a home where implicit obedience was the law.

Never had learners a happier period of pupilage, and the cordial relations between teacher and students testified to the mutual desire to meet, each, the requirements of the other party to the compact.

To the impetus given our minds by association with the genial scholar who directed our studies, was added the stimulus of the table-talk that went on in our hearing daily. It was the informal, suggestive chat of men eager for knowledge, comparing notes and opinions, and discussing questions of deep import—historical, biological, and theological. In the main, they were a bright set of fellows; in the main, likewise, gentlemen at heart and in bearing. It goes without saying that the exception in my mind to the latter clause was our late and hated tutor. I might write to Dorinda, in constrained goody-goodyishness, of the impropriety of “drawing comparisons” between him and Mr. Howison, whose “easy” laugh and winning personality wrought powerfully upon my childish fancy. At heart I loved the one and consistently detested the other.

To this hour I recall the gratified thrill of conscious security and triumph that coursed through my minute being when, Mr. Tayloe having taken it upon himself to reprove me for something I said—pert, perhaps, but not otherwise offensive—Mr. Howison remarked, with no show of temper, but firmly: [97]

"Mr. Tayloe, you will please recollect that this young lady is now under *my* care!"

He laughed the next moment, as if to pass the matter off pleasantly, but all three of us comprehended what was implied.

We began French with our new tutor, and geometry! I crossed the *Pons Asinorum* in January, and went on with Euclid passably well, if not creditably. Mathematics was never my strong point. The patience and perfect temper of the preceptor never failed him, no matter how far I came short of what he would have had me accomplish in that direction.

"Educate them as if they were boys and preparing for college," my father had said, and he was obeyed.

Beyond and above the benefit derived from the study of text-books was the education of daily contact with a mind so richly stored with classic and modern literature, so keenly alive to all that was worthy in the natural, mental, and spiritual world as that of Robert Howison. He had been graduated at the University of Virginia, and for a year or more had practised law in Richmond, resigning the profession to begin studies that would prepare him for what he rated as a higher calling. My debt to him is great, and inadequately acknowledged in these halting lines.

Were I required to tell what period of my nonage had most to do with shaping character and coloring my life, I should reply, without hesitation, "The nine months passed at Rice Hill." A new, boundless realm of thought and feeling was opened to the little provincial from a narrow, neutral-tinted neighborhood. I was a dreamer by nature and by habit, and my dreams took on a new complexion; a born story-maker, and a wealth of material was laid to my hand. We were a family of mad book-lovers, and the libraries of seminary and college were to my eyes twin Golcondas of illimitable possibilities. Up to now, novel-reading had been a questionable delight in which I hardly dared indulge freely. I was taught to abhor deceit and clandestine practices, and my father had grave scruples as to the wisdom of allowing young people to devour fiction. We might read magazines, as we might have confectionery, in limited supplies. A bound novel would be like a dinner of mince-pie and sweetmeats, breeding mental and moral indigestion. [98]

So, when Mr. Howison not only permitted, but advised the perusal of Scott's novels and poems, I fell upon them with joyful surprise that kindled into rapture as I became familiar with the Wizard and his work. We lived in the books we read then, discussing them at home and abroad, as we talk now of living issues and current topics. *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Marmion*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, and *Waverley* were read that winter on stormy afternoons and during the long evenings that succeeded the early supper. Sometimes Mr. Howison lingered when his comrades had gone back to their dormitories, and took his part in the fascinating entertainment. Usually the group was composed of Aunt Rice, her sister (Mrs. Wharey, lately widowed, who was making arrangements to settle upon an adjoining plantation), Mrs. Wharey's daughter, another "Cousin Mary," my sister, and myself.

Aunt Rice was a "character" in her way and day; shrewd, kindly sympathetic, active in church and home, and with a marvellous repertoire of tale and anecdote that made her a most entertaining companion. "The Seminary" was her foster-child; the students had from her maternal interest and affection. Like other gentlewomen of her time and latitude, she was well versed in the English classics and in translations from the Latin and Greek. Pope, Swift, and Addison were household favorites, and this winter she was reading with delight the just-published *History of the Reformation*, by Merle d'Aubigné. She always wore black—merino in the morning, black silk or satin in the afternoon—and a regulation old lady's cap with ribbon strings tied under a double chin, and I think of her as always knitting lamb's-wool stockings. Hers was a pronounced individuality in every capacity she assumed to fill—mistress, housewife, neighbor, and general well-wisher. She never scolded, yet she managed the dozen or more servants that had come down to her by ordinary generation—seven of them men and boys—judiciously and well. Even then she was meditating a scheme she afterward put into successful execution—namely, liberating all her slaves and sending them to Liberia. To this end she had taught them to read and write, and each boy was trained in some manual trade. She superintended their religious education as faithfully. Every Sunday night all the negroes who were beyond infancy assembled in the dining-room for Scripture readings expounded by her own pleasant voice, and for recitations in the Shorter Catechism and Village Hymn-book. They were what was called in the neighborhood vernacular, "a likely lot." The boys and men were clever workers in their several lines of labor. The women were skilled in the use of loom, spinning-wheel, and needle, and excellent cooks. One and all, they were made to understand from babyhood what destiny awaited them so soon as they were equipped for the enterprise. [99]

I wish I could add that the result met her fond expectations. While the design was inchoate, her example served as a stock and animating illustration of the wisdom of those who urged upon Virginia slaveholders the duty of returning the blacks to the land from which their fathers were stolen. Colonization was boldly advocated in public and in private, and the old lady was a fervent convert. In the fulness of time she sent out five families, strong and healthy, as well-educated as the average Northern farmer and mechanic. She sold Rice Hill and well-nigh impoverished herself in her old age to fit out the colony with clothes and household goods, and went to spend [100]

the few remaining years of her life in the home of her sister. The great labor of her dreams and hope accomplished, she chanted a happy “Nunc Dimittis” to sympathizer and to doubter. She had solved the Dark Problem that baffled the world’s most astute statesmen. If all who hearkened unto her would do likewise, the muttering of the hell that was already moving from its depth under the feet of the nation, would be silenced forever.

The competent colonists had hardly had time to send back to their emancipated mistress news of their safe arrival in the Promised Land, when they found themselves in grievous straits. These, duly reported to Aunt Rice, were African fevers that exhausted their strength and consumed their stock of ready money; the difficulty of earning a livelihood while they were ignorant of the language and customs of the natives; lack of suitable clothing; scarcity of provisions, and a waiting-list of etceteras that rent the tender heart of the benefactress with unavailing pity. She was importuned for money, for clothes, for groceries—even that she would, for the love of Heaven and the sake of old times, send them a barrel of rice—which, infidels to her faith in colonization did not fail to remind her, was to be had in Liberia for the raising.

The stout-hearted liberator never owned in word her disappointment at the outcome of long years of patient preparation and personal privation, or gave any sign of appreciation of the truth that her grand solution of the Dark Problem was the song of the drunkard and a by-word and a [101] hissing in the mouth of the unbeliever. But she ceased long before her death, in 1858, to tax her listeners’ patience by setting forth the beauties of colonization as the practical abolition of negro slavery in America. If her ancestors had sinned in bringing the race into bondage, and her teeth were thereby set on edge, she hid her hurt. This significant silence was the only token by which her best friends divined her consciousness of the humiliating revelation which had fallen into the evening of a well-spent life. She had exchanged for the five families born and reared in her home, dependence, comfort, and happiness, for freedom, pauperism, and discontent. The cherished bud had been passing sweet. The fruit was as bitter as gall.

At the time of which I am writing, the dream-bubble was at the brightest and biggest. She was in active correspondence with the officers of the Colonization Society; subscribed to and read colonization publications, and dealt out excerpts from the same to all who would listen; was busy, sanguine, and bright, beholding herself, in imagination, the leader in a crusade that would wipe the stain of slavery from her beloved state.

One event of that wonderful winter was a visit paid to Aunt Rice by her aged father, Major James Morton, of High Hill, Cumberland County, the “Old Solid Column” of Revolutionary story. The anecdote of Lafayette’s recognition of his former brother-in-arms was related in an earlier chapter. It was treasured in the family as a bit of choice silver would be prized. I had heard it once and again, and had constructed my own portrait of the stout-hearted and stout-bodied warrior. Surprise approximated dismay when I behold a withered, tremulous old man, enfeebled in mind almost to childishness, his voice breaking shrilly as he talked—a pitiable, crumbling wreck of the stately column.

He had definite ideas upon certain subjects still, and was doughty in their defence. For [102] example, during this visit to his daughter, he sat one evening in the chimney-corner, apparently dozing, while a party of young people were discussing the increasing facilities of travel by steam, and contrasting them with the slow methods of their fathers. The Major drowsed on, head sunken into his military stock, eyes closed, and jaw drooping—the impersonation of senile decay—when somebody spoke of a trip up the Hudson to West Point the preceding summer.

The veteran raised himself as if he had been shaken by the shoulder.

“That is not true!” he said, doggedly.

“But, Major,” returned the surprised narrator, “I did go! There is a regular line of steamers up the river.”

The old war-horse reared his head and beat the floor with an angry heel.

“I say it is not true! It could not be true! General Washington had a big chain stretched across the river after Arnold tried to sell West Point, so that no vessel could get up to the fort. And, sir!” bringing his cane down upon the hearth with a resounding thump, his voice clear and resonant, “there is not that man upon earth who would dare take down that chain. Why, sir, *General Washington put it there!*”

A fragment of the mighty chain, forged in the mountains of New Jersey, lies upon the parade-ground at West Point.

Forty years thereafter I laid a caressing hand upon a huge link of the displaced boom, and told the anecdote to my twelve-year-old boy, adding, as if the stubborn loyalist had said it in my ear,

“And there it stands until this day,
To witness if I lie.”

We read *Ivanhoe* in the open air when the spring wore into summer. The afternoons were long, [103] and when study-hours were over we were wont to repair to the roomy back-porch, shaded by vines, and looking across a little valley, at the bottom of which were a bubbling spring, a twisting brook, and a tiny pool as round as a moon, to the hill crowned by “Morton,” a plain but spacious

house occupied by the Wharey family.

Not infrequently a seminary student, attracted by Mary Wharey's brunette comeliness and happy temper, would join our group and lend a voice in the reading. Moses Drury Hoge, a cousin of my mother and of Aunt Rice, was with us at least twice a week, basking in the summer heat like a true son of the tropics. He was a tutor in Hampden-Sidney while a divinity student, and, as was proved by his subsequent career, was the superior of his fellows in oratorical gifts and other endowments that mark the youth for success from the beginning of the race. I think he was born sophisticated. Already his professors yielded him something that, while it was not homage in any sense of the word, yet singled him out as one whose marked individuality and brilliant talents gave him the right to speak with authority. At twenty-three, without other wealth than his astute brain and ready wits, his future was sure.

He won in after years the title of "the Patrick Henry of the Southern Pulpit."

Of him I shall have occasion to speak further as my story progresses.

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# X

[104]

## FAMILY LETTERS—COMMENCEMENT AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY—THEN AND NOW

"Richmond, *June 10th, 1843.*

"My dear Wife,—After a fatiguing day it is with great pleasure I sit down to have a little chat with you, and to inform you of our progress. Were I disposed to give credit to lucky and unlucky days, a little incident occurred on our way down which would have disturbed me very much. We were going on at a reasonable rate when, to our surprise, the front of the 'splendid line of coach' assumed a strange position, and for a moment I thought we should be wrecked, but it was only minus a wheel—one of the front ones having taken leave of us and journeying, 'singly and alone,' on the other side of the turnpike. We were soon 'all right,' and arrived here in good health but much fatigued. Mother has hardly got rested yet, but thinks another quiet day will be sufficient, and that she will be ready to start on Monday morning and be able to hold out to go through without again stopping. We have passed over the most fatiguing part of our journey. We shall leave on Monday morning by the railroad, and, unless some accident should happen on the way, expect to be in Boston on Wednesday about 9 o'clock A.M. It is my intention to keep on, unless mother should require rest, more than can be had on the line of travel.... Well, love, are you not tired of this overparticularity about business? I will not weary you any longer with it. I have never left home with a stronger feeling of regret than at the present time, and it appears that the older I get, the greater the trial to stay away. Now you will say that it is because you become more and more interesting. Well, it must be so, for I cannot discover [105] any other cause. Do not let it be long before you write.

"The heat, wind, and dust of the city to-day have put me entirely out of trim for writing, and my talent is but small even under the most favorable circumstances. By-the-bye, called on Mrs. D. last evening to deliver a message from Mr. D. *Quite* a pleasant ten minutes' affair, and was excused. Herbert must save some of those nice plants for that box to be placed on a pole, and tell him if he is a good boy we will try and have a nice affair for the little birds. My *man* must have a hand in the work, if it be only to look on, and Alice can do the talking part. Don't let Virginia take to her chamber. Keep her circulating about the house in all dry weather; the wind will not injure her, unless it be quite damp, at least so I think.

"*Sunday, 11th.*—Attended Doctor Plumer's church this morning, and heard a young man, the son of one of the professors at Princeton, preach. The sermon was good, but should have preferred the Doctor. Morning rainy and no one in from Olney.

"*Evening.*—Attended Mr. Magoon's church. He preached from the words, 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked,' etc. A good, practical sermon; he alluded to ministers and church members away from home, and showed them in many cases to be mockers of God, and instanced inconsistencies, all of which he termed 'mockery.' Expect to-night to hear Doctor Plumer. Now, love, you have a full history up to the time of our departure. Write to me soon, and, after telling about yourself, the children, and servants, give me an account of store, farming, and gardening operations. Those large sheets will hold a great deal, if written very close. Kiss Alice and the baby for father. Tell Herbert and Horace that father wishes them to be good boys and learn fast. And now, dear Anna, I must bid you adieu, commending you and our dear

ones to the care of Him whose mercies have been so largely bestowed on us in days past. May He preserve you from all evil and cause you to dwell in perfect peace."

The foregoing extracts from a letter written by my father during the (to us) "wonderful summer" of our sojourn in Prince Edward had to do with the periodical visit paid by my grandmother to her Massachusetts home. I am deeply impressed in the perusal of these confidential epistles with the absolute dependence of the strong man—whom mere acquaintances rated as reserved to sternness, and singularly undemonstrative, even to his friends—upon the gentle woman who was, I truly believe, the one and only love of his lifetime. He talked to her by tongue and by pen of every detail of business; she was the confidante of every plan, however immature; she, and she alone, fathomed the depths of a soul over which Puritan blood and training impelled him to cast a veil. In all this he had not a secret from her. Portions of the letter which I have omitted go into particulars of transactions that would interest few women. [106]

No matter how weary he was after a day of travel or work, he had always time to "talk it out" with his *alter ego*. The term has solemn force, thus applied. In the injunction to write of domestic, gardening, and farming affairs, he brings in "the store," now of goodly proportions and "departments," and into which she did not set foot once a week, and then as any other customer might. "Those large sheets will hold a great deal if written very close," he says, archly. They had evidently been provided for this express purpose before he left home.

One paragraph in the exscinded section of the letter belongs to a day and system that have lapsed almost from the memory of the living.

An infant of Mary Anne, my mother's maid, was ill with whooping-cough when the master took his journey northward.

"I am quite anxious to hear how Edgar is," he writes. "I fear the case may prove fatal, and am inclined to blame myself for leaving home before it was decided. Yet I know he is in good hands, and that you have done and will do everything necessary for his comfort. Also that, in the event of his death, all that is proper will be attended to. When I get home the funeral shall be preached, of which you will please inform his parents." [107]

No word of written or spoken comfort would do more to soothe the hearts of the bereaved parents than the assurance that the six-months-old baby should have his funeral sermon in good and regular order. The discourse was seldom preached at the time of interment. Weeks, and sometimes months, intervened before the friends and relatives could be convened with sufficient pomp and circumstance to satisfy the mourners. I have attended services embodying a long sermon, eulogistic of the deceased and admonitory of the living, when the poor mortal house of clay had mouldered in the grave for half a year. I actually knew of one funeral of a wife that was postponed by untoward circumstances until, when a sympathizing community was convoked to listen to the sermon, the ex-widower sat in the front seat as chief mourner with a second wife and her baby beside him. And the wife wore a black gown with black ribbon on her bonnet, out of respect to her predecessor!

They were whites, and church members in good and regular standing.

Little Edgar died the day after my father took the train from Richmond for the fast run through to Boston—in two days and two nights! When the master got home after a month's absence, the funeral sermon was preached in old Petersville Church, three miles from the Court House, on a Sunday afternoon, and the parents and elder children were conveyed thither in the family carriage, driven by Spotswood, who would now be the "coachman." Then he was the "carriage-driver." They took time for everything then-a-days, and plenty of it. [108]

In September, Mea and I had the culmination of our experiences and "privileges" upon College Hill in the Hampden-Sidney Commencement. I had never attended one before. I have seen none since that were so grand, and none that thrilled me to the remotest fibre of my being as the exercises of that gloriously cloudless day. I hesitate to except even the supreme occasion when, from a box above the audience-floor packed with two thousand students and blazing with electric lights, I saw my tall son march with his class to receive his diploma from the president of a great university, and greeted him joyfully when, the ceremonial over, he brought it up to lay in my lap.

There were but four graduates in that far-off little country college with the hyphenated name and the honored history. It may be that their grandchildren will read the roll here: Robert Campbell Anderson, Thomas Brown Venable, Paul Carrington, and Mr. Rice, whose initials I think were "T. C." There were, I reiterate, but four graduates, but they took three honors. Robert Anderson was valedictorian; Mr. Rice of the uncertain initials had the philosophical oration; Tom Brown Venable had the Latin salutatory; and Paul Carrington, the one honorless man, made the most brilliant speech of them all. It was a way he had. The madcap of the college—who just "got through," as it were, by the skin of his teeth, by cramming night and day for two months to make up for an indefinite series of wretched recitations and numberless escapades out of class—he easily eclipsed his mates on that day of days. The boys used to say that he was "Saul," until he got up to declaim, or make an original address. Then he was "Paul." He was Pauline, *par éminence*, to-day.

I could recite verbatim his lament over Byron's wasted powers, and I see, as if it were but yesterday that it thrilled me, the pose and passion of the outburst, arms tossed to heaven in the declamation: [109]

"O! had his harp been tuned to Zion's songs!"

Music was "rendered" by an admirably trained choir. The hour of the brass-band had not come yet to Hampden-Sidney. And the choir rendered sacred music—such grand old anthems as,

"Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion!
Put on thy beautiful garments";

and,

"How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that publisheth salvation;
That saith unto Zion,
'Thy God reigneth!'"

Doctor Maxwell was the president then, and was portentous in my eyes in his don's gown.

Dear old Hampden-Sidney! she has arisen, renewed in youth and vigor, from the cinders of semi-desolation, has cast aside the sackcloth and ashes of her grass-widowhood, and stepped into the ranks of modern progress. I like best to recall her when she maintained the prestige of her traditional honors and refused to accept decadence as a fixed fact.

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## XI

[110]

## BACK IN POWHATAN—OLD VIRGINIA HOUSEWIFERY—A SINGING-CLASS IN THE FORTIES—THE SIMPLE LIFE?

My father's "ways" were so well known by his neighbors it was taken for granted that the education of his daughters would not be conducted along conventional lines after we returned home. Mr. Howison had completed his theological course in the seminary, and there were other plans on foot, known as yet to my parents alone, which made the engagement of another tutor inexpedient.

It did not seem odd to us then, but I wonder now over the routine laid down by our father, and followed steadily by us during the next winter and summer. A room in the second story was fitted up as a "study" for the two girls. Each had her desk and her corner. Thither we repaired at 9 o'clock A.M. for five days of the week, and sat us down to work. When problem, French exercise, history, and rhetoric lessons were prepared, we gravely and dutifully recited them to each other; wrote French exercises as carefully as if Mr. Howison's eye were to scan them; and each corrected that of her fellow to the best of her ability. We read history and essays upon divers topics aloud, and discussed them freely. The course of study was marked out for us by our beloved ex-tutor, who wrote to us from time to time, in the midst of other and engrossing cares, in proof of continued remembrance and interest in his whilom pupils.

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We girls wrought faithfully and happily until one o'clock at our lessons. The rest of the day was our own, except afternoon hours which were passed with our mother, and in occupations directed by her. She had inherited from her mother taste and talent for dainty needlework, and, as all sewing was done by hand, her hands were always full, although her own maid was an expert seamstress. The Virginian matron of *antebellum* days never wielded broom or duster. She did not make beds or stand at wash-tub or ironing-table. Yet she was as busy in her line of housewifely duty as her "Yankee" sister.

Provisions were bought by the large quantity, and kept in the spacious store-room, which was an important section of the dwelling. Every morning the cook was summoned as soon as breakfast was fairly over, appearing with a big wooden tray under her elbow, sundry empty "buckets" slung upon her arm, and often a pail on her head, carried there because every other available portion of her person was occupied. The two went together to the store-room, and materials for the daily food of white and black households were measured into the various vessels. The notable housewife knew to a fraction how much of the raw products went to the composition of each dish she ordered. So much flour was required for a loaf of rolls, and so much for a dozen beaten biscuits; a stated quantity of butter was for cake or pudding; sugar was measured for the kitchen-table and for that at which the mistress would sit with her guests. Molasses was poured into one bucket, lard measured by the great spoonful into another; "bacon-middling" was cut off by the chunk for cooking with vegetables and for the servants' eating; hams and shoulders were laid aside from the supply in the smoke-house, to which the pair presently repaired. Dried fruits in the winter, spices, vinegar—the scores of minor condiments and flavoring that were brought into daily use in the lavish provision for appetites accustomed to the fat of the land—were "given out" as scrupulously as staples. If wine or brandy were to be used in sauces, the mistress would supply them later. It was not right, according to her code, to put temptation of that sort in the way of her dependants. It was certainly unsafe. Few colored women drank. I do not now recall a solitary instance of that kind in all my experience with, and

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observation of negro servants, before or after the war. I wish I could say the same for Scotch, Irish, and German cooks whom I have employed during a half-century of active housewifery.

Negro men were notoriously weak in that direction. The most honest could not resist the sight and smell of liquor. The failing would seem to be racial. It is an established fact that when the solid reconstructed South "went dry" in certain elections, it was in the hope of keeping ardent spirits out of the way of the negroes.

To return to our housekeeper of the mid-nineteenth century: The second stage in the daily round appointed to her by custom and necessity was to superintend the washing of breakfast china, glass, and silver. In seven cases out of ten she did the work herself, or deputed it to her daughters. One of my earliest recollections is of standing by my mother as she washed the breakfast "things," and allowed me to polish the teaspoons with a tiny towel just the right size for my baby hands.

Her own hands were very beautiful, as were her feet. To preserve her taper fingers from the hot water in which silver and glass were washed, she wore gloves, cutting off the tips of the fingers. The proper handling of "fragiles" was a fine art, and few colored servants arose to the right practice of it. I have in my memory the picture of one stately gentlewoman, serene of face and dignified of speech, who retained her seat at the table when the rest of us had finished breakfast. To her, then, in dramatic parlance, the butler, arrayed in long, white apron, sleeves rolled to the elbow, bearing a pail of cedar-wood with bright brass hoops, three-quarters full of [113]
hot water. This he set down upon a small table brought into the room for the purpose, and proceeded to wash plates, cups, glass, silver, etc., collected from the board at which madam still presided, a bit of fancy knitting or crocheting in hand, which did not withdraw her eyes from vigilant attention to his movements.

Like surveillance was exercised over each branch of housework. Every part of the establishment was visited by the mistress before she sat down to the sewing, which was her own especial task. Her daughters were instructed in the intricacies of backstitch, fell-seams, overcasting, hemstitching, herringbone, button-holes, rolled and flat hems, by the time they let down their frocks and put up their hair. The girl who had not made a set of chemises for herself before she reached her fourteenth birthday was accounted slow to learn what became a gentlewoman who expected to have a home of her own to manage some day. Until I was ten years old I knit my own stockings of fine, white cotton, soft as wool. Gentlemen of the old school refused to wear socks and stockings bought over a counter. In winter they had woollen, in summer cotton foot-gear, home-knit by wives or aunts or daughters. We embroidered our chemise bands and the ruffles of skirts, the undersleeves that came in with "Oriental sleeves," and the broad collars that accompanied them.

Reading aloud more often went with the sewing-circle found in every home, than gossip. My father set his fine, strong face like a flint against neighborhood scandal and tittle-tattle. "'They say' is next door to a lie," was one of the sententious sayings that silenced anecdotes dealing with village characters and doings. A more effectual quietus was: "*Who says* that? Never repeat a tale without giving the author's name. That is the only honorable thing to do."

I do not know that the exclusion of chit-chat of our friends drove us to books for entertainment, [114]
when miles of seams and gussets and overcasting lay between us and springtime with its outdoor amusements and occupations. I do say that we did not pine for evening "functions," for luncheons and matinées, when we had plenty of books to read aloud and congenial companions with whom to discuss what we read. Once a week we had a singing-class, which met around our dining-table. My father led this, giving the key with his tuning-fork, and now and then accompanying with his flute a hymn in which his tenor was not needed.

Have I ever spoken of the singular fact that he had "no ear for music," yet sang tunefully and with absolute accuracy, with the notes before him? He could not carry the simplest air without the music-book. It was a clear case of a lack of co-ordination between ear and brain. He was passionately fond of music, and sang well in spite of it, playing the flute correctly and with taste —always by note. Take away the printed or written page, and he was all at sea.

Those songful evenings were the one dissipation of the week. A singing-master, the leader of a Richmond choir, had had a school at the Court House the winter before, and *The Boston Academy* was in every house in the village. I could run glibly over the names of the regular attendants on the Tuesday evenings devoted to our *musicale*. George Moody, my father's good-looking ward, now seventeen, and already in love up to his ears with Effie D., my especial crony, who was a month my junior; Thaddeus Ivey, a big blond of the true Saxon type, my father's partner, and engaged to be married to a pretty Lynchburg girl; James Ivey, a clerk in the employ of Hawes & Ivey—nice and quiet and gentlemanly, and in love with nobody that we knew of— these were the bassos. Once in a while, "Cousin Joe," who was busily engaged in a seven years' [115]
courtship of a fair villager, Effie's sister, joined us and bore our souls and voices aloft with the sonorous "brum! brum!" of a voice at once rich and well-trained. There were five sopranos—we called it "the treble" then—and two women sang "the second treble." One weak-voiced neighbor helped my father out with the tenor. Until a year or two before the singing-master invaded the country, women sang tenor, and the alto was known as "counter."

The twentieth century has not quite repudiated the tunes we delighted in on those winter nights, when

"The fire, with hickory logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide,"

and we lined both sides of the long table, lighted by tall sperm-oil lamps, and bent seriously happy faces over *The Boston Academy*, singing with the spirit and, to the best of our ability, with the understanding—"Lanesboro'" and "Cambridge" and "Hebron" and "Boyleston" and "Zion," and learning, with puckered brows and steadfast eyes glued to the notes, such new tunes as "Yarmouth," "Anvern," and "Zerah."

"Sing *at* it!" my father would command in heartsome tones, from his stand at the top of the double line. "You will never learn it if you do not make the first trial."

I arose to my feet the other day with the rest of the congregation of a fashionable church for a hymn which "everybody" was enjoined from the pulpit to "sing."

When the choir burst forth with

"Triumphant Zion! Lift thy head!"

I dropped my head upon my hands and sobbed. Were the words ever sung to any other tune than "Anvern," I wonder?

In the interval of singing we chatted, laughed, and were happy. How proud all of us girls were, [116] on one stormy night when the gathering was smaller than usual, and good-looking George—coloring to his ears, but resolute—sang the bass solo in the fourth line of "Cambridge":

"Resound their Maker's praise!"

The rest caught the words from his tongue and carried the tune to a conclusion.

We sang until ten o'clock; then apples, nuts, and cakes were brought in, and sometimes sweet cider. An hour later we had the house to ourselves, and knelt for evening prayers about the fire before going to bed.

It was an easy-going existence, that of the well-to-do Virginia countryman of that date. If there were already elements at work below the surface that were to heave the fair level into smoking ruin, the rank and file of the men who made, and who obeyed the laws, did not suspect it.

Grumblers there were, and political debates that ran high and hot, but the Commonwealth that had supplied the United States with statesmen and leaders since the Constitution was framed, had no fear of a dissolution of what was, to the apprehension of those now at the helm, the natural order of things.

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## XII [117]
## ELECTION DAY AND A DEMOCRATIC BARBECUE

THE time of the singing of birds and the departure of winter came suddenly that year. Hyacinths were aglow in my mother's front yard early in February, and the orchards were aflame with "the fiery blossoms of the peach." The earth awoke from sleep with a bound, and human creatures thrilled, as at the presage of great events.

It was the year of the presidential election and a campaign of extraordinary importance. My father talked to me of what invested it with this importance as we walked together down the street one morning when the smell of open flowers and budding foliage was sweet in our nostrils.

A Democratic barbecue was to be held in a field on the outskirts of the village just beyond "Jordan's Creek." The stream took its name from the man whose plantation bounded it on the west. The widening and deepening into a pool at the foot of his garden made it memorable in the Baptist Church.

I do not believe there was a negro communicant in any other denomination throughout the length of the county. And their favorite baptizing-place was "Jordan's Creek." I never knew why, until my mother's maid—a bright mulatto, with a smart cross of Indian blood in her veins—"got through," after mighty strivings on her part, and on the part of the faithful of her own class and complexion, and confided to me her complacency in the thought that she was now safe for time and eternity.

"For, you see, John the Babtis', he babtized in the River Jerdan, and Brother Watkins, he [118] babtized me in the Creek Jerdan. I s'pose they must be some kin to one another?"

My father laughed and then sighed over the story, when I told it as we set out on our walk. The religious beliefs and superstitions of the colored servants were respected by their owners to a degree those who know little of the system as it prevailed at that time, find it hard to believe. From babyhood we were taught never to speak disrespectfully of the Baptists, or of the vagaries that passed with the negroes for revealed truth. They had a right to their creeds as truly as we had to ours.

This younger generation is also incredulous with respect to another fact connected with our domestic relations. Children were trained in respectful speech to elderly servants—indeed, to all who were grown men and women. My mother made me apologize once to this same maid—Mary Anne by name—for telling her to "Hush her mouth!" the old Virginian form of "Hold your tongue!"

The blesséd woman explained the cause of her reproof when the maid was out of hearing:

"The expression is unladylike and coarse. Then, again, it is *mean*—despicably mean!—to be saucy to one who has no right to answer in the same way. If you must be sharp in your talk, quarrel with your equals, not with servants, who cannot meet you on your own ground."

The admonition has stuck fast in my mind to this day.

By the time we turned the corner in the direction of Jordan's Creek, my father and I were deep in politics. He was the stanchest of Whigs, and the ancient and honorable party had for leader, in this year's fight, one whom my instructor held to be the wisest statesman and purest patriot in the land. The ticket, "Clay and Frelinghuysen," was a beloved household word with us; talk of the tariff, protection and the national debt, which Henry Clay's policy would wipe out, and forever, if [119] opportunity were granted to him, ran as glibly from our childish tongues as dissertations upon the Catholic bill and parliamentary action thereupon dropped from the lips of the Brontë boy and girls. There was not a shadow of doubt in our minds as to the result of the November fight.

"It seems a pity"—I observed, as we looked across the creek down into the distant meadow, where men and boys were moving to and fro, and smoke was rising from fires that had been kindled overnight—"that the Democrats should go to so much expense and trouble only to be defeated at last."

"They may not be so sure as you are that they are working for nothing," answered my father, smiling good-humoredly. "They have had some victories to boast of in the past."

"Yes!" I assented, reluctantly. "As, for instance, when Colonel Hopkins was sent to the Legislature! Father, I wish you had agreed to go when they begged you to let them elect you!"

The smile was now a laugh.

"To nominate me, you mean. A very different matter from election, my daughter. Not that I cared for either. If I may be instrumental in the hands of Providence in helping to put the right man into the right place, my political ambitions will be satisfied."

"I do hope that Powhatan will go for Clay!" ejaculated I, fervently. "And I think it an outrage that the Richmond voters cannot come up to the help of the right, at the presidential election."

"The law holds that the real strength of the several states would not be properly represented if this were allowed," was the reply.

I saw the justice of the law later in life. Then it was oppressive, to my imagination.

That most doubtful blessing of enlightened freemen—universal suffrage—had not as yet been [120] thrust upon the voters of the United States. In Virginia, the man who held the franchise must not only be "free, white, and twenty-one," but he must be a land-owner to the amount of at least twenty-five dollars. Any free white of the masculine gender owning twenty-five dollars' worth of real estate in any county had a vote there. If he owned lands of like value in ten counties, he might deposit a vote in each of them, if he could reach them all between sunrise and sunset on Election Day. It was esteemed a duty by the Richmond voter—the city being overwhelmingly Whig—to distribute his influence among doubtful counties in which he was a property-holder. He held and believed for certain that he had a right to protect his interests wherever they might lie.

Powhatan was a doubtful factor in the addition of election returns. Witness the election to the Legislature at different periods of such Democrats as Major Jacob Michaux—from a James River plantation held by his grandfather by a royal grant since the Huguenots sought refuge in Virginia from French persecutors—and of the Colonel Hopkins whom I had named. This last was personally popular, a man of pleasing address and fair oratorical powers, and represented an influential neighborhood in the centre of the county. A most worthy gentleman, as I now know. Then I classed him with Jesuits and tyrants. I had overheard a sanguine Democrat declare in the heat of political argument that "Henry L. Hopkins would be President of the United States some day." To which my father retorted, "When that day comes I shall cross the ocean and swear allegiance to Queen Victoria."

When I repeated the direful threat to my mother, she laughed and bade me give myself no uneasiness on the subject, as nothing was more unlikely than that Colonel Hopkins would ever go [121] to the White House. Nevertheless, I always associated that amiable and courtly gentleman with our probable expatriation.

Election Day was ever an event of moment with us children. From the time when I was tall enough to peep over the vine-draped garden-fence—until I was reckoned too big to stand and stare in so public a place, and was allowed to join the seniors who watched the street from behind the blinds and between the sprays of the climbing roses shading the front windows—it was my delight to inspect and pronounce upon the groups that filled the highway all day long. Children are violent partisans, and we separated the sheep from the goats—*id est*, the Whigs

from the Democrats—as soon as the horsemen became visible through the floating yellow dust of the roads running from each end of the street back into the country. One neighborhood in the lower end of the county, bordering upon Chesterfield, was familiarly known as the “Yellow Jacket region.” It took its name, according to popular belief, from the butternut and nankeen stuffs that were worn by men and women. The term had a sinister meaning to us, although it was sufficiently explained by the costume of the voters, who seldom appeared at the Court House in force except upon Election Day. They arrived early in the forenoon—a straggling procession of sad-faced citizens, or so we fancied—saying little to one another, and looking neither to the left nor the right as their sorrel nags paced up the middle of the wide, irregularly built street. I did not understand then, nor do I now, their preference for sorrel horses. Certain it is that there were four of that depressing hue to one black, bay, or gray. So badly groomed were the poor beasts, and so baggy were the nankeen trousers of the men who bestrode them, that a second look was needed to determine where the rider ended and the steed began. We noted, with disdainful glee, that the Yellow Jacket folk turned the corner of the crossway flanking our garden, [122] and so around the back of the public square enclosing Court House, clerk’s office, and jail. There they tethered the sorry beasts to the fence, shook down a peck or so of oats from bags they had fastened behind their saddles, and shambled into the square to be lost in the gathering crowd.

As they rode through the village, ill-mannered boys chanted:

“Democrats—
They eat rats!
But Whigs
Eat pigs!”

Bacon being a product for which the state was famed, the distinction was invidious to the last degree. My mother never let us take up the scandalous doggerel. She said it was vulgar, untrue, and unkind. It was not her fault that each of us had the private belief that there was a spice of truth in it.

When we saw a smart tilbury, drawn by a pair of glossy horses, stop before the “Bell Tavern” opposite our house, the occupants spring to the ground and leave the equipage to the hostlers—who rushed from the stables at sound of the clanging bell pulled by the landlord as soon as he caught sight of the carriage—we said in unison:

“They are Whigs!”

We were as positive as to the politics of the men who rode blooded hunters and wore broadcloth and tall, shining hats. The Yellow Jacket head-gear was drab in color, uncertain in shape.

It seemed monstrous to our intolerant youth that “poor white folksy” men should have an equal right with gentlemen, born and bred, in deciding who should represent the county in the Legislature and the district in Congress.

The crowning excitement of the occasion was reserved for the afternoon. As early as three [123] o’clock I was used to see my father come out of the door of his counting-room over the way, watch in hand, and look down the Richmond road. Presently he would be joined there by one, two, or three others, and they compared timepieces, looking up at the westering sun, their faces graver and gestures more energetic as the minutes sped by. The junta of women sympathizers behind the vine-curtains began to speculate as to the possibility of accident to man, beast, or carriage, and we children inquired, anxiously, “What would happen if the Richmond voters did not come, after all?”

“No fear of that!” we were assured, our mother adding, with modest pride, “Your father has attended to the matter.”

They always came. Generally the cloud of distant dust, looming high and fast upon the wooded horizon, was the first signal of the reinforcements for the Whig party. Through this we soon made out a train of ten or twelve carriages, and perhaps as many horsemen—a triumphal cortége that rolled and caracoled up the street amid the cheers of expectant fellow-voters and of impartial urchins, glad of any chance to hurrah for anybody. The most important figure to me in the scene was my father, as with feigned composure he walked slowly to the head of the front steps, and lifted his hat in courteous acknowledgment of the hands and hats waved to him from carriage and saddle-bow. If I thought of Alexander, Napoleon, and Washington, I am not ashamed to recollect it now.

That child has been defrauded who has not had a hero in his own home.

I was at no loss to know who mine was, on this bland spring morning, as my father and I leaned on a fence on the hither side of the creek and watched the proceedings of the cooks and managers about the *al fresco* kitchen.

“Too many cooks spoil the dinner!” quoth I, as negroes bustled from fire to fire, and white men [124] yelled their orders and counter-orders. “Not that it matters much what kind of victuals are served at a Democratic barbecue, so long as there is plenty to drink.”

“Easy, easy, daughter!” smiled my auditor. “There are good men and true in the other party.

We are in danger of forgetting that."

"None as good and great as Mr. Clay, father?"

He raised his hat slightly and involuntarily. "I do not think he has his equal as man and pure patriot in this, or any other country. God defend the right!"

"You are not afraid lest *Polk*"—drawling the monosyllable in derision—"will beat him, father?"

The smile was a laugh—happily confident.

"Hardly! I have more faith in human nature and in the common-sense of the American people than to think that they will pass over glorious Harry of the West, and forget his distinguished services to the nation, to set in the presidential chair an obscure demagogue who has done nothing. Wouldn't you like to go down there and see half an ox roasted, and a whole sheep?"

We crossed the stream upon a shaking plank laid from bank to bank, and strolled down the slope to the scene of operations. An immense kettle was swung over a fire of logs that were so many living coals. The smell of Brunswick stew had been wafted to us while we leaned on the fence. A young man, who had the reputation of being an epicure, to the best of his knowledge and ability, superintended the manufacture of the famous delicacy.

"Two dozen chickens went into it!" he assured us. "They wanted to make me think it couldn't be made without green corn and fresh tomatoes. I knew a trick worth two of that. I have worked it before with dried tomatoes and dried sweet corn soaked overnight."

He smacked his lips and winked fatuously. [125]

"I've great confidence in your culinary skill," was the good-natured rejoinder.

I recollected that I had heard my father say of this very youth:

"I am never hard upon a fellow who is a fool because he can't help it!" But I wondered at his gentleness when the epicure prattled on:

"Yes, sir! a stew like this is fit for Democrats to eat. I wouldn't give a Whig so much as a smell of the pot!"

"You ought to have a tighter lid, then," with the same good-humored intonation, and we passed on to see the roasts. Shallow pits, six or seven feet long and four feet wide, were half filled with clear coals of hard hickory billets. Iron bars were laid across these, gridiron-like, and half-bullocks and whole sheep were cooking over the scarlet embers. There were six pits, each with its roast. The spot for the speakers' rostrum and the seats of the audience was well-selected. A deep spring welled up in a grove of maples. The fallen red blossoms carpeted the ground, and the young leaves supplied grateful shade. The meadows sloped gradually toward the spring; rude benches of what we called "puncheon logs"—that is, the trunks of trees hewed in half, and the flat sides laid uppermost—were ranged in the form of an amphitheatre.

"You have a fine day for the meeting," observed my father to the master of ceremonies, a planter from the Genito neighborhood, who greeted the visitors cordially.

"Yes, sir! The Lord is on our side, and no mistake!" returned the other, emphatically. "Don't you see that yourself, Mr. Hawes!"

"I should not venture to base my faith upon the weather," his eyes twinkling while he affected gravity, "for we read that He sends His rain and sunshine upon the evil and the good. Good-morning! I hope the affair will be as pleasant as the day." [126]

Our father took his family into confidence more freely than any other man I ever knew. We were taught not to prattle to outsiders of what was said and done at home. At ten years of age I was used to hearing affairs of personal and business moment canvassed by my parents and my father's partner, who had been an inmate of our house from his eighteenth year—intensely interested to the utmost of my comprehension and drawing my own conclusions privately, yet understanding all the while that whatever I heard and thought was not to be spoken of to schoolmate or visitor.

It was not unusual for my father to confide to me in our early morning rides—for he was my riding-master—some scheme he was considering pertaining to church, school, or purchase, talking of it as to an equal in age and intelligence. I hearkened eagerly, and was flattered and honored by the distinction thus conferred. He never charged me not to divulge what was committed to me. Once or twice he had added, "I know I am safe in telling you this." After which the thumb-screw could not have extracted a syllable of the communication from me.

It was during one of these morning rides that he unfolded a plan suggested, as he told me, by our visit to the Democratic barbecue-ground some weeks before.

We had to rise betimes to secure a ride of tolerable length before the warmth of the spring and summer days made the exercise fatiguing and unpleasant. A glass of milk and a biscuit were brought to me while I was dressing in the gray dawn, and I would join my escort at the front gate, where stood the hostler with both horses, while the east was yet but faintly colored by the unseen sun.

We were pacing quietly along a plantation road five miles from the Court House, and I was dreamily enjoying the fresh taste of the dew-laden air upon my lips, and inhaling the scent of the [127] wild thyme and sheep-mint, bruised by the horses' hoofs, when my companion, who, I had seen, had been in a brown study for the last mile, began with:

"I have been thinking—" The sure prelude to something worth hearing, or so I believed then.

A Whig rally was meditated. He had consulted with three of his friends as to the scheme born of his brain, and there would be a meeting of perhaps a dozen leading men of the party in his counting-room that afternoon. The affair was not to be spoken of until date and details were settled. My heart swelled with pride in him, and in myself as his chosen confidante, as he went on. The recollection of the scenes succeeding the barbecue was fresh in our minds, and the memory sharpened the contrast between the methods of the rival parties.

I was brimful of excitement when I got home, and the various novelties of the impending event in the history of county politics and village life were the staple of neighborhood talk for the weeks dividing that morning ride from the mid-May day of the "rally."

That was what they called it, for it was not to be a barbecue, although a collation would be served in the grounds surrounding the Grove Hotel, situated in the centre of the hamlet, and separated from the public square by one street. The meeting and the speaking would be in the grove at the rear of the Court House. Seats were to be arranged among the trees. It was at my father's instance and his expense that the benches would be covered with white cotton cloth —"muslin," in Northern parlance. This was in special compliment to the "ladies who, it was hoped, would compose a great part of the audience."

This was the chiefest innovation of all that set tongues to wagging in three counties. The wives and mothers and daughters of voters were cordially invited by placards strewed broadcast [128] through the length and breadth of Powhatan. The like had never been heard of within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. It was universally felt that the step practically guaranteed the county for Clay and Frelinghuysen.

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# XIII

## A WHIG RALLY AND MUSTER DAY

THE day dawned heavenly fair, and waxed gloriously bright by the time the preparations for the reception of the guests were completed. The dust had been laid by an all-day rain forty-eight hours before. Every blade of grass and the leaves, which rustled joyously overhead, shone as if newly varnished. At ten o'clock all the sitting-space was occupied, three-fourths of the assembly being of the fairer sex. Half an hour later there was not standing-room within the sound of the orators' voices. A better-dressed, better-mannered crowd never graced a political "occasion." All were in summer gala attire, and all were seated without confusion. My father, as chairman of the committee of arrangements, had provided for every stage of the proceeding. It was by a motion, made by him and carried by acclamation, that Captain Miller, "a citizen of credit and renown," was called to preside.

As if it had happened last week, I can, in fancy, see each feature of this, the most stupendous function that had ever entered my young life. I suppose there may have been five hundred people present. I would have said, unhesitatingly, "five thousand," if asked to make the computation. I wore, for the first time, a sheer lawn frock—the longest I had ever had, but, as my mother explained to the village dressmaker—Miss Judy Cardozo—"Virginia is growing so fast, we would better have it rather long to begin with." I secretly rejoiced in the sweep of the full skirt down to [130] my heels, as giving me a young-ladylike appearance. "Thad" Ivey, always kind to me, and not less jolly because he was soon to be a married man, meeting me on the way up the street, declared that I had "really a ball-room air." My hair was "done" in two braids and tied with white ribbon figured with pale-purple and green flowers. Sprigs of the same color decorated the white ground of my lawn. I carried a white fan, and I sat, with great delight, between my mother and Cousin Mary.

"'And bright
The *sun* shone o'er fair women and brave men,'"

murmured a gallant Whig to the row of women behind us.

"Isn't that strange!" whispered I to Cousin Mary; "those lines have been running in my mind ever since we came."

Not strange, as I now know. Everybody read and quoted "Childe Harold" at that period, and I may add, took liberties with the text of favorite poems to suit them to the occasion.

When the round of applause that greeted the appearance of Captain Miller upon the platform subsided, everything grew suddenly so still that I heard the leaves rustling over our heads. His was not an imposing presence, but he had a stainless reputation as a legislator and a Whig, and

was highly respected as a man. He began in exactly these words:

"Ladies and gentlemen—fellow-citizens, all!—it behooves us, always and everywhere, before entering upon the prosecution of any important enterprise, to invoke the presence and blessing of Almighty God. We will, therefore, be now led in prayer by the Reverend Mr. Carus."

My uncle-in-law "offered" a tedious petition, too long-winded to please the average politician perhaps, but it was generally felt that a younger man and newer resident could not have been [131] called upon without incivility verging upon disrespect to a venerable citizen. The invocation over, the presiding officer announced that "the Whigs, in obedience to the spirit of fair play to all, and injustice to none, that had ever characterized the party, would to-day grant to their honored opponents, the Democrats, the opportunity of replying publicly to the arguments advanced in the addresses of those representing the principles in the interest of which the present assembly had been convened. The first speaker of the day would be the Hon. Holden Rhodes, of Richmond. The second would be one almost as well known to the citizens of county and state—the Hon. John Winston Jones, of Chesterfield. The Whigs reserved to themselves the last and closing address of the day by the Hon. Watkins Leigh, of Richmond."

Nothing could be fairer and more courteous, it seemed to me. In the hum of approval that rippled through the assembly it was apparent that others held the like sentiment. Likewise, that the "Honorable Chairman" had scored another point for the magnanimous Whigs. But then—as I whispered to my indulgent neighbor on the left—they could afford to surrender an advantage or two to the party they were going to whip out of existence.

Holden Rhodes was an eminent lawyer, and his speech was a trifle too professional in sustained and unoratorical argument for my taste and mental reach. I recall it chiefly because of a comical interruption that enlivened the hour-long exposition of party creeds.

I have drawn in my book, *Judith*, a full-length portrait of one of the men of marked individuality who made Powhatan celebrated in the history of a state remarkable in every period for strongly defined public characters. In *Judith* I named this man "Captain Macon." In real life he was Capt. John Cocke, a scion of a good old family, a planter of abundant means, and the father of sons who [132] were already beginning to take the place in the public eye he had held for fifty years. He was tall and gaunt, his once lofty head slightly bowed by years and—it was hinted—by high living. He had been handsome, and his glance was still piercing, his bearing distinguished. I ever cherished, as I might value a rare antique, the incident of his introduction to that stalwart dame, my New England grandmother, who had now been a member of our family for three years.

We were on our way home after service at Fine Creek, and the carriage had stopped at a wayside spring to water the horses. Captain Cocke stood by the spring, his bridle rein thrown over his arm while his horse stooped to the "branch" flowing across the highway. Expecting to see my mother in the carriage, he took off his hat and approached the window.

"This is my mother, Captain," said my father, raising his voice slightly, as he then named the new-comer to her deaf ears.

The old cavalier bowed low, his hand upon his heart: "Madam, I am the friend of your son. I can say nothing more to a mother!"

The fine courtesy, the graceful deference to age, the instant adaptation of manner and words to the circumstances, have set the episode aside in my heart as a gem of its kind.

He wore on that Sunday, and he wore on every other day the year around, a scarlet hunting-coat. I wonder if there were more eccentrics in Virginia in that generation than are to be met with there—or anywhere else—nowadays? Certain it is that nobody thought of inquiring why Captain Cocke, whose ancestors had served under Washington and Lafayette in the war for freedom, chose to sport the British livery. We had ceased to remark upon it by the time I write of. When strangers expressed wonderment at the queer garb, we had a resentful impression of [133] officiousness.

Mr. Rhodes, with the rest of his party, was thoroughly dissatisfied with the policy (or want of policy) of John Tyler, who had been called to the presidential chair by the untimely death of Gen. W. H. Harrison. In the progress of his review of national affairs, he came to this name when he had spoken half an hour or so.

Whereupon uprose the majestic figure clad in scarlet, from his seat a few feet away from the platform. The Captain straightened his bent shoulders and lifted lean arms and quivering fingers toward heaven. The red tan of his weather-beaten cheeks was a dusky crimson.

"The Lord have mercy upon the nation!" he cried, his voice solemn with wrath, and sonorous with the potency of the mint-juleps for which "The Bell" was noted. "Fellow-citizens! I always cry to High Heaven for mercy upon this country when John Tyler's name is mentioned! Amen and amen!"

He had a hearty round of applause mingled with echoes of his "amens" and much good-humored laughter. They all knew and loved the Captain. I felt the blood rush to my face, and I saw others glance around reprovingly when a city girl who sat behind me, and carried on a whispered flirtation with a fopling at her side during Mr. Rhodes's speech, drawled:

"What voice from the tombs is that?"

Mrs. James Saunders, née Mary Cocke, was my mother's right-hand neighbor. With perfect temper and an agreeable smile, she looked over her shoulder into the babyish face of the cockney guest—

"That is my Uncle John," she uttered, courteously.

Whereat all within hearing smiled, and the young woman had the grace to blush.

[134] Mr. Rhodes was speaking again, and the audience was respectfully attentive. The orator made clever use of the Captain's interruption. The manner of it offended nobody. John Tyler was, perhaps, the most unpopular man in the Union at that particular time. The Democrats had no use for him, and he had disappointed his own party. When the smoke and dust of political skirmishing cleared away, Virginians did something like justice to his motives and his talents. Twenty years thereafter, my early pre-possessions, engendered by the vituperative eloquence of the Clay campaign, were corrected by a quiet remark made by my father to a man who spoke slightingly of the ex-President:

"The man who chose the cabinet that served during Tyler's administration was neither fool nor traitor."

John Winston Jones demolished the fair fabric Mr. Rhodes had spent so much time and labor in constructing that I began to yawn before the lively Democrat woke me up. I recollect that he was pungent and funny, and that I was interested, despite his sacrilegious treatment of what I regarded as sacred themes.

It was a telling point when he drew deliberately a wicked-looking jack-knife from his breeches pocket, opened it as deliberately, and, turning toward Mr. Rhodes, who sat at his left, said:

"If I were to plunge this into the bosom of my friend and respected opponent (and I beg to assure him that I shall not hurt a hair of his head, now or ever!), would I be regarded as his benefactor? Yet that is what General Jackson did to the system of bank monopolies," etc.

I did not follow him further. For a startled second I had really thought we were to have a "scene." I had heard that Democrats were bloodthirsty by nature, and that sanguinary outbreaks attended political demonstrations and cataracts of bad whiskey.

[135] It goes without saying that the Hon. Watkins Leigh—a distinguished member of the Richmond bar, famous for legal acumen and forensic oratory—made quick and thorough work in the destruction of Mr. Jones's building, and sent the Whigs home with what I heard my mother describe as "a good taste in their mouths."

The orations were interspersed with "patriotic songs." A quartette of young men, picked out by the committee of arrangements, for their fine voices and stanch Whiggery, stood on the platform and sang the body of the ballads. The choruses were shouted, with more force and good-will than tunefulness, by masculine voters of all ages and qualities of tone.

Doctor Henning, an able physician, and as eccentric in his way as Captain Cocke in his, stood near my father, his back against a tree, his mouth wide, and all the volume of sound he could pump from his lungs pouring skyward in the refrain of

"Get out of the way, you're all unlucky;
Clear the track for Old Kentucky!"—

when his eye fell upon a young man, who, having no more ear or voice than the worthy Galen himself, contented himself with listening. As the quartette began the next verse, the Doctor collared "Abe" Cardozo (whom, by the way, he had assisted to bring into the world), and actually shook him in the energy of his patriotism—

"Abraham James! why don't you sing?"

"Me, Doctor?" stammered the young fellow, who probably had not heard his middle name in ten years before—"I never sang a note in my life!"

"Then begin now!" commanded the Doctor, setting the example as the chorus began anew.

[136] How my father laughed! backing out of sight of the pair, and doubling himself up in the enjoyment of the scene, real bright tears rolling down his cheeks. I heard him rehearse the incident twenty times in after-years, and always with keen delight. For the Doctor was a scholar and a dreamer, as well as a skilful practitioner, renowned for his horticultural and ornithological successes, and so taciturn and absent-minded that he seldom took part in general conversation. That he should have been drawn out of his shell to the extent of roaring out ungrammatical doggerel in a public assembly of his fellow-citizens, was a powerful proof of the tremendous force of party enthusiasm. The incongruity of the whole affair appealed to my father's ever-active sense of humor. He would wind up the story by asserting that "it would have made Jeremiah chuckle if he had known both of the actors in the by-play."

One specimen of the ballads that flooded the land in the fateful 1844 will give some idea of the tenor of all:

*Tune:* "Ole Dan Tucker"

"The moon was shining silver bright, the stars with glory crowned the night,
High on a limb that 'same old Coon' was singing to himself this tune:

*Chorus*

"Get out of the way, you're all unlucky; clear the track for Ole Kentucky!

"Now in a sad predicament the Lokies are for President;
They have six horses in the pasture, and don't know which can run the faster.

"The Wagon-Horse from Pennsylvany, the Dutchmen think he's the best of any;
But he must drag in heavy stages his Federal notions and low wages.

"They proudly bring upon the course an old and broken-down war-horse;
They shout and sing: 'Oh! rumpsey dumsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumsey!' [137]

"And here is Cass, though not a dunce, will run both sides of the track at once;
To win the race will all things copy, be sometimes pig and sometimes puppy.

"The fiery Southern horse, Calhoun, who hates a Fox and fears a Coon,
To toe the scratch will not be able, for Matty keeps him in the stable.

"And here is Matty, never idle, a tricky horse that slips his bridle;
In forty-four we'll show him soon the little Fox can't fool the Coon.

"The balky horse they call John Tyler, we'll head him soon or burst his boiler;
His cursed 'grippe' has seized us all, which Doctor Clay will cure next fall.

"The people's fav'rite, Henry Clay, is now the 'fashion' of the day;
And let the track be dry or mucky, we'll stake our pile on Ole Kentucky.

"Get out of the way, he's swift and lucky; clear the track for Ole Kentucky!"

(The chorus of each preceding verse is, "Get out of the way, you're all unlucky," etc. The "Fox" is Martin Van Buren, or "Matty." The "Coon" is Clay. The "Wagon-Horse from Pennsylvany" is James Buchanan.)

Another ballad, sung that day under the trees at the back of the Court House, began after this wise:

"What has caused this great commotion
Our ranks betray?
It is the ball a-rolling on
To clear the way
For Harry Clay. [138]
And with him we'll beat your Polk! Polk! Polk!
And his motley crew of folk.
O! with him we'll beat your Polk."

To my excited imagination it was simple fact, not a flight of fancy, that Powhatan should be alluded to that day as "your historic county—a mere wave in the vast Union—

"That ever shall be
Divided as billows, yet one as the sea."

"A wave, fellow-citizens, that has caught the irresistible impulse of wind and tide bearing us on to the most glorious victory America has ever seen."

Ah's me! That was how both parties talked and felt with regard to the Union seventeen years before the very name became odious to those who had been ready to die in defence of it.

I cannot dismiss the subject of public functions in the "historic county" without devoting a few pages to the annual Muster Day. It was preceded by five days of "officers' training." The manœuvres of the latter body were carried on in the public square, and, as one end of our house overlooked this, no lessons were studied or recited between the hours of 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. on those days. The sophisticated twentieth-century youngling will smile contemptuously at hearing that, up to this time, I had never heard a brass-band. But I knew all about martial music. Already there was laid away in the fat portfolio nobody except myself ever opened, a story in ten parts, in which the hero's voice was compared to "the thrilling strains of martial music."

I boiled the tale down four years thereafter, and it was printed. It had a career. But "that is another story."

I used to sit with my "white work," or a bit of knitting, in hand, at that end window, looking [139] across the side-street down upon the square, watching the backing and filling, the prancing and

the halting of the eight “officers” drilled in military tactics by Colonel Hopkins, the strains of the drum and fife in my ears, and dream out war-stories by the dozen.

The thumping and the squealing of drum and fife set my pulses to dancing as the finest orchestra has never made them leap since that day when fancy was more real and earnest than what the bodily senses took in.

By Saturday the officers had learned their lesson well enough to take their respective stands before (and aft, as we shall see) the larger body of free and independent American citizens who were not “muster free,” hence who must study the noble art of war.

They came from every quarter of the county. The Fine Creek and Genito neighborhoods gave up their quota, and Deep Creek, Red Lane, and Yellow Jacket country kept not back. It was a motley and most democratic line that stretched from the main street to that flanking the public square. Butternut and broadcloth rubbed elbows; planter and overseer were shoulder to shoulder. “Free, white, and twenty-one” had the additional qualification of “under forty-five.” Past that, the citizen of these free and enlightened United States lays down the burden of peaceable military muster.

Besides those worn by the officers, there was not a uniform on duty that Saturday. Here and there one might descry the glitter of a gun-barrel. Walking-canes and, with the Yellow Jacket contingent, corn-stalks, simulated muskets in the exercises dictated by Colonel Hopkins, who was to-day at his best. I employ the word “dictated” with intention. He had to tell the recruits (surely the rawest ever drawn up in line) exactly what each order meant. To prevent the swaying array from leaning back against the fence, three officers were detailed to skirmish behind the long row [140]
and shove delinquents into place. The Colonel instructed them how to hold their “arms,” patiently; in the simplest colloquial phrase, informed them what each was to do when ordered to “shoulder arms,” “right dress,” “mark time,” and the rest of the technicalities confusing to ears unlearned, and which, heard by the veteran but once in a twelve-month, could not be familiar even after ten or fifteen years of “service.”

Both the windows commanding the parade-ground were filled on Muster Day. My mother and our grown-up cousins enjoyed the humors of the situation almost as much as we girls, who let nothing escape our eager eyes. Especially do I recall the shout of laughter we drew away from our outlook to stifle, when the suave commanding officer, mindful of the dull comprehension and crass ignorance of a large proportion of his corps, directed them in a clear voice—whose courteous intonations never varied under provocations that would have thrown some men into paroxysms of mirth, and moved many to profanity—to “look straight forward, hold the chin level, and let the hands hang down, keeping thumbs upon the seam of the pantaloons.” More technical terms would have been thrown away. Twenty warriors (prospective) brought both hands forward and laid their thumbs, side by side, upon the central seams of their pantaloons! Merriment, that threatened to be like the “inextinguishable laughter” of Olympian deities, followed the grave anxieties of the officials in rear and front of the mixed multitude to hinder those at the extreme ends of the line from bending forward to watch the manœuvres of comrades who occupied the centre of the field. In spite of hurryings to and fro and up and down the ranks, it chanced, half a dozen times an hour, that what should have been a straight line became a curve. Then the gallant, indomitable Colonel would walk majestically from end to end, and with the flat of his [141]
naked sword repair the damage done to discipline—

“Just like a boy rattling a stick along the palings!” gasped Cousin Mary, choking with mirth.

The simile was apt.

Some staid citizens, tenacious of dignity and susceptible to ridicule, seldom appeared upon the parade-ground, preferring to pay the fine exacted for the omission. Others—and not a few—contended that some familiarity with military manœuvres was essential to the mental outfit of every man who would be willing to serve his country in the field if necessary. This sentiment moved sundry of the younger men to the formation, that same year (if I mistake not), of the “Powhatan Troop.”

One incident connected with the birth of an organization that still exists, in name, fixed it in my mind. Cousin Joe—the hero of my childish days—was mainly instrumental in getting up the company, and brought the written form of constitution and by-laws to my father’s house, where he dined on the Court Day which marked the first parade. Our kinsman, Moses Drury Hoge, came with him. He prided himself, among a great many other things, upon being phenomenally far-sighted. To test this he asked Cousin Joe to hold the paper against the wall on the opposite side of the room, and read it aloud slowly and correctly from his seat, twenty feet away.

The scene came back to me as it was photographed on my mind that day, when I read, ten years ago, in a Richmond paper, of the prospective celebration of the formation of the “Powhatan Troop.” I was more than four hundred miles away, and fifty-odd years separated me from the “historic county” and the Court House where the banquet was to be given. I let the paper drop and closed my eyes. I was back in the big, square room on the first floor of the long, low, rambling house on the village street. My favorite cousin, tall and handsome, held the paper above [142]
his head, smiling in indulgent amusement at the young kinsman of whom he was ever fond and proud. My father stood in the doorway, watching the progress of the test. My mother had let her sewing fall to her lap while she looked on. The scent of roses from the garden that was the joy of my mother’s heart, stole in through open doors and windows. The well-modulated tones, that

were to ring musically in church and hall on both sides of the sea, and for more than a half-century to come, read the formal agreement, of which I recalled, in part, the preamble:

"*We, the undersigned, citizens of the County of Powhatan, in the State of Virginia.*"

While the glamour of that moment of ecstatic reminiscence wrought within me, I seized my pen and wrote a telegram of congratulation to the revellers, seated, as I reckoned, at that very hour, about the banqueting-board. I addressed the despatch to Judge Thomas Miller, the grandson of the chairman on the day of the Whig rally. By a remarkable and happy coincidence, for which I had hardly dared to hope, the telegram, sent from a country station in New Jersey, flew straight and fast to the obscure hamlet nearly five hundred miles off, and was handed to Judge Miller at the head of the table while the feast was in full flow. He read it aloud, and the health of the writer was drunk amid such applause as my wildest fancy could not have foreseen in the All-So-Long-Ago when my horizon, all rose-color and gold, was bounded by the confines of "Our County."

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# XIV

[143]

## RUMORS OF CHANGES—A CORN-SHUCKING—NEGRO TOPICAL SONG

My mother's love for Richmond was but second to that she felt for husband and children. It was evident to us in after-years that her longing to return to her early home wrought steadily, if silently, upon my father's mind and shaped his plans.

These plans were definitively made and announced to us by the early autumn of 1844. Uncle Carus had removed to the city with his family late in the summer. My sister and I were to be sent to a new school just established in Richmond, and recommended to our parents by Moses Hoge, who was now assistant pastor in the First Presbyterian Church, and had full charge of a branch of the same, built farther up-town than the Old First founded by Dr. John H. Rice. We girls were to live with the Caruses that winter. In the spring the rest of the family would follow, and, thenceforward, our home would be in Richmond.

A momentous change, and one that was to alter the complexion of all our lives. Yet it was so gradually and quietly effected that we were not conscious of so much as a jar in the machinery of our existence.

I heard my mother say, and more than once, in after-years, crowded with incident and with cares of which we never dreamed in those eventless months:

"I was never quite contented to live anywhere out of Richmond, yet I often asked myself during the seven years we spent in Powhatan if they were not the most care-free I should ever have. I know, now, that they were." [144]

My father gave a fervent assent when he heard this. To him the sojourn was prosperous throughout. Energy, integrity, public spirit, intelligence, and, under the exterior chance acquaintances thought stern, the truest heart that ever throbbed with love to God and love to man, had won for him the esteem and friendship of the best men in the county. Steadily he mounted, by the force of native worth, to the magistrate's bench, and was a recognized factor in local and in state politics. He had established a flourishing Sunday-school in the "Fine Creek neighborhood," where none had ever existed until he made this the nucleus of a church. He was the confidential adviser of the embarrassed planter and the struggling mechanic, and lent a helping hand to both. He was President of a debating society, in which he was, I think, the only man who was not a college graduate.

His business had succeeded far beyond his expectations. Except that the increase of means moved him to larger charities, there was no change in our manner of life. We had always been above the pinch of penury, living as well as our neighbors, and, so far as the younger members of the family knew, as well as any reasonable people need desire to live. We had our carriage and horses, my sister and I a riding-horse apiece, abundance of delicacies for the table, and new clothes of excellent quality whenever we wanted them.

The ambitions and glories of the world beyond our limited sphere came to our ken as matter of entertainment, not as provocatives to discontent.

Two nights before we left home for our city school, the Harvest Home—"corn-shucking"—was held. It was always great fun to us younglings to witness the "show." With no premonition that I should never assist at another similar function, I went into the kitchen late in the afternoon, and, as had been my office ever since I was eight years old, superintended the setting of the supper-table for our servants and their expected guests. I was Mammy Ritta's special pet, and she put in a petition that I would stand by her now, in terms I could not have resisted if I had been as averse to the task as I was glad to perform it: [145]

"Is you goin' to be sech a town young lady that you won't jes' step out and show us how to set de table, honey?" could have but one answer.

A boiled ham had the place of honor at one end of the board, built out with loose planks to stretch from the yawning fireplace, bounding the lower end of the big kitchen, to Mammy's room at the other. My mother had lent tablecloth and crockery to meet the demands of the company. She had, of course, furnished the provisions loading the planks. A shoulder balanced the ham, and side-dishes of sausage, chine, spareribs, fried chicken, huge piles of corn and wheat bread, mince and potato pies, and several varieties of preserves, would fill every spare foot of cloth when the hot things were in place. Floral decorations of feasts would not come into vogue for another decade and more, but I threw the sable corps of workers into ecstasies of delighted wonder by instructing Spotswood, Gilbert, and a stableman to tack branches of pine and cedar along the smoke-browned rafters and stack them in the corners.

"Mos' as nice as bein' in de woods!" ejaculated the laundress, with an audible and long-drawn sniff, parodying, in unconscious anticipation, Young John Chivery's—"I feel as if I was in groves!"

It was nine o'clock before the ostensible business of the evening began. Boards, covered with straw, were the base of the mighty pyramid of corn in the open space between the kitchen-yard and the stables. Straw was strewed about the heap to a distance of twenty or thirty feet, and here [146]
the men of the party assembled, sitting flat on the padded earth. The evening was bland and the moon was at the full. About the doors of kitchen and laundry fluttered the dusky belles who had accompanied the shuckers, and who would sit down to supper with them. Their presence was the inspiration of certain "topical songs," as we would name them—sometimes saucy, oftener flattering. As dear Doctor Primrose hath it, "There was not much wit, but there was a great deal of laughter, and that did nearly as well."

This was what Mea and I whispered to each other in our outlook at the window of our room that gave directly upon the lively scene. We had sat in the same place for seven successive corn-shuckings, as we reminded ourselves, sighing reminiscently.

The top of the heap of corn was taken by the biggest man present and the best singer. From his eminence he tossed down the hooded ears to the waiting hands that caught them as they hurtled through the air, and stripped them in a twinkling. As he tossed, he sang, the others catching up the chorus with a will. Hands and voices kept perfect time.

One famous corn-shuckers' song was encored vociferously. It ran, in part, thus:

"My cow Maria
She fell in de fire.

*Chorus*

"Go de corn! Go de corn!

"I tell my man Dick
To pull 'er out quick.
(Go de corn!) [147]

"And Dick he said,
'Dis cow done dade!'
(Go de corn!)"

(Being of an economic turn of mind, the owner of deceased Maria proceeded to make disposition of her several members:)

"I made her hide over
For a wagon-cover.
(Go de corn!)

"I cut her hoof up
For a drinkin' cup.
(Go de corn!)

"Her tail I strip'
Fur a wagon-whip.
(Go de corn!)

"Her ribs hol' op
Dat wagon top.
(Go de corn!)"

And so on until, as Mea murmured, under cover of the uproarious "Go de corn!" repeated over and over and over, with growing might of lung—"Maria was worth twice as much dead as alive."

We had had our first nap when the chatter of the supper-party, saying their farewells to hosts and companions, awoke us. We tumbled out of bed and flew to the window. The moon was as bright as day, the dark figures bustling between us and the heaps of shucks and the mounds of corn, gleaming like gold in the moonlight, reminded us of nimble ants scampering about their

hills. The supper had evidently been eminently satisfactory. We could smell hot coffee and sausage still. Fine phrases, impossible to any but a negro's brain and tongue, flew fast and gayly. [148] The girls giggled and gurgled in palpable imitation of damsels of fairer skins and higher degree.

Hampton—the spruce carriage-driver (as coachmen were named then) of Mr. Spencer D., Effie's father—bowed himself almost double right under our window in worshipful obeisance to a bright mulatto in a blazing red frock.

"Is all de ladies ockerpied wid gentlemen?" he called, perfunctorily, over his shoulder. And, ingratiatingly direct to the coy belle who pretended not to see his approach, "Miss Archer! is you ockerpied?"

Miss Archer tittered and writhed coquettishly.

"Well, Mr. D.! I can't jes' say that I is!"

"Then, jes' hook on hyar, won't you?" crooking a persuasive elbow.

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## XV [149]

## THE COUNTRY GIRLS AT A CITY SCHOOL—VELVET HATS AND CLAY'S DEFEAT

Our father took us to Richmond the first of October. A stage ran between Cumberland Court House and the city, going down one day and coming up the next, taking in Powhatan wayside stations and one or more in Chesterfield.

We rarely used the public conveyance. This important journey was made in our own carriage. A rack at the back contained two trunks. Other luggage had gone down by the stage. We had dinner at a half-way house of entertainment, leaving home at 9 o'clock A.M., and coming in sight of the town at five in the afternoon.

That night I was lulled to sleep for the first time by what was to be forevermore associated in my thoughts with the fair City of Seven Hills—the song of the river-rapids. It is a song—never a moan. Men have come and men may go; the pleasant places endeared by history, tradition, and memory may be, and have been, laid waste; the holy and beautiful houses in which our fathers worshipped have been burned with fire, the bridges spanning the rolling river have been broken down, and others have arisen in their place; but one thing has remained as unchanged as the heavens reflected in the broad breast of the stream—that is the sweet and solemn anthem, dear to the heart of one who has lived long within the sound of it, as the song of the surf to the homesick exile who asked in the Vale of Tempë, "Where is the sea!"

We were duly entered in the school conducted by Mrs. Nottingham and her four daughters in [150] an irregularly built frame-house—painted "colonial yellow"—which stood at the corner of Fifth and Franklin Streets. It was pulled down long ago to make room for a stately brick residence, built and occupied by my brother Horace.

The school was Presbyterian, through and through. Mr. Hoge had a Bible-class there every Monday morning; the Nottingham family, including boarders, attended Sunday and week-day services in the chapel, a block farther down Fifth Street. The eloquent curate of the Old First was rising fast into prominence in city and church. His chapel was crowded to the doors on Sunday afternoons when there was no service in the mother-church, and filled in the forenoon with the colony which, it was settled, should form itself into a corporate and independent body within a few months.

It spoke well for the drill we had had from our late tutor, and said something for the obedient spirit in which we had followed the line of study indicated by him, that Mea and I were, after the preliminary examination, classed with girls older than ourselves, and who had been regular attendants upon boarding and day schools of note. If we were surprised at this, having anticipated a different result from the comparison of a desultory home-education in the country, with the "finish" of city methods, we were the more amazed at the manners of our present associates. They were, without exception, the offspring of refined and well-to-do parents. The daughters of distinguished clergymen, of eminent jurists, of governors and congressmen, of wealthy merchants and rich James River planters, were our classmates in school sessions and our companions when lessons were over. It was our initial experience in the arrogant democracy of the "Institution."

Be it day-school, boarding-school, or college, the story of this experience is the same the world [151] over. The frank brutality of question and comment; the violent and reasonless partisanships; the irrational intimacies, and the short lives of these; the combinations against lawful authority; the deceptions and evasions to screen offenders from the consequences of indolence or disobedience —were but a few of the revelations made to the two country girls in the trial-months of that winter.

I had my first shock in the course of an examination upon ancient history conducted by the second and gentlest of the Nottingham sisters—Miss Sarah. I was unaffectedly diffident in the

presence of girls who were so much more fashionably attired than we in our brown merino frocks made by “Miss Judy,” and trimmed with velvet of a darker shade, that I felt more ill at ease than my innate pride would let me show. But I kept my eyes upon the kind face of the catechist, and answered in my turn distinctly, if low, trying with all my might to think of nothing but the subject in hand. I observed that Mea did the same. I was always sure of her scholarship, and I tingled with pride at her composure and the refined intonations that rendered replies invariably correct. Honestly, I had thought far more of her than of myself, when, after a question from Miss Sarah revealed the fact that I had read *Plutarch’s Lives*, a tall girl next to me dug her elbow into my ribs:

“Law, child! you think yourself so smart!”

She was the daughter of one of the eminent professional men I have alluded to, and three years my senior. I knew her father by reputation, and had been immensely impressed with a sense of the honor of being seated beside her in the class.

“Miss Blank!” said Miss Sarah, as stern as she could ever be. “I am surprised!”

The girl giggled. So did a dozen others. My cheeks flamed hotly, and my temper followed suit. I [152]
made up my mind, then and there, never to like that “creature.” I have seen the like misbehavior in college girls who took the highest honors.

Prof. Brander Matthews, of Columbia University, once said to a class in English literature, of which my son was a member:

“I could go through all of my classes and pick out, with unerring certainty, the young men who belong to what may be called ‘reading families.’ Nothing in the college curriculum ever takes the place in education of a refined early environment and intellectual atmosphere.”

I am inclined to adapt the wise utterance to the cultivation of what we class, awkwardly, under the head of “manners.” The child, who is taught, by precept and hourly example in home-life, that politeness is a religious duty, and sharp speech vulgar, and who is trained to practise with the members of his family the “small, sweet courtesies of life” that make the society man and woman elegant and popular, will suffer many things at the tongues of school and college mates, yet will not his “manners” depart from him—when he is older!

As home-bred girls, we had to undergo a system of moral and mental acclimation during that session. I do not regret the ordeal. Quiet, confidential talks with Cousin Mary, whose tact was as fine as her breeding, helped me to sustain philosophically what would have made me miserable but for her tender and judicious ministrations.

“It is always right to do the right thing,” was a maxim she wrought into my consciousness by many repetitions. “The danger of association with rude and coarse people is that we may fall into their ways to protect ourselves. It may be good for you to rough it for a while, so long as it does not rough*en* you.”

Little by little we got used to the “roughing.” School-work we thoroughly enjoyed, and our [153]
teachers appreciated this. From each of them we met with kind and helpful treatment as soon as the routine of study was fully established.

Our French master supplied the crucial test of philosophy and diligence. He was a “character” in his way, and he fostered the reputation. In all my days I have never known a man who could, at pleasure, be such a savage and so fine a gentleman. He was six-feet-something in height, superbly proportioned and heavily mustachioed. Few men curtained the upper lip then. He had received a university education in France; had been a rich man in New York, marrying there the daughter of Samuel Ogden, a well-known citizen, the father of Anna Cora Mowatt, the actress, who afterward became Mrs. Ritchie.

Isidore Guillet lost wife and fortune in the same year, and, after a vain effort to recoup his finances at the North, removed to Richmond with his three sons, and became a fashionable French teacher. He was fierce in class, and suave outside of the recitation-room. Our late and now-more-than-ever-lamented tutor had laid a fair foundation for us in the French language. We were “up” in the verbs to an extent that excited the rude applause of our classmates. We read French as fluently as English, and were tolerably conversant with such French classics as were current in young ladies’ seminaries. These things were less than vanity when M. Guillet and Manesca took the field. We were required to copy daily seven or eight foolscap pages-full of that detestable “System.” Beginning with “*Avez vous le clou?*” and running the gamut of “*le bon clou*,” “*le mauvais clou*,” and “*le bon clou de votre père*,” “*le mauvais clou de votre grandmère*,” up to the maddening discords of “*l’interrogatif et le negatif*”—we were rushed breathlessly along the lines ordained by the merciless “System” and more merciless master, until it was a marvel that [154]
nerves and health were not wrecked. I said just now that the lion roared him soft in general society. Throughout a series of Spanish lessons given to us two girls through the medium of French, he was the mildest-mannered monster I ever beheld. One day he went out of his way to account for the unlikeness to the language-master of the class. The explanation was a refined version of Mr. Bagnet’s code—“Discipline must be maintained.” To the pair of girls who read and recited to him in their private sitting-room, he was the finished gentleman in demeanor, and in talk delightfully instructive. His family in Paris had known the present generation of Lafayettes. Lamartine—at that epoch of French Revolutionary history, the popular idol—was his personal friend. He brought and read to us letters from the author-statesman, thrilling with interest, and

kept us advised, through his family correspondence, of the stirring changes going on in his native land. All this was in the uncovenanted conversational exercise that succeeded the Spanish lesson. The latter over, he would toss aside the books used in it with an airy "*Eh, bien donc! pour la conversation!*" and plunge into the matter uppermost in his mind, chatting brilliantly and gayly in the most elegant French imaginable, bringing into our commonplace, provincial lives the flavor and sparkle of the Parisian salon.

To return to our first winter in a city school: The session began on October 5th. We had ceased to be homesick, and were learning to sustain, with seeming good-humor, criticisms of our "countrified ways and old-fashioned talk," when our mother came to town for her fall shopping. She arrived on the first of November, my father tarrying behind to vote on the fourth. We had a glorious Saturday. It was our very first real shopping expedition, and it has had no equal in our subsequent experiences. There was a lecture on Saturday morning. Mr. Richard Sterling, the [155]
brother-in-law of our late tutor, and the head-master of a classical school for boys, lectured to us weekly upon Natural Philosophy. We were out by eleven o'clock, and on emerging from the house, we found our mother awaiting us without.

The day was divine, and we had worn our best walking-dresses, in anticipation of the shopping frolic. Three of the girls had commented upon our smart attire, one remarking that we "really looked like folks." The vocabulary of school-girls usually harmonizes with their deportment. The tall girl I have spoken of as "Miss Blank," added to her patronizing notice of the country girls, the encouraging assurance that "if we only had bonnets less than a century old, we would be quite presentable."

We held our peace, hugging to our souls the knowledge that we were that day to try on two velvet bonnets—*real* velvet—the like of which had never graced our heads before. We could afford to smile superior to contempt and to patronage—the lowest device of the mean mind, the favorite tool of the consciously underbred.

I forgot heat and bitterness, and misanthropy died a natural death in the milliner's shop. The new hat was a dream of beauty and becomingness in my unlearned eyes. It was a soft plum-color, and had a tiny marabou feather on the side. I had never worn a feather. Mea's was dark-blue and of uncut velvet. It, too, was adorned with a white feather. I could have touched the tender blue heavens with one finger when it was decided that we might wear the new bonnets home, and have the old ones sent up instead.

"You know I never like to have new clothes worn for the first time to church," our mother remarked, aside, to us.

We walked up-town, meeting my father at the foot of Capitol Street. He was in a prodigious hurry, forging along at a rate that made it difficult for me to overtake him when my mother told [156]
me to "run after him, and we would all go home together."

He drew out his watch when I told my errand breathlessly. His eyes were bright with excitement; as he hurried back to offer his arm to his wife, he said:

"I must be on Broad Street when the Northern train comes in. We have just time if you don't mind walking briskly."

Mind it! I could have run every step of the way if that would bring the news to us more quickly. My heart smote me remorsefully. For in the engrossing event of the new bonnet I had forgotten, for the time, that decisive news of the election would certainly be received by the mail-train which ran into Richmond at two o'clock. It must be remembered that the period of which I write antedated the electric telegraph. We had but one through mail daily. Election news had been pouring in heavily, but slowly. We were not quite sure, even yet, how our own State had gone. The returns from New York and Pennsylvania would establish the fact of the great Whig victory beyond a doubt. We said "the Clay victory," and were confident that it was an accomplished, established fact. True, my father and Uncle Carus had spoken rather gravely than apprehensively last night of the unprecedentedly large Irish vote that had been polled.

We were at the corner of Broad and Tenth Streets, and still at racing speed, when the train drew slowly into the station. The track lay in the centre of Broad Street, and the terminus was flush with the sidewalk. I was on one side of my father; my mother had his other arm. Mea, never a rapid walker, was some paces in the rear. I felt my father's step falter and slacken suddenly. Looking into his face, I saw it darken and harden. The mobile mouth was a straight, tense line. I thought that a groan escaped him. Before I could exclaim, a man strode toward us from the train. [157]
He grasped my father's arm and said something in his ear. I caught five words of one sentence:

"The Irish vote did it!"

At the same instant the ludicrous touch, never lacking from the supreme moments of life, was supplied to this by a boy walking down the street, his young face disfigured by the wrathful disappointment stamped upon the visages of most of the men thronging the sidewalk. Some ardent Democrat had nailed a vigorous poke-stalk against the fence, and the lad stopped to kick it viciously. Even my father smiled at the impotent fury of the action.

"That's right, my boy!" he said, and struck the weed into the gutter with a blow of his cane.

"I wish other evils were as easily disposed of!" was all that escaped the tightly-closed lips for the next half-hour.

The gloom rested upon face and spirits for twenty-four hours. Richmond was a Whig city, and the very air seemed oppressed by what we reckoned as a National woe. It is not easy to appreciate in this century that the defeat of a Presidential candidate imported so much to the best men in the country.

"How did you know what had happened, father?" I ventured to ask that night when the silent meal was over. We had moved and spoken as if the beloved dead lay under our roof. I stole out to the long back porch as we arose from table, and stood there, leaning over the railing and listening to the dirge chanted by the river. The stars twinkled murkily through the city fogs; a sallow moon hung low in the west. It was a dolorous world. I wondered how soon the United States Government would collapse into anarchy. Could—would my father continue to live here under the rule of Polk? How I loathed the name and the party that had made it historic! So quietly had my father approached that I was made aware of his proximity by the scent of his [158] cigar. I was vaguely conscious of a gleam of gratitude that he had this slight solace. His cigar meant much to him. I laid my hand on that resting on the railing. Such strong, capable hands as his were! His fingers were closed silently upon mine, and I gathered courage to put my question. The blow had fallen before we met the man who had hissed at "the Irish vote."

"How did you know what had happened, father?"

No need to speak more definitely. Our minds had room for but one thought.

"It was arranged with the engineer and conductor that a flag should be made fast to the locomotive if there were good news. It was to be a large and handsome flag. Hundreds were on the lookout for it. As soon as I caught sight of the train I saw that the flag was not there."

He smoked hard and fast. A choking in my throat held me silent. For, in a lightning flash of fancy, I had before me the glorious might-have-been that would have driven the waiting hundreds mad with joy. I pictured how proudly the "large, handsome flag" would have floated in the sunshine, and the wild enthusiasm of the crowds collected upon the sidewalks—the gladness that would have flooded our hearts and our home.

It was, perhaps, five minutes before I could manage my voice to say:

"How do you suppose Mr. Clay will bear it?"

I was a woman-child, and my whole soul went out in the longing to comfort the defeated demigod.

"Like the hero that he is, my daughter. *This*"—still not naming the disaster—"means more to the nation than to him."

He raised his hat involuntarily, as I had seen him do that bright, happy May morning when we walked down to Jordan's Creek to be amused by the Democratic barbecue.

He removed it entirely a week later, and bowed his bared head silently, when a fellow-Whig [159] told him, with moist eyes, that the decisive tidings were brought to the hero as he stood in a social gathering of friends. Mr. Clay—so ran the tale I have never heard contradicted—was called out of the room by the messenger, returning in a few minutes to resume the conversation the summons had interrupted, with unruffled mien and the perfect courtesy that never failed him in public and in private. It was said then that he repeated on that evening, in reply to the expressed sorrow of his companions—if, indeed, it was not said then for the first time—the immortal utterance:

"I would rather be right than President!"

The inevitable dash of the ludicrous struck across the calamity in the form of my father's disapproval of the velvet bonnet I would not have exchanged on Saturday for a ducal tiara. I had meant to reserve the appearance of it as a pleasant surprise, and to call his attention to it when I was dressed for church next day. I did not blame him for not noticing it in our rapid tramp up Capitol Street on Saturday. He had weightier matters on his mind. With the honest desire of diverting him from the train of ideas that had darkened his visage for twenty-four hours, I donned the precious head-piece ten minutes before it was time to set out for church, and danced into my mother's room where he sat reading. Walking up to him, I swept a marvellous courtesy and bolted the query full at him:

"How do you like my new bonnet?"

He lowered the book and surveyed me with lack-lustre eyes.

"Not at all, I am sorry to say."

I fairly staggered back, casting a look of anguished appeal at my mother. Being of my sex, she comprehended it.

"Why, father! we think it very pretty," laying her hand on his shoulder. "And she never had a [160] velvet bonnet before."

I saw the significant tightening of the small fingers, and he must have felt it. But the dull eyes did not lighten, the corners of the mouth did not lift.

"As I said, I do not admire it. Nor do I think it becoming."

I turned on my heel, as he might have done, and went to my room. When Mea and I joined our parents in the lower hall, the splendors of the new bonnets were extinguished by thick barege veils. We had not meant to wear them in November. They were indispensable for summer noons. After I had confided my tale of woe to my sister, we hastened to exhume the veils from our trunks and to bind them over our hats. We walked, slow and taciturn, behind our elders for five squares. Then my father turned and beckoned to us. He was actually smiling—a whimsical gleam that had in it something of shame, and much of humor.

"Take off those veils!" he said, positively, yet kindly. And, as we hesitated visibly: "I mean what I say! I want to take a good look at those bonnets."

It was in a quiet corner of a secluded street, lined with what was once a favorite shade-tree in Richmond—the Otaheite mulberry. The night had been cold, and the last russet leaves were ankle-deep on the sidewalk. They rustled as I moved uneasily in loosening my veil.

I never passed the spot afterward without thinking of the absurd little episode in the history of those melancholy days.

"I see, now, that they are very pretty and very becoming," my father pursued, as they were divested of the ugly mufflers. "I have been very cross for the past twenty-four hours. I suppose because I have been horribly upset by the National calamity. We will turn over a new and cleaner [161] leaf."

He was often stern, and oftener imperative. It was his nature to be strong in all that he set his hand or mind unto. I have yet to see another strong man who was so ready to acknowledge a fault, and who made such clean work of the act.

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# XVI

[162]

## HOME AT CHRISTMAS—A CANDY-PULL AND HOG-KILLING

We went home at Christmas!

Twenty years were to elapse before I should spend another Christmas week in the country. We did not know this then. Not a hitch impeded the smooth unrolling of the weeks of expectation and the days of preparation for the holidays. We were to set out on Monday. On Friday, Spotswood drove up to our door, and Mary Anne, my mother's own maid, alighted. That evening James Ivey reported for escort duty. Even elderly women seldom travelled alone at that date. About young girls were thrown protective parallels that would widen our college-woman's mouth with laughter and her eyes with amazement. There were no footpads on the stage-road from Richmond to Powhatan, and had these gentry abounded in the forests running down to the wheel-tracks, stalwart Spotswood and a shot-gun would have kept them at bay. Maid and outrider were the outward sign of unspoken and unwritten conventions rooted in love of womankind. The physical weakness of the sex was their strength; their dependence upon stronger arms and tender hearts their warrant for any and every demand they chose to make upon their natural protectors.

We had none of these things in mind that joyful Monday morning when Uncle Carus, on one hand, and James Ivey on the other, helped us into the carriage. Carriage-steps were folded up, accordion-wise, and doubled back and down upon the floor of the vehicle when not in use. The [163] clatter, as the coach-door was opened and the steps let down, was the familiar accompaniment of successive arrivals of guests at hospitable homes, and worshippers at country churches.

The trim flight fell with a merry rattle for the two happiest girls in the State, and we sprang in, followed by Mary Anne. We were wedged snugly in place by parcels that filled every corner and almost touched the roof. Presents we had been buying for a month with our own pocket-money and making in our few spare hours, were bound into bundles and packed in boxes. The wells under the cushioned seats were crammed with fragiles and confectionery, the like of which our lesser sisters and brothers had never tasted.

Uncle Carus prophesied a snow-storm. My mother used to say that he was a wise weather-prophet. We stubbornly discredited the prediction until we had left the city spires five miles behind us, and James Ivey's overcoat and leggings (some called them "spatter-dashes") were dotted with feathery flakes. Whereupon we discovered that there was nothing in the world jollier than travelling in a snow-storm, and grew wildly hilarious in the prospect. The snow fell steadily and in grim earnest. By the time we got to Flat Rock, where we were to have the horses and ourselves fed, the wheels churned up, at every revolution, mud that was crushed strawberry in color, topped with whiteness that might have been whipped cream; for the roads were heavy by reason of an open winter. This was Christmas snow. We exulted in it as if we had had a hand in the making. Our gallant outrider, albeit a staid youth of three-and-twenty, fell in with our humor. He made feeble fun of his own appearance as each wrinkle in his garments became a drift, and his dark hair was like a horsehair wig such as we had seen in pictures of English barristers. His [164] bay horse was a match to our iron-grays, and the twelve hoofs were ploughing through a level fall of six inches before we espied the tremulous sparks we recognized as village windows.

Our throats ached with laughing and our hearts with great swelling waves of happiness, as we tumbled out of our seats—and our bundles after us—at the gate of the long, low house that might

have been mean in eyes accustomed to rows of three-storied brick “residences” on city streets. Every door was flung wide; every window was red with fire and lamp light.

We had fried chicken and waffles, hot rolls, ham, beaten biscuits, honey, three kinds of preserves, and, by special petition of all the children, a mighty bowl of snow and cream, abundantly sweetened, for supper. This dispatched, and at full length, the journey having made us hungry, and the sight of us having quickened the appetites of the rest, we sat about the fire in the great “chamber” on the first floor, that was the throbbing heart of the home, and talked until ten o’clock. The faithful clock that hung above the mantel did not vary five minutes from the truth in that number of years; but it was dumbly discreet, never obtruding an audible reminder of the flight of hours. I saw one of the same pattern in a curio shop last week. The salesman asked fifty dollars for it.

The chimney in “the chamber” drew better than any other in the house. A fire was kindled on that hearth, night and morning, for nine months in the year. My mother maintained that the excellent health of her young family was due in part to that fact. A little blaze dispelled the lingering dampness of the morning and the gathering fogs of night. She knew nothing of germs, benevolent and malevolent, but she appreciated the leading fact that cold and humidity signify danger, heat and dryness go with health.

I coveted no girl’s home and apparel, as Mea and I snuggled down under our blankets on the [165]
mattress my father was so far in advance of his times as to insist should be substituted for a feather-bed in each bedroom occupied by a child. The “whim” was one of the “notions” that earned for him the reputation of eccentricity with conservative neighbors.

Our windows were casements, and rattled sharply in blasts that had thrashed the snow-storm into a tempest. The wind pounded, as with hammers, upon the sloping roof over our happy heads. Longfellow had not yet written

“My little ones are folded like the flocks,”

but I know my mother felt it.

She came near saying it when I told her at the breakfast-table that I fell asleep, saying to myself:

“He’ll go into the barn and keep himself warm
And hide his head under his wing.”

“I could think of nothing, whenever I awoke, but the mother sheep with her lambs all with her in the fold,” was her answer. “And of ‘the hollow of His hand.’ We have much to make us thankful this Christmas.”

“To make us thankful!” She was ever on the watch for that. Like Martin Luther’s little bird, she “sat on her twig, content, and let God take care.”

A bright sun left little of what had promised to be a deep snow, by Christmas Day. Four Christmas-guns were fired at midnight of Christmas Eve in four different quarters of the village. That is, holes were drilled with a big auger into the heart of a stout oak or hickory, and stuffed with powder. At twelve o’clock a torch was applied by a fast runner, who took to his heels on the instant to escape the explosion. The detonation was that of a big cannon. Sometimes, the tree [166]
was rent apart. That was a matter of small moment in a region where acres of forest-lands were cleared for tobacco fields by the primitive barbarism of girdling giant trees that had struck their roots into the virgin soil and lifted strong arms to heaven for centuries. From midnight to sunrise the sound of “pop-crackers” and pistol-shots was hardly intermitted by a minute’s silence. With the awakening of quieter, because older folk, the air rang with shouts of “Christmas gift!” addressed impartially to young and old, white and black.

The salutation was a grievous puzzle and positive annoyance to our New-England grandmother, the first Christmas she passed with us. By the time she was ready for breakfast she had emptied her pocket of loose coins, and bestowed small articles of dress and ornament upon three or four of the (to her apprehension) importunate claimants. When she made known the grievance—which she did in her usual imperious fashion—my father shouted with laughter. With difficulty he drilled into her mind that the greeting was not a petition, still less a demand. From that day he forbade any of us to say “Christmas gift!” to “Old Mistis,” as the servants called her. We children wished her, “A merry Christmas.” The servants never learned the unaccustomed form. The old lady did not enter into the real significance of the words that offended her. Nor, for that matter, did one out of a hundred of those who had used it all their lives, as each Christmas rolled around. It never dawned upon me until I heard how Russian peasants and Russian nobility alike greet every one they meet on Easter morning with—“The Lord is risen,” receiving the answer, “He is risen indeed!” The exultant cry of “Christmas gift!” was a proclamation of the best thing that ever came into the world. The exchange of holiday offerings at the festal season commemorates the same. All over Christendom it is an act of grateful, if too often blind, [167]
obedience to the command—“Freely ye have received, freely give.”

There were twelve servants in our family—eight adults and four children. Not one was overlooked in the distribution of presents that followed breakfast and family prayers. The servants were called in to morning and evening prayers as regularly as the white members were

assembled for the service. The custom was universal in town and country, and was, without doubt, borrowed from English country life—the model for Virginian descendants. Men and women took time to pray, and made haste to do nothing. We prate long and loudly now of deep breathing. We *practised* it in that earlier generation.

On Christmas night we had a "molasses stew." We have learned to say "candy-pull" since then. A huge cauldron of molasses was boiled in the kitchen—a detached building of a story-and-a-half, standing about fifty feet from "the house." Gilbert—the dining-room servant, who would be "a butler" now—brought it into the dining-room when it was done to a turn, and poured it into great buttered platters arranged around the long table. All of us, girls and boys, had pinned aprons or towels over our festive garments, and put back our cuffs from our wrists. My mother set the pace in the pulling. She had a reputation for making the whitest and most spongy candy in the county, and she did it in the daintiest way imaginable. Buttering the tips of her fingers lightly, she drew carefully from the surface of the platter enough of the cooling mixture for a good "pull." In two minutes she had an amber ribbon, glossy and elastic, that bleached fast to cream-color under her rapid, weaving motion, until she coiled or braided completed candy—brittle, dry, and porous—upon a dish lined with paper. She never let anybody take the other end of the rope; she did not butter her fingers a second time, and used the taper tips alone in the work, and she had the [168] candy on the dish before any of the others had the sticky, scalding mass in working order. We dipped our fingers again and again in butter and, when hard bestead, into flour, which last resort my mother scorned as unprofessional, and each girl had a boy at the other end of her rope. It was graceful work when done *secundum artem*. The fast play of hands; the dexterous toss and exchange of the ends of shining strands that stiffened too soon if not handled aright; the strain upon bared wrists and strong shoulders as the great ropes hardened; the laughing faces bent over the task; the cries of feigned distress as the immature confectionery became sticky, or parted into strings, under careless manipulation; the merry peals of laughter at defeat or success—made the Christmas frolic picturesque and gay. I wondered then, and I have often asked since, why no painter has ever chosen as a subject this one of our national pastimes.

A homelier, but as characteristic an incident of that Christmas—the last we were to have in the country home—was hog-killing.

The "hog and hominy," supposed by an ignorant reading-public to have formed the main sustenance of the Virginian planter and his big family, are as popularly believed to have been raised upon his own farm or farms. Large herds of pigs were born and brought up on Virginia lands. Perhaps one-half of the pork cured into bacon by country and by village folk, was bought from Kentucky drovers. Early in the winter—before the roads became impassable—immense droves of full-grown hogs crowded the routes leading over mountain and valley into the sister State. We had notice of the approach of one of these to our little town before it appeared at the far end of the main street, by the hoarse grunting that swelled into hideous volume—unmistakable and indescribable—a continuous rush of dissonance, across which were projected occasional squeals.

A drove had entered the village a week before Christmas, and rested for the night in the wide [169] "old field" back of the Bell Tavern. Citizens of the Court House and from the vicinity had bought freely from the drovers. More than twenty big-boned grunters were enclosed in a large pen at the foot of our garden, and fed lavishly for ten days, to recover them from the fatigue of the journey that left them leaner than suited the fancy of the purchaser. On the morning of the cold day appointed for the "killing," they were driven to a near-by "horse-branch" and washed. At noon they were slaughtered at a spot so distant from the house that no sound indicative of the deed reached our ears. Next day the carcasses were duly cut up into hams, shoulders, middlings (or sides of bacon), chines, and spareribs.

Lean leavings from the dissection were apportioned for sausage-meat; the heads and feet would be made into souse (headcheese); even the tails, when roasted in the embers, were juicy tidbits devoured relishfully by children, white and black.

Not an edible atom of the genial porker went to waste in the household of the notable housewife. The entrails, cleaned and scalded into "chitterlings," were accounted a luscious delicacy in the kitchen. They rarely appeared upon the table of "white folks." I never saw them dished for ourselves, or our friends. Yet I have heard my father tell of meeting John Marshall, then Chief Justice of the United States, in the Richmond streets one morning, as the great man was on his way home from the Old Market. He had a brace of ducks over one arm, and a string of chitterlings swung jauntily from the other.

And why not? Judge Marshall had "Hudibras" at his tongue's end, and could have quoted:

"His warped ear hung o'er the strings,
Which was but souse to chitterlings."

The Virginia house-mother had classic precedent for the utilization of what her granddaughter [170] accounts but offal. I once heard a celebrated divine say, unctuously:

"'Hog-killing time' is to me the feast of the year."

And nobody stared, or smiled, or said him "Nay." Chine, spareribs, and sausage, such as titillated our palates in the first half of the nineteenth century, are not to be had now for love or

money. The base imitations sold to us in the shambles are the output of “contract work.”

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# XVII

## A NOTABLE AFFAIR OF HONOR

[171]

EARLY in the second winter of our residence in Richmond, the community and the State were thrilled to painful interest by the most notable duel recorded in the history of Virginia.

On the desk at my side lies a time-embrowned pamphlet, containing a full report of the legal proceedings that succeeded the tragedy.

The leading Democratic paper of the State at that time was published by Thomas Ritchie and his sons. The father, to whom was awarded the title of “The Nestor of the Southern Press,” was a dignified gentleman who had won the esteem of his fellow-citizens by a long life spent under the limelight that beats more fiercely nowhere than upon a political leader who is also an editor. In morals, stainless, in domestic and social life, exemplary and beloved, the elder Ritchie enjoyed, in the evening of his day, a reputation unblurred by the rancor of partisan spite. The policy of his paper was fearless, but never unscrupulous. To the Democratic party, the *Enquirer* was at once banner and bulwark. Of his elder son, William Foushee, I shall have something to say in later chapters, and in a lighter vein. The second son, the father’s namesake, was recognized as the moving spirit of the editorial columns.

John Hampden Pleasants was as strongly identified with the Whig party. He was a man in the prime of life; like the Ritchies, descended from an ancient and honorable Virginia family, noble in [172] physique, and courtly in bearing. He held a trenchant pen, and had been associated from his youth up with the press. He had lately assumed the office of editor-in-chief of a new paper, and brought it into notice by vigorous and brilliant editorials that were the talk of both parties.

The opening gun of what was to be a sanguinary combat was fired by a Washington correspondent of the *Enquirer*, under date of January 16, 1846:

“I am much mistaken if Mr. John Hampden Pleasants does not intend, with his new paper, to out-Herod Herod—to take the lead of the *Intelligencer*, if possible, in exciting Abolitionism by showing Southern Whig sympathy in their movements; and thus, for the benefit of Whiggery, to cheat them into the belief that the Southern patrons of either of these gentlemen are ceasing to detest their incendiary principles, and beginning, like the Whigs of the North, to coalesce with them.

“They agitate to affect public opinion at the South, and Messrs. Gales and Pleasants practically tell them to go on—that they are succeeding to admiration.”

It was a poor shot—more like a boy’s play with a toy gun than a marksman’s aim. But the bullet was poisoned by the reference to Abolitionism. That was never ineffective. A friend in conservative Philadelphia called Mr. Pleasants’ notice to the attack, which had up to that time escaped his eyes:

“I have d——d this as a lie every time I had a chance, although I believe that you, like myself—a Virginian and a slaveholder—regard Slavery as an evil.”

Mr. Pleasants replied in terms that were singularly mild for a fighting political editor.

I may say, here, that it is a gross blunder to compare the methods of party-writers and orators of to-day with those of sixty years ago, to the disadvantage of the former. They fought, then, [173] without the gloves, and as long as breath lasted.

“I confess my surprise, nay, my regret,” wrote Mr. Pleasants, “that the present editors of the *Enquirer* should, by publication, have indorsed, so far as that sort of indorsement can go, and without any explanatory remark, the misrepresentations of their Washington correspondent. They ought, as public men, to know that I stand upon exactly the same platform with their father in respect to this subject. In 1832 we stood, for once, shoulder to shoulder, and since that time we have both expressed, without intermission, the same abhorrence of Northern Abolition, and the same determination, under no circumstances which could be imagined, to submit, in the slightest degree, to its dictation or intrusion....

“These were also the views—namely, that Slavery was an evil, and ought to be got rid of, but at our own time, at our own motion, and in our own way—of Washington, Jefferson, Henry, George Mason, the two Lees, Madison, Monroe, Wirt, and all the early patriots, statesmen, and sages of Virginia—WITHOUT EXCEPTION!

“Such are my opinions still, and if they constitute me an Abolitionist, I can only say that I would go further to see some of the Abolition leaders hanged than any man in Virginia, especially since their defeat of Mr. Clay.

“In respect to Slavery, I take no pious, no fanatical view. I am not opposed to it because I think it morally wrong, for I know the multitude of slaves to be better off than the whites. I am against it for the sake of the whites, my own race. I see young and powerful commonwealths around us,

with whom, while we carry the burden of Slavery, we can never compete in power, and yet with whom we must prepare to contend with equal arms, or consent to be their slaves and vassals—we or our children. In all, I look but to the glory and liberty of Virginia."

The confession of State's Rights would seem strong enough to soften the heart of an original Secessionist—a being as yet unheard of—and the respectful mention of the Nestor of the *Enquirer* might have drawn the fire of the filial editor. How far these failed of their effect is obvious in the return shot: [174]

"Although the language used by Mr. Pleasants may not be considered directly offensive, yet we are unwilling to allow him or others to make hypotheses in regard to our veracity. When we desire lectures on morals we hope to be allowed to choose our own preceptor. We certainly shall not apply to *him!*"

In Mr. Pleasants' rejoinder he again reminds the young men that their father and himself had been of the same mind on the Slavery question for twenty years:

"The correspondent may have believed what he said, in ignorance of the facts, and may therefore be guiltless of premeditated injustice, but the editors who indorse his calumny by printing it without any explanation, either did know better, in which case their candor and liberality are compromised, or ought to have known better, in which case they themselves may say what responsibility they incur by printing an accusation utterly false in fact, and calculated to infuse the greatest possible prejudice against him respecting whom it is promulgated."

The answer of the *Enquirer* was a sneer throughout:

"We doubt whether he knows, himself, what principles he may be disposed to advocate. His most intimate friends are sometimes puzzled to understand his position.... If our correspondent 'Macon' wishes it, he will, of course, have the use of our columns, but if he will take our advice, he will let Mr. J. H. P. alone. To use an old proverb—'Give the gentleman rope enough, and he will hang himself!'"

In a long letter to a personal friend, but published in the *News and Star*—what would be called now an "open letter"—Mr. Pleasants sums up the points of the controversy, and calmly assumes the animus of the attack to be personal enmity, a sort of vendetta feud, against which argument is powerless: [175]

"Justice from the Richmond *Enquirer* I have long ago ceased to expect. For more than twenty years I have lived under its ceaseless misrepresentations and malevolent misconstructions. I had hoped, when the former editor removed to Washington to receive the rich rewards of his devotion to party, to live upon better terms with his successors, and I have studied to cultivate better relations by respectful consideration and undeviating courtesy; but I have found that other passions besides the love of liberty are transmitted from sire to son.... Calmly reviewing this piece of impertinence, I should be of opinion that this assailant meditated fight, if I could think that a young brave would seek, as an antagonist upon whom to flesh his maiden sword, a man so much older than himself as I am, and with dependent children."

In allusion to a former altercation with "Il Secretario," a "foe illustrious for his virtues and talents, whom this aspirant after knighthood" declined to encounter—the senior combatant concludes:

"Battle, then, being clearly not his object, I must suppose that he meant no more than a little gasconade, and the recovery, at a cheap rate, of a forfeited reputation for courage."

With the, to modern taste, odd blending of personality with editorial anonymity that characterized the professional duel throughout, "We, the junior editor," retorts:

"This letter affords strong corroborative evidence of our opinion expressed in our article of the 27th ultimo, and from Mr. J. H. Pleasants' communication, evidently understood by him to the extent we intended—namely, that facts within our knowledge proved him to be a COWARD. [176]

"He appeals to the confines of age and dependent children. Let it be! We shall not disturb him."

Ten years after the correspondence and the "affair" to which it was the prelude, an eminently respectable citizen of Richmond told my husband of a street-corner scene, date of February 21, 1846, the day on which the last contribution to the war of words above recorded, appeared in the *Enquirer*.

"One of the groups one saw on all sides, in heated discussion of the newspaper controversy and the probable outcome, was collected about Doctor ——, then, as now, pastor of the —— —— Church. He read out the last sentences of Ritchie's ultimatum with strong excitement. Then he struck the paper with his finger, and said: 'That settles the matter! Pleasants must fight! There is no way out of it!'

"One of the party ventured a remonstrance to the effect that 'Pleasants was not a hot-headed boy to throw his life away. He might be made to see reason, and the matter be smoothed over,' etc.

"The minister broke in warmly, with—

"'Impossible, sir, impossible! No honorable man could sit down quietly under the insult! He must fight! There is no alternative!'

"Now," continued the narrator, "I am not a church-member, and I had no overstrained scruples against duelling at that time. But it sent a queer shock through me when I heard a minister of the gospel of peace take that ground. I felt that I could never go to hear him preach again. And I never did! I heard he made a most feeling allusion to poor Pleasants in a sermon preached shortly after his death. That didn't take the bad taste out of my mouth."

[177] How general was the sympathy with the incautiously expressed opinion of the divine can hardly be appreciated now that the duello is reckoned among the errors of a ruder age. The city was in a ferment for the three days separating the 21st of February and the 25th, on which the memorable encounter took place. If any friend essayed to reconcile the offending and offended parties, we have no note of it.

The nearest approach to arbitration recorded in the story of the trial is in the testimony of a man well-acquainted with both parties, who was asked by one of Mr. Ritchie's seconds to "go upon the ground as a mutual friend."

He testified on the stand: "I declined to do so. I asked him if the matter could be adjusted. I asked if Mr. Ritchie would not be willing to withdraw the epithet of 'coward,' in case Mr. Pleasants should come upon the field. His reply was that Mr. Ritchie conscientiously believed Mr. Pleasants to be a coward."

The persuasions of other friends to whom he spoke, at an evening party(!), of the affair to come off on the morrow, overcame the scruples of the reluctant pacificator. He accompanied the surgeon (the most eminent in the city, and one of the Faculty of Richmond Medical College) to the ground next morning. The meeting was no secret, except—presumably—to the authorities who might have prevented it. Going up to Mr. Ritchie's second, he made a final effort to avert the murder:

"I renewed the application I had made the evening before, telling him that Mr. Pleasants was on the field, and asking him if he would not withdraw the imputation of cowardice. He replied that he would keep his friend there fifteen minutes, and no longer."

The morning was raw, and the wind from the river was searching. There had been rain during the night, and the ground was slippery with sleet. The principals were equipped with other arms [178] than the duelling pistols.

"Mr. Pleasants put a revolver into the left pocket of his coat; then he took two duelling pistols, one in his right, and the other in his left hand." At this point the witness interpolates: "I looked away about that time." (As well he might!) "The next weapon I saw him arm himself with was his sword-cane under his left arm. He had a bowie-knife under his vest."

Of Mr. Ritchie it was testified:

"He had four pistols and also a revolver. He had the larger pistols in his belt. I did not see his sword until after the rencontre. He had it drawn when I came up to him. I supposed it was a bowie-knife."

After a brief parley as to the disadvantages of a position first selected, and the choice of a second, the word was given to advance and fire. The principals were two hundred yards apart when the word was given.

"Mr. Ritchie fired at the distance of twenty-five or thirty yards. Mr. Pleasants fired his first pistol within about fifteen or twenty feet of Mr. Ritchie.... At the third shot they were more rapid. Mr. Pleasants advanced. At the third fire Mr. Ritchie's form became obscure; Mr. Pleasants still advancing, I saw him within six or seven feet of Mr. Ritchie. It was then that Mr. Pleasants fired his second pistol."

Thus the eminent surgeon, who had refused to come to the field as the friend of both parties, but yielded when asked to serve in his professional capacity. He remarks, parenthetically, here:

"I am now giving my recollection of events transpiring in a short time and under great excitement."

Perhaps, in spite of the great excitement, the training of his calling held his senses steady, for his story of the fight is graphic and succinct.

[179] "I saw Mr. Pleasants level his second pistol; I heard the report; I saw Mr. Ritchie stagger back, and I remarked to Mr. D." (the man who had been overpersuaded to witness the murder as a "mutual friend"), "'Ritchie is a dead man!' I so inferred, because he had staggered back. Then I heard several discharges without knowing who was firing. I saw Mr. Pleasants striking at Mr. Ritchie with some weapon—whether a cane or a pistol, I do not know. I also saw him make several thrusts with a sword-cane. He gave several blows and two or three thrusts. I do not know if the sword was sheathed. During this part of the affair I saw Mr. Ritchie with his sword in his hand. I did not see him draw it. I saw him in the attitude of one making a thrust, and did see him make one or two thrusts at Mr. Pleasants. I remarked to Mr. D., 'Let us go up, or he'll be stabbed!' Two or three times the cry was made, 'Stop, Pleasants! Stop, Ritchie!' We went up. Mr. Pleasants was tottering; Mr. Ritchie was standing a few feet away, the point of his sword on the

ground; he was perfectly quiet. Mr. Archer took Mr. Pleasants' arm and laid him down. He was on the ground when I reached him. Before I got to him I saw Mr. Ritchie leaving the ground. He walked a short distance, and then ran."

It transpired afterward that not one of Pleasants's balls had struck Ritchie. The presumption was that the elder man was wounded by his opponent's first fire, and fired wildly in consequence. He received six balls in various parts of his body. But one of his bullets was found, and that in the gable of a building out of the line of the firing. The ball was embedded in the wood, nine feet above the ground. Mad with pain and blinded by rage, the wounded man struck at the other's face when they were near together—some said, with the useless pistol, others with his sword-cane or bowie-knife. When the fugitive reached the carriage in waiting at the foot of the hill, his face was covered with blood. His physician was in the carriage, and examined him at once. But [180] for the cut lip he was absolutely uninjured.

The sun was just rising when John Hampden Pleasants was lifted into the carriage and borne back to the city. He knew himself to be mortally wounded from the moment he fell.

This was on Wednesday, February 25th. Before the short winter day neared its noon, the tale was known from one end of Richmond to the other, and the whole population heaved with excitement. Business was practically suspended while men talked over the terrible event; the sidewalks were blocked by gossiping idlers.

Our school was called to order at nine o'clock daily. On this morning, teachers and pupils were unfit for lessons. For Mr. Pleasants' only daughter was one of us, and a general favorite. His niece was likewise a pupil, and the two had the same desk. Their vacant chairs made the tragedy a personal grief to each of us. When Mrs. Nottingham bade us get our Bibles ready for the morning service, not a girl there could read without a break in her trembling voice, and when the dear old lady made tender mention in her prayer of the "sorrowing," and for "those drawing near unto death," our sobs drowned the fervent tones.

I recall, as one of the minor incidents of the dreadful day, that when I went home in the afternoon, my grandmother insisted I should read the newspaper correspondence aloud to her. She was a captious tyrant at times, and, like many another deaf person, sensitive as to the extent of her infirmity. She "was not so very deaf, except in damp weather, or when she had a cold. If people would only speak distinctly, and not mumble, she would have no trouble in understanding what was said." In this connection she often made flattering exception of myself as the "one girl she knew who could speak English." In this capacity she summoned me to her side. She had the [181] week's papers on her lap. I must pick out the articles "that were responsible for this scandalous affair."

Down I sat, close beside her "good ear," and read, with precise articulation and right emphasis, the editorials from which I have made excerpts in this chapter.

In copying them to-day, the strait-laced New-Englander's classification of the awful event is in my mind and ear. Every detail of the duel and the cold-blooded preparations therefor—the deadly weapons borne by, and girt about the principals; the sang-froid of seconds and attendant "friends"; the savagery of the combat; the tone of public sentiment that made the foul fight within sight of the steeples of the city practicable, although the leading men of the place were cognizant of each step that led to the scene on the river-bank before sunrise that gray morning—can we, in these later times we are wont to compare regretfully with those, sum up the details and the catastrophe in phrase more fit and true?

I resented it hotly, if silently, then. Even my father, who always spoke of duelling as a "remnant of Middle Age barbarism," shared in the universal grief for his party leader laid low in the prime of his useful manhood, and would suffer no censure of the challenge that had made the fight inevitable.

"Pleasants is a brave man, and a proud. He could not endure to sit down quietly under the aspersion of cowardice."

Another terrible day of suspense dragged its slow length along. Hourly bulletins from the chamber where the wounded man was making his last struggle with Fate, alternately cheered and depressed us. He was conscious and cheerful; he had exonerated his opponent from blame in the matter of the duel:

"I thought I had run him through. It was providential that I did not. Ritchie is a brave man. I [182] shall not recover. You will be candid with me, Doctor? It is all right."

These were some of the sentences caught up by young and old, and repeated with tearful pride in the dying hero. That was what they called him; and when on Friday morning the flag on the capitol hung at half-mast, the mourners who went about the streets were his fellow-townsmen, who had no word of condemnation for him and the rash act that ended his career.

On Saturday morning it began to snow. By Sunday afternoon the streets were eighteen inches deep on the level, with the heaviest snow-fall of the season. Mrs. Pleasants, the widow of a governor of Virginia, and the mother of the slain editor, was a member of the Grace Street Presbyterian Church, of which Reverend Doctor Stiles was then pastor. The funeral services were held there on Sunday, at 3 o'clock P.M. By two the sidewalks were blocked by a crowd of silent spectators, and, half an hour later, every seat in the church, except those reserved for the family

and immediate friends of the deceased, was filled. After these had taken their places, there was not standing-room in aisles or galleries. The sermon was an eloquent tribute to the private virtues and the public services of the deceased. One memorable extract is inscribed upon the monument erected by admirers and friends over his grave in Shockoe Hill Cemetery:

With a Genius above Talent, a Courage above Heroism

None ever forgot the scene who saw the long line of funeral carriages winding, like a black stream, through streets where the snow came up to the axles, under the low-hanging sky that stooped heavily and gloomed into leaden gray by the time the cortége reached the cemetery. And all the afternoon the brooding air throbbed with the tolling bells. [183]

We said and believed that Richmond had never known so sad a day since she went into mourning for the threescore victims of the burning of the theatre in 1811.

The trial of Thomas Ritchie for murder in the first, and of the seconds as "principals in the second degree," followed the duel with swiftness amazing to the reader of criminal cases in our age. On March 31, 1846, four of the ablest lawyers in Virginia appeared in court to defend the prisoner.

The old brochure which records the proceedings is curious and deeply interesting reading; in nothing more remarkable than in the defence of what was admitted to be "an unhappy custom" and directly opposed to the laws of the country.

"*The letter of the law is made to yield to the spirit of the times*" is an italicized sentence in the principal speech of the defence. The same speaker dwelt long and earnestly upon precedents that palliated, excused, and warranted the time-honored (although "unhappy") practice.

Not less than fifteen instances of the supremacy of the higher law of the "spirit of the times" were drawn from English history.

"In not one of which had there been any prosecution.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury, does any one suppose that duelling can be suppressed, or capitally punished, when the first men in the kingdom—such men as Pitt and Fox, and Castlereagh and Canning and Grattan, and Nelson and Wellington, lend the high sanction of their names, and feel themselves justified and compelled to peril their lives upon a point of honor? And I would ask my friend, the Commonwealth's Attorney, if such men as these constitute the 'swordsmen of England,' and were alone worthy of the times of Tamerlane and Bajazet?... [184]

"Was Andrew Jackson regarded as a 'swordsman' and duellist because he fought, not one, but three duels, and once shed the blood of a fellow-man in single combat? He was twice elected to the first office in the world, and died a Christian.... How many of Henry Clay's numerous friends in Virginia, and, especially, the religious portion of them (including ministers of the Gospel), refused to vote for him as President of the United States because he had fought two duels?...

"The coroner's inquest held on the body of General Hamilton brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States.

"Colonel Burr afterward took his seat in the Senate of the United States as Vice-President; his second, afterward, became a judge; and the second of General Hamilton—a most amiable and accomplished man—I served with in Congress, some years ago....

"I call upon you, then, gentlemen, by every motive that can bind you to a discharge of your duty, to do justice to my unfortunate young friend. Bind up the wounds of his broken-hearted parents; carry joy and peace and consolation to his numerous family and friends; wash out the stain that has been attempted upon his character and reputation, and restore him to his country —as, in truth, he is—pure and unspotted."

The address of the Commonwealth's Attorney is comparatively brief and emphatically half-hearted. We are entirely prepared for the announcement in smaller type at the foot of the last page:

"The argument on both sides" (!) "having been concluded, the jury took the case, and, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of 'Not guilty!'

"The verdict was received by the large auditory with loud manifestations of applause. Order was promptly commanded by the officers of the court. [185]

"Mr. Ritchie then left the court-house, accompanied by the greater portion of the spectators, who seemed eager to shake hands with him and to congratulate him upon his honorable acquittal."

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[186]

# XVIII

## THE MENACE OF SLAVE INSURRECTION

"RICHMOND, *June 8th, 1847.*

"DEAR EFFIE,—It is past ten o'clock, and a rainy night. Just such a one as would make a comfortable bed and a sound snooze no mean objects of desire.

"George Moody, alias 'The Irresistible,' arrived this afternoon, and will leave in the morning, and I cannot let so good an opportunity of writing to you escape. I must scribble a brief epistle.

"The drive down from Powhatan was delightful. I found Mr. Belt extremely pleasant, full of anecdote, a great talker, yet, withal—as Mr. Miller had told me—a good listener. A very necessary qualification, by-the-way, for any one with whom I may chance to be in company.

"The first thing I heard when I reached home was tidings of that worst of bugbears to a Southern woman—an impending insurrection. A double guard was on duty at the capitol, and a detachment of military from the armory paraded the streets all night. I was, I confess, somewhat alarmed, and not a little startled, but gradually my fears wore away, and I slept as soundly that night as if no such thing were in agitation.

"'Puss Sheppard was in to supper, and her parting salutation to us at going was: 'Farewell! If I am alive in the morning I will come and see if you are!'

"The whole matter ended, like Mr. C.'s sermon—'just where it began—*viz.*, in nothing.'

"Richmond is rather dull at present. The Texas excitement has subsided almost entirely, and those who gave credence to the report of the insurrection [187] are desirous to keep as still as possible.

"*Morning.*—I can write no more. I am sure your good-nature will acquit me of blame so far as matter, chirography, and quality go, when I tell you that I have written this partly by the light of a lamp which finally went out, self-extinguished for want of oil, and partly this morning, when I am suffering with a sick-headache. I feel more like going to bed than writing, but 'The Unexceptionable' is about to take his departure, and waits for this. Write soon and much. I will try to treat you better next time."

There is much reading between the lines to be done for the right comprehension of that letter. My *genre* pictures of days that are no more would be incomplete were I to fail to touch upon the "worst of bugbears" I feigned to pass over lightly.

In the debate upon the abolition of slavery in my native State, lost by one vote in the Legislature of 1831-32, while Nat Turner's insurrection was fresh in the public mind, John Randolph declared, "Whenever the fire-alarm rings in Richmond every mother clasps her baby closer to her breast."

I cannot recollect when the whisper of the possibility of "Insurrection" (we needed not to specify of what kind) did not send a sick chill to my heart. The menace I here dismiss with a sentence or two was the most serious that had loomed upon my horizon. I could not trust myself to dwell upon it within the two days that had elapsed since my return from a vacation month in Powhatan. How keenly every circumstance attending it was bitten into my mind is proved by the distinctness of the etching preserved by a memory that has let many things of greater moment escape its hold.

My host, Mr. D., had come in to dinner the day before that set for my stage-journey back to town, with the pleasing intelligence that Mr. Lloyd Belt, a former citizen of Powhatan, but for [188] twenty years a resident of Richmond, was "going down"—Richmond was always "down," as London is "up" from every part of England—the next day, and would be glad to take me in his carriage. As I wrote to Effie, the drive was delightful. My courtly escort took as much pains to entertain me as if I had been a belle and a beauty, instead of an unformed school-girl. It was a way they had—those gentlemen of the Old School—of recognizing the woman in every baby-girl, and doing it honor.

It did not strike me as strange that Mr. Belt beguiled the thirty-mile journey with anecdote and disquisition. He was charming. I never thought that he was likewise condescending. I am quite as sure that the idea did not enter his knightly imagination.

As we drove leisurely up Main Street from the bridge, we noticed that groups of men stood on the street corners and in the doors of stores, chatting gravely, and, it would seem, confidentially.

"There must be news from the seat of war!" opined my companion.

The Mexican War was then in progress, and accompanying raids into the debatable territory of Texas kept public sentiment in a ferment.

My father and the rest of the family, with a couple of neighbors, were enjoying the cool of the day upon our front porch. He came down to the gate to assist me to alight. So did Mr. Strobia, our elderly next-door neighbor, and he handed me up the steps while my father lingered to thank my escort for bringing me safely home. In the joyous confusion of greetings, I had not observed

that Mr. Belt was leaning down from the carriage to my father's ear, and that both were very grave, until Puss Sheppard, like the rattlepate she was, whispered loudly to Mr. Strobia:

"I'm scared to death! What is the latest news? You men won't tell us." [189]

"I have heard no news about anything or anybody!" ejaculated the old gentleman, testily and loudly, glancing over his shoulder at Gilbert, who had my trunk on his shoulder and was carrying it in at the side-gate. "Upon my soul, I haven't!" And as she caught his arm and swung around to get the truth from his eyes, he bustled down the steps and so on home.

I had the tale in full by the time my bonnet was off. Mea, on one side, and Puss on the other, poured it forth in excited whispers, having closed "the chamber" door. Abolitionists had been at work among the negroes in Henrico and Hanover counties for weeks. There were indications of an organized conspiracy (in scope and detail so like the plot for which John Brown's blood paid twelve years thereafter, that I bethought me of it when the news from Harper's Ferry stunned the nation), and the city was under arms. Governor Smith was said to have issued a proclamation to militia and citizens at large in Latin.

I laughed there.

"'Extra Billy!' He knows less of Latin than of Choctaw!"

The worthy functionary had earned the *sobriquet* by superdiligence in the matter of extra baggage while in the service of a stage-coach company, and as he was a Democrat we never forgot it.

"Let that pass!" said Mea, impatiently. "We can't get away from the fact that where there is so much smoke there must be a little fire. Some evil business is on foot, and all the servants know what it is, whether we do or not."

I felt that she was right when Mary Anne and "Mammy," Gilbert, Tom, his assistant, and my little maid Paulina, with black Molly, Percy's nurse, trooped in, one after the other, to welcome "Miss Firginny" home. They had done the like ever since I was born. I should have felt hurt and [190] angry had they failed in the ceremony. My sharpened senses detected something that was overdone in manner and speech. They were too glad to see me, and while they protested, I discerned sarcasm in their grins, a sinister roll in lively eyeballs.

We talked fast over the supper-table, and of all manner of things irrelevant to the topic uppermost in our thoughts. Once, while Gilbert and his half-grown subaltern were out of the room, I ventured a hasty whisper to my father, at whose right I sat:

"Father, have we any arms in the house if they should come?"

Without turning his head, he saw, out of the tail of his eye, Gilbert on the threshold, a plate of hot waffles in hand, and Tom at his heels bearing a pitcher of fresh water. My father reached out a deliberate hand for a slice of bread from a plate near his elbow.

"All that I have to say, my daughter" (his speech as deliberate as his hand, and every syllable sharp and clear), "is that we are prepared for them, come when and how they may."

A perceptible shiver, as when one catches breath after an electric shock, ran around the table. All felt that he had thrown down the gauntlet, and was ready to take the consequences. My heart leaped up as an elastic bough from the weight that had bowed it to the earth. It was no effort after that to be gay. I told stories of my country sojourn, retailed the humors of the visit to our old neighborhood, mimicking this and that rustic, telling of comical sayings of the colored people who pressed me with queries as to town life—in short, unbottled a store of fun and gossip that lasted until bedtime. Then, as I told my correspondent, I went to bed and slept the sleep of youth, health, and an easy mind.

And this because he who never lied to me had said that he was "prepared" for the assassins, [191] come when they might.

A week later, when the fireless smoke had vanished quite from the horizon, and we dared jest at the "scare," I asked my mother what arsenal my father had had in reserve that he could speak so confidently of preparation for midnight attack and domestic treachery.

"Nothing more formidable than a carving-knife," she answered, merrily, "and courage that has always served him in the hour of peril. He was not alarmed. I believe he would face a hundred negroes with no other weapon than his bare hands."

I am often asked why, if our family servants were really and warmly attached to us, we should have let the "bugbear" poison our pleasures and haunt our midnight visions. To the present hour I am conscious of a peculiar stricture of the heart that stops my breath for a second, at the sudden blast of a hunter's horn in the country. Before I was eight years old I had heard the tale of Gabriel's projected insurrection, and of the bloodier outbreak of murderous fury led by Nat Turner, the petted favorite of a trusting master. Heard that the signal of attack in both cases was to be "a trumpet blown long and loud." Again and again, on my visits to country plantations, I have been thrown into a paroxysm of terror when awakened from sleep in the dead of night, by the sound of the horns carried by "coon hunters" in their rounds of the woods nearest us. I could not have been over ten, when, on a visit to "Lethe," a homestead occupied for a while by Uncle Carus, I was rambling in the garden soon after sunrise, picking roses, and let them fall from

nerveless fingers at the ringing blast of a “trumpet blown long and loud”, from the brow of a neighboring hill. As it pealed louder and longer, until the blue welkin above me repeated the sound, I fled as fast as my freezing feet would carry me, to the deepest recesses of the graveyard [192] at the foot of the garden, and hid in a tangle of wild raspberry bushes higher than my head. There I lay, wet with the dews of the past night, and my face and hands scratched to bleeding, until the winding horn grew faint and fainter, and the bay of a pack of hounds told me what a fool panic had made of me. We always thought of the graveyard as an asylum in the event of a rising. No negro would venture to enter it by day or night.

In any ordinary period of danger or distress, I would have trusted my life in the hands of the men and women who had been born on the same plantation with my mother, and the younger generation, to whom she had been a faithful and benignant friend from their cradles. In fire and flood and tempest; in good report and evil report; in sickness and in health; in poverty, as in riches—they would have stood with, and for us to the death. We knew them to be but children of a larger growth, passionate and unreasoning, facile and impulsive, and fanatical beyond anything conceivable by the full-blooded white. The superstitious savagery their ancestors had brought from barbarous and benighted Africa, was yet in their veins. We had heard how Gabriel, a leader in prayer-meetings, and encouraged by the whites to do Christian evangelization among his own race, had deliberately meditated and written down, as sections of the code to be put into practice, when he should come into his kingdom of Lower Virginia—a plan of murder of all male whites, and a partition of the women and girl-children among his followers, together with arson and tortures exceeding the deviltries of the red Indians. We had heard from the lips of eyewitnesses, scenes succeeding the Southampton massacre of every white within the reach of the murderous horde howling at the heels of the negro preacher whom his master had taught to [193] read and write—how the first victim of the uprising, in the name of God and freedom, was that master as he lay asleep at his wife’s side. Of how coolly—even complacently—Turner recorded: “He sprang up, calling his wife’s name. It was his last word. A single blow was sufficient to kill him. We forgot a baby that was asleep in the cradle, but Hark went back and dispatched it.”

In every plan of rising against their masters, Religion was a potent element. It was, to their excitable imaginations, a veritable Holy War, from which there would be no discharge. The “Mammy” who had nursed her mistress’s baby at her own bosom, would brain it, with the milk yet wet upon its lips, if bidden by the “prophet” to make the sacrifice. Nat Turner split with his axe the skull of a boy he had carried in his arms scores of times, and stayed not his hand, although the little fellow met him with a happy laugh and outstretched arms and the cry, “Uncle Nat, you have come to give me a ride! Haven’t you?”

I repeat, we knew with what elements we should have to deal if the “rising” ever took an organized form. This ever-present knowledge lay at the root of the hatred of the “abolition movement.” To the Northerner, dwelling at ease among his own people, it was—except to the leaders—an abstract principle. “All men are created free and equal”—a slaveholder had written before his Northern brother emancipated his unprofitable serfs. Ergo, reasoned the Northern brother, in judicial survey of the increasing race, whose labor was still gainful to tobacco and wheat planter, the negro slave had a right to “liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

He did not count the cost of a consummation devoutly to be desired. He had no occasion to meditate upon the bloody steps by which the enslaved and alien race would climb to the height [194] the Abolitionist would stimulate him to attain.

So well was it understood that a mother ran dangerous risks if she put her child into the care of the colored woman who complained that she “was tired of that sort of work,” that neglect of such dislike of a nurse’s duties was considered foolhardy. I heard a good old lady, who owned so many servants that she hired a dozen or so to her neighbors, lament that Mrs. Blank “did not mind what I told her about Frances’ determination not to take care of children. I hired the girl to her as a chambermaid, and gave her fair warning that she just would *not* be a nurse. A baby was born when Frances had been there four months, and she was set to nurse it. You must have heard the dreadful story? Perhaps you saw it in the papers. When the child was six months old the wretched creature pounded glass and put it in the baby’s milk. The child died, and the girl was hanged.”

Ugly stories, these, but so true in every particular that I cannot leave them out of my chronicle of real life and the workings of what we never thought, then, of calling “the peculiar institution.”

One of my most distinct recollections of the discussions of Slavery held in my hearing is that my saintly Aunt Betsy said, sadly and thoughtfully:

“One thing is certain—we will have to pay for the great sin of having them here. How, or when, God alone knows.”

“We did not bring them to Virginia!” was my mother’s answer. “And I, for one, wish they were all back in Africa. But what can we do, now that they are on our hands?”

Before turning to other and pleasanter themes, let me say that my father, after consultation with the wife who had brought to him eight or ten “family servants” as part of her father’s estate, resolved to free them and send them to Liberia at his own expense. This was in my early [195] childhood, yet I recollect how the scheme failed through the obstinate refusal of the slaves to leave master, home, and country for freedom in a strange land. They clung to my mother’s knees, and prayed her, with wild weeping, not to let them go. They had blood relatives and dear friends

here; their children had intermarried with men and women in different parts of the county; their grandfathers and great-grandfathers had left them no legacy of memories that would draw them toward the far-off country which was but the echo of an empty name to their descendants. They were comfortable and happy here. Why send them, for no fault of theirs, into exile?

"There is something in what they say!" my father had said to my mother, in reviewing the scene. "I cannot see that anything is left for us to do except to keep on as we are, and wait for further indications of the Divine will."

This was in the thirties, not many years after an act of gradual emancipation was lost in the Legislature by the pitiful majority I named in an earlier paragraph. A score of years had passed since that momentous debate in our capitol, and our Urim and Thummin had not signified that we could do anything better than to "keep on as we were."

It would be idle to say that we were not, from time to time, aware that a volcano slumbered fitfully beneath us. There were dark sides to the Slavery Question, for master, as for slave.

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# XIX

[196]

## WEDDING AND BRIDESMAID—THE ROUTINE OF A LARGE FAMILY—MY FIRST BEREAVEMENT

In the summer of 1851, my grandmother had bought and given to her only child the house which was to be our home as long as we remained a resident family in Richmond. Of this house I shall have a story to tell in the next chapter. It stands upon Leigh Street (named for the distinguished lawyer of whom we have heard in these pages as taking a part in the Clay campaign), and the locality was then quietly, but eminently, aristocratic. There were few new houses, and the old had a rural, rather than an urban, air. Each had its garden, stocked with shrubbery and flowers. Some had encompassing lawns and outlying copses of virgin native growth.

The new home held a large family. The stately old dame who had settled us for life, occupied a sunny front chamber, and in addition to our household proper, we had had with us, for two years, my mother's widowed brother-in-law, "Uncle" Cams, and the stepdaughter for whose sake we had consented to receive him. My aunt had died soon after her youngest child (Anne) was taken to a Better Country; Cousin Paulina went a year later, and as the mother's parting request to the eldest of her flock was that she would "take care of her father," separation was not to be thought of. None of us loved the lonely old man. One and all, we loved her who was a younger sister to our mother, and a second mother to her children.

So we sat down to our meals every day, a full dozen, all told, and as we were seldom without a [197]
visitor, we must have been "thirteen at table", times without number. If we had ever heard the absurd superstition that would have forbidden it, we never gave it a thought. I should not have liked to meet my father's frown and hear his comment, had the matter been broached in his hearing.

The modern (nominal) mistress would be horrified at the thought of twelve eaters, drinkers, and sleepers under the roof of a private house. We descried nothing out of the way in it, and fared exceeding comfortably from year's end to year's end. Large families were still respectable in the public eye, and an increase in the number of domestics kept the addition to the white family from bearing hard upon the housemother.

How gayly and smoothly the little craft of my life moved on up to the middle of '53, let a few passages from a letter dated July 23d of that year, testify:

> "I came back from the mountains on the 2d of this month. I had a charming visit at Piedmont. I believe I left warm friends behind me when I reluctantly said 'Good-bye' to the hospitable abode. I was the only young lady on the plantation, and there were four grown brothers and a cousin or two. Each had his pet riding-horse, which he 'must have me try.' I had rides, morning and evening, and once at *high noon*. In June! Think of it! I won't tell you which Rosinante I preferred. You might have a notion that his master shared his honors, and these shrewd guesses are inconvenient sometimes. The very considerate gallants found out, 'by the merest chance,' that it made me sick to ride in a closed carriage, and, of course, as there were two buggies on the place, there was 'tall' bidding as to which I should distinguish by accepting a seat in it. Sarah C., her mother, and sister were kindness itself to me. I was quite ashamed of my unworthiness of such petting....
>
> "I got home just in time to help Mea with the preparations for her Northern trip, and to get ready for Sarah Ragland's wedding—an event that had its [198]
> influence in shaping my summer plans.
>
> "We enjoyed the 'occasion' heartily. How could I do otherwise when my attendant groomsman was ordered for the affair from Charlottesville?—the

very youth who smote my already beriddled heart when I was up in that region. He is a cousin of the Raglands—Charley Massie by name—and the arrangement was Mary's (bless her heart!). Mr. Budwell, the bridegroom, was indisputably the handsomest man in the room. This was as it should be; but I never attended another wedding where this could be said with truth. My knight was the next best-looking, and for once I was content with a second-best article."

I allude in this letter to "Cousin Mollie's" illness, but with no expression of anxiety as to the result. She had been delicate ever since I could recollect anything. She went to Saratoga every summer, and now and then to Florida in the winter. The only intimation I ever had from her as to the cause of her continued singlehood was in answer to the girlish outburst: "Cousin Mary, you must have been beautiful when you were young! You will always be charming. I can't comprehend why you have never married!"

Her speech was ever even and sweet. I detected a ring of impatience or of pain in it, as she said: "Why should I marry, Namesake? To get a nurse for life?"

I had suspected all along that she had a history known to none of us. After that I knew it, and asked no more questions.

Patient, brave, unselfishly heroic—

"The sweetest soul
That ever looked with human eyes,"

—she lingered day after day, now weaker, now rallying, until she spoke her own conviction to me one day in late July, as I sat by, fanning her, and no one else was present. [199]

I smiled as she opened her large dark eyes, the only beauty left in the wasted face, and saw me.

"You are better, dear! We shall have you up and out driving before long."

"No, dear child!"—infinite weariness in tone and look. "The old clock has run clean down!"

I did not believe it, and I said it stoutly aloud, and to myself.

She seemed no more languid—only drowsy—the next afternoon, as I fluttered into the room and leaned over her in a glow of excitement:

"Cousin Mollie, darling! I have come in to say that Junius Fishburn is down-stairs. He is in town for a day on his way to Newport."

The great eyes opened wide, a smile lighted them into liveliness.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she gasped.

She was "glad" of everything that gave me pleasure. I had never doubted that. I had never gone to her with a pain or a pleasure without getting my greedy fill of sympathy.

When I had said a hearty "*bon voyage!*" to my caller, I went back to tell her of the interview. She was dying. We watched by her from evening to morning twilight.

Ned Rhodes, who was in Boston when he got my letter, telling briefly what had come to us, sent me lines I read then for the first time. Had the writer shared that vigil with us, he could not have described it more vividly:

"We watched her breathing thro' the night,
  Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
  Kept heaving to and fro. [200]
Our very hopes belied our fears;
  Our fears our hopes belied:
We thought her dying while she slept,
  And sleeping when she died."

At midnight there was a rally for a few minutes. I was wetting the dry lips, leaning over the pillow, so that she looked into my eyes in unclosing hers. A smile of heavenly sweetness played over her face—a ray that irradiated, without moving a feature or line. The poor mouth stirred ever so slightly. I bent closer to it to hear the whisper:

"I'm almost there!"

Two months later I wrote to my old friend:

"Our great sorrow in July was my first affliction. Yet I was wonderfully supported under it, and the *terrible* desolation that has grown upon us, instead of lessening. I say 'supported,' for not once have I wished her back;

but I miss her—oh, so sadly!

"'I cannot make her dead!'

"Then mother went to the country for a month, and I was left as housekeeper, with the whole care of the family on my hands. Rising betimes to preside at father's early breakfast, pickling, preserving, sewing, overseeing the servants, etcetera.

"Enough of this! Although the little girls' lessons begin again to-day, and I have my sister's domestic and social duties to perform in addition to my own, I have more leisure than you might think, and you shall have the benefit of a spare half-hour on this bright Monday morning. (Alice practising, meanwhile, in the same room!)

"Mea is still in Boston and the vicinity, and will not return for a month or more. Lizzie M. is to be married late in October or early in November, and wishes to have Mea with her. Another of the three Lizzies, and the prettiest—Lizzie N.—married last week a Mr. L.—a nice young man, Mea says. I have never seen him, although they have been engaged for some time. He has [201] taken up his abode in Boston, to keep his lovely wife with her invalid mother.

"And while upon marriage—E. G. is to wed on October 11th, Mr. R. H., one of *ten* brothers. She is 'doing very well,' say the gossips.

"Sarah and Mr. Budwell are at home again, he handsomer than ever, while she looks prettier and happier than she ever was before.

"While retailing news, let me chronicle the arrival of Master Robert Wallace Courtney, an interesting youth, who—as father dryly remarked, when I said that he 'came from a foreign shore'—'speaks the language of the Cry-mea.'

"Heigho! so goes this mad world of ours: death; marriage; birth. Ranks are mowed down, and filled up as soon. Few of us appreciate what a fearful thing it is to die, and fewer yet how awful it is to live—writing our histories by our actions in the Book of God's Remembrance, a stroke for every word, movement, and thought! Again I say, if Death be fearful, Life is awful!

"We are prone to forget, as one and another fall, and the chasm is closed up and Life seems the same—except within the bleeding hearts of mourners—that our day is coming as surely as those others have gone. In effect, we arrogate immortality for ourselves.

"The longer I live, and the more I see of the things that perish with the using, the more firmly persuaded am I that there is but one reality in life, and that is Religion. Why not make it an every-day business? Since the loving care of the Father is the only thing that may not be taken from us, why do we not look to it for every joy, and cling to it for every comfort?...

"Write soon. Will you not *come* to me? I am very lonely at times. One sister *gone!* Another absent!

"I am wondering if you have changed as much as I feel that I have? It is not natural to suppose that you have. You have not the same impression of added responsibility, the emulation to throw yourself into the breach made by the removal of one so beloved, and, in her quiet way, exercising so much [202] influence. If I could but hope that patience and prayerful watchfulness would ever make me 'altogether such an one' as she was!

"How many and how happy have been the meetings in heaven since I last saw you! Dear little Sallie B.! How often in fancy do I see her walk away in the moonlight night of our parting! I never look from the front window in the evening without recalling that hour."

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[203]

# XX

## OUR TRUE FAMILY GHOST-STORY

One evening of the winter following the events recorded in the last chapter, "Ned" Rhodes and I had spent a cosey two hours together. My parents never did chaperon duty, in the modern acceptation of the word. They made a habit, without hinting at it as a duty, of knowing personally every man who called upon us. When, as in the present case, and it was a common one, the visitor was well known to them, and they liked him, both of them came into the drawing-room, sat for a half-hour or longer, as the spirit moved them, then slipped out, separately, to their own sitting-room and books.

I have drawn Ned Rhodes's picture at length as "Charley" in *Alone*. I will only say here that he was my firm and leal friend from the time I was twelve years old to the time of his death, in the early eighties.

He had a piece of new music for me to-night, and we fell to work with piano and flute soon after my father's exit. It was not difficult. The songs and duets that followed were familiar to us both. We chatted by the glowing grate when we left the piano—gayly and lightly, of nothing in particular—the inconsequent gossip of two old and intimate acquaintances that called for no effort from either.

I mention this to show that I carried a careless spirit and a light heart with me, as I went off in the direction of my bedroom, having extinguished the hanging lamp in the hall, and taking one of the lamps from the parlor to light myself bedward.

[204] It was a big, square Colonial house, with much waste of space in the matter of halls and passages. The entrance-hall on the first floor was virtually a reception-room, and nearly as large as any apartment on that level. It was cut across the left side by an archway, filled with Venetian blinds and door. Beyond these was a broad, easy stairway, dropping, by a succession of landings, to the lower from the upper story. Directly opposite the front door was a second and narrower arch, the door in which was, likewise, of Venetian slats. This led to the rooms at the back of the house. The plan of the second floor was the same. On this eventful night I passed through the smaller archway, closing the door behind me. It had a spring latch that clicked into place as I swung it to. The bedroom I shared with my sister, who was not at home that night, was directly across the passage from that occupied by our parents. A line of light under their door proved that they were still up, and I knocked.

"Come in!" called both, in unison.

My mother, wrapped in her dressing-gown, lay back in her rocking-chair, her book closed upon her finger. My father had laid aside his coat, and stood on the rug, winding his watch.

"I was hoping that you would look in," he said. "I wanted to ask what that new piano-and-flute piece is. I like it!"

We exchanged a few sentences on the subject; I kissed both good-night, and went out into the hall, humming, as I went, the air that had caught his fancy.

The lamp in my hand had two strong burners. Gas had not then been introduced into private dwellings in Richmond. We used what was sold as "burning fluid," in illuminating our houses—something less gross than camphene or oil, and giving more light than either. I carried the lamp in front of me, so that it threw a bright light upon the door across the passage, here a little over [205] six feet wide. As I shut the door of my mother's room, I saw, as distinctly as if by daylight, a small woman in gray start out of the opposite door, glide noiselessly along the wall, and disappear at the Venetian blinds giving upon the big front hall.

I have reviewed that moment and its incident a thousand times, in the effort to persuade myself that the apparition was an optical illusion or a trick of fancy.

The thousandth-and-first attempt results as did the first. I shut my eyes to see—always the one figure, the same motion, the same disappearance.

She was dressed in gray; she was small and lithe; her head was bowed upon her hands, and she slipped away, hugging the wall, as in flight, vanishing at the closed door. The door I had heard latch itself five minutes ago! Which did not open to let her through! I recall, as clearly as I see the apparition, what I thought in the few seconds that flew by as I stood to watch her. I was not in the least frightened at first. My young maid, Paulina, a bright mulatto of fifteen, had more than once that winter fallen asleep upon the rug before my fire, when she went into the room to see that all was in readiness for my retiring. The servants slept in buildings detached from the main residence, a custom to which I have referred before.

"The house" was locked up by my father's own hands at ten o'clock, unless there were some function to keep one or more of the servants up and on duty. Therefore, when I had twice awakened Paulina from her unlawful slumber, I had sent her off to the "offices"—in English parlance—with a sharp reproof and warning against a repetition of the offence. My instant thought now was:

"The little minx has been at it again!" The next, "She went like a cat!" The third, in a lightning flash, "She did not open the door to go through!" Finally—"Nor did she open the door when she came out of my room!"

[206] I had never, up to that instant, known one thrill of supernatural dread since I was old enough to give full credence to my father's assurances that there were no such things as ghosts, and to laugh at the tales told by ignorant negroes to frighten one another, and to awe white children. I had never been afraid of the darkness or of solitude. I would take my doll and book to the graveyard and spend whole happy afternoons there, because it was quiet and shady, and nobody would interrupt study or dream.

It was, then, the stress of extraordinary emotion which swept me back into the room I had just quitted, and bore me up to the table by which my mother sat, there to set down the lamp I could scarcely hold, enunciating hoarsely:

“I have seen a ghost!”

My father wheeled sharply about.

“*What!*”

At that supreme moment, the influence of his scornful dislike to every species of superstition made me “hedge,” and falter, in articulating, “If there is such a thing as a ghost, I have seen one!”

Before I could utter another sound he had caught up the lamp and was gone. Excited, and almost blind and dumb as I was, I experienced a new sinking of heart as I heard him draw back the bolt of the door through which the Thing had passed, without unclosing it. He explored the whole house, my mother and I sitting, silent, and listening to his swift tramp upon floor and stairs. In a few minutes the search was over.

He was perfectly calm in returning to us.

“There is nobody in the house who has not a right to be here. And nobody awake except ourselves.”

Setting down the lamp, he put his hand on my head—his own, and almost only, form of caress.

“Now, daughter, try and tell us what you think you saw?”

Grateful for the unlooked-for gentleness, I rallied to tell the story simply and without excitement. When I had finished, he made no immediate reply, and I looked up timidly. [207]

“I really saw it, father, just as I have said! At least, I believe I did!”

“I know it, my child. But we will talk no more of it to-night. I will go to your room with you.”

He preceded me with the lamp. When we were in my chamber, he looked under the bed (how did he guess that I should do it as soon as his back was turned, if he had not?). Then he carried the light into the small dressing-room behind the chamber. I heard him open the doors of a wardrobe that stood there, and try the fastenings of a window.

“There is nothing to harm you here,” he said, coming back, and speaking as gently as before. “Now, try not to think of what you believe you saw. Say your prayers and go to bed, like a good, brave girl!”

He kissed me again, putting his arm around me and, holding me to him tenderly, said “Good-night,” and went out.

I was ashamed of my fright—heartily ashamed! Yet I was afraid to look in the mirror while I undid and combed my hair and put on my night-cap. When, at last, I dared put out the light, I scurried across the floor, plunged into bed, and drew the blankets tightly over my head.

My father looked sympathizingly at my heavy eyes next morning when I came down to prayers. After breakfast he took me aside and told me to keep what I had seen to myself.

“Neither your mother nor I will speak of it in the hearing of the children and servants. You may, of course, take your sister into your confidence. She may be trusted. But my opinion is that the fewer who know of a thing that seems unaccountable, the better. And your sister is more nervous than you.” [208]

Thus it came about that nothing was said to Mea, and that we three who knew of the visitation did not discuss it, and tried honestly not to think of it.

Until, perhaps a month after my fright, about nine o’clock, one wet night, my mother entered the chamber where my father and I were talking over political news, as we still had a habit of doing, and said, hurriedly, glancing nervously behind her:

“I have seen Virginia’s ghost!”

She saw it, just as I had described, issuing from the closed door and gliding away close to the wall, then vanishing at the Venetian door.

“It was all in gray,” she reported, “but with something white wrapped about the head. It is very strange!”

Still we held our peace. My father’s will was law, and he counselled discretion.

“We will await further developments,” he said, oracularly.

Looking back, I think it strange that the example of his cool fearlessness so far wrought upon me that I would not allow the mystery to prey upon my spirits, or to make me afraid to go about the house as I had been wont to do. Once my father broke the reserve we maintained, even to each other, by asking if I would like to exchange my sleeping-room for another.

“Why should I?” I interrogated, trying to laugh. “We are not sure where *she* goes after she leaves it. It is something to know that she is no longer there.”

Mea had to be taken into confidence after she burst into the drawing-room at twilight, one evening, and shut the door, setting her back against it and trembling from head to foot. She was

as white as a sheet, and when she spoke, it was in a whisper. Something had chased her down- [209]
stairs, she declared. The hall-lamp was burning, and she could see, by looking over her shoulder, that the halls and stairs were empty but for her terrified self. But Something—*Somebody*—in high-heeled shoes, that went "Tap! tap! tap!" on the oaken floor and staircase, was behind her from the time she left the upper chamber where she had been dressing, until she reached the parlor door. Her nerves were not as stout as mine, perhaps, but she was no coward, and she was not given to foolish imaginations. When we told her what had been seen, she took a more philosophical view of the situation than I was able to do.

"Bodiless things can't hurt bodies!" she opined, and readily joined our secret circle.

Were we, as a family, as I heard a woman say when we were not panic-stricken at the rumored approach of yellow-fever, "a queer lot, taken altogether"? I think so, sometimes.

The crisis came in February of that same winter.

My sister Alice and a young cousin who was near her age—fourteen—were sent off to bed a little after nine one evening, that they might get plenty of "beauty sleep." Passing the drawing-room door, which was ajar, they were tempted to enter by the red gleam of the blazing fire of soft coal. Nobody else was there to enjoy it, and they sat them down for a school-girlish talk, prolonged until the far-off cry "All's well!" of the sentinel at the "Barrack" on Capitol Square told the conscience-smitten pair that it was ten o'clock. Going into the hall, they were surprised to find it dark. We found afterward that the servant whose duty it was to fill the lamp had neglected it, and it had burned out. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and the great window on the lower landing of the staircase was unshuttered. The arched door dividing the two halls was open, and from the doorway of the parlor they had a full view of the stairs. The moonbeams flooded it half- [210]
way up to the upper landing; and from the dark hall they saw a white figure moving slowly down the steps. The mischievous pair instantly jumped to the conclusion that one of "the boys"—my brothers—was on his way, *en déshabillé*, to get a drink of water from the pitcher that always stood on a table in the reception-room, or main hall. To get it, he must pass within a few feet of them, and they shrank back into the embrasure of the door behind them, pinching each other in wicked glee to think how they would tease the boy about the prank next morning. Down the stairs it moved, without sound, and slowly, the concealed watchers imagined, listening for any movement that might make retreat expedient. They said, afterward, that his nightgown trailed on the stairs, also that he might have had something white cast over his head. These things did not strike them as singular while they watched his progress, so full were they of the fun of the adventure.

It crossed the moonlit landing—an unbroken sheet of light—and stepped, yet more slowly, from stair to stair of the four that composed the lowermost flight. It was on the floor and almost within the archway when the front door opened suddenly and in walked the boys, who had been out for a stroll.

In a quarter-second the apparition was gone. As Alice phrased it:

"It did not go backward or forward. It did not sink into the floor. It just was *not!*"

With wild screams the girls threw themselves upon the astonished boys, and sobbed out the story. In the full persuasion that a trick had been played upon the frightened children, the brothers rushed up-stairs and made a search of the premises. The hubbub called every grown member of the household to the spot except our deaf grandmother, who was fast asleep in her bed up-stairs.

Assuming the command which was his right, my father ordered all hands to bed so [211]
authoritatively that none ventured to gainsay the edict. In the morning he made light to the girls and boys of the whole affair, fairly laughing it out of court, and, breakfast over, sent them off to school and academy. Then he summoned our mother, my sister, and myself to a private conference in "the chamber."

He began business without preliminaries. Standing on the rug, his back to the fire, his hands behind him, in genuine English-squirely style, he said, as nearly as I can recall his words:

"It is useless to try to hide from ourselves any longer that there is something wrong with this house. I have known it for a year and more. In fact, we had not lived here three months before I was made aware that some mystery hung about it.

"One windy November night I had gone to bed as usual, before your mother finished her book."

He glanced smilingly at her. Her proclivity for reading into the small hours was a family joke.

"It was a stormy night, as I said, and I lay with closed eyes, listening to the wind and rain, and thinking over next day's business, when somebody touched my feet. Somebody—not something! Hands were laid lightly upon them, were lifted and laid in the same way upon my knees, and so on until they rested more heavily on my chest, and I felt that some one was looking into my face. Up to that moment I had not a doubt that it was your mother. Like the careful wife she is, she was arranging the covers over me to keep out stray draughts. So, when she bent to look into my face, I opened my eyes to thank her.

"She was not there! I was gazing into the empty air. The pressure was removed as soon as I

lifted my eyelids. I raised myself on my elbow and looked toward the fireplace. Your mother was deep in her book, her back toward me. I turned over without sound, and looked under the bed [212] from the side next the wall. The firelight and lamplight shone through, unobstructed.

"I speak of this now for the first time. I have never opened my lips about it, even to your mother, until this moment. But it has happened to me, not once, nor twice, nor twenty—but fifty times—maybe more. It is always the same thing. The hands—I have settled in my mind that they are those of a small woman or of a child, they are so little and light—are laid on my feet, then on my knees, and travel upward to my chest. There they rest for a few seconds, sometimes for a whole minute—I have timed them—and *something* looks into my face and is gone!

"How do I account for it? I don't account for it at all! I know that it *is!* That is all. Shakespeare said, long before I was born, that 'there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.' This is one of them. You can see, now, daughter"—turning to me—"why I was not incredulous when you brought your ghost upon the scene. I have been on the lookout for what our spiritualistic friends call 'further manifestations.'"

"You believe, then," Mea broke in, "that the girls really saw something supernatural on the stairs last night? That it was not a trick of moonlight and imagination?"

"If we can make them think so, it will be better for them than to fill their little brains with ghostly fears. That was the reason I took a jesting tone at breakfast-time. I charged them, on the penalty of being the laughing-stock of all of us, not to speak of it to any one except ourselves. I wish you all to take the cue. Moreover, and above everything else, don't let the servants get hold of it. There would be no living in the house with them, if they were to catch the idea that it is 'haunted.'"

He drew his brows into the horseshoe frown that meant annoyance and perplexity. "How I hate [213] the word! You girls are old enough to understand that the value of this property would be destroyed were this story to creep abroad. I would better burn the house down at once than to attempt to sell it at any time within the next fifty years with a ghost-tale tagged to it.

"Now, here lies the case! We can talk to outsiders of what we have seen and felt and heard in this, our home, where your grandmother, your mother and father have hoped to live comfortably and to die in peace, or we can keep our own counsel like sensible, brave Christians. 'Bodiless spirits cannot hurt bodies,' and"—the frown passing before a humorous gleam—"the little gray lady seems to be amiable enough. I can testify that her hands are light, and that they pet, not strike. She is timid, too. What do you say—all of you? Can we hold our tongues?"

We promised in one voice. We kept the pledge so well that both the girls and the boys were convinced of our incredulity. Our father forbade them positively to drop a hint of their foolish fancies in the hearing of the servants. Young as they were, they knew what stigma would attach to a haunted house in the community. As time passed, the incident faded from their minds. It was never mentioned in their hearing.

A year went by without further demonstration on the part of the little gray lady, except for two nocturnal visitations of the small, caressing hands. My father admitted this when we questioned him on the subject; but he would not talk of it.

The one comic element connected with the bodiless visitant was introduced, oddly enough, by our sanctimonious clerical uncle-in-law, who now and then paid us visits of varying lengths. As he came unannounced, it was not invariably convenient to receive him. On one occasion his appearance caused dismay akin to consternation. We were expecting a houseful of younger [214] friends within two days, and needed the guest-room he must occupy. He was good for a week at the shortest.

True to the Arab-like traditions of hospitality that pervaded all ranks of Old Dominion society, we suffered nothing of this to appear in our behavior. Nor could he have heard the anguished discussion of ways and means that went on between Mea and myself late that night. It was, therefore, a delightful surprise when he announced, next morning, his intention of going out to Olney that day, and to remain there for—perhaps a week. He "had let too long a time elapse since he had paid the good people there a visit. He didn't want them to think he had forgotten them."

One of the "good people," the wife of my mother's brother, drove into town to spend the day with us, a week after the close of his stay at Olney. "Aunt Sue" was a prime favorite with us all, and she was in fine feather to-day, full of fun and anecdote. She interrupted a spicy bit of family news to say, by-and-by:

"Did any of you ever suspect that your house is haunted?"

"How ridiculous!" laughed my mother. "Why do you ask?"

The narrator laughed yet more merrily.

"The funniest thing you ever heard! The old gentleman had an awful scare the last night he was here. I asked him what he had eaten—and drunk—for supper that evening. But he stuck to it that he was standing at his window, looking out into the moonlight in the garden, when somebody came up behind him, and took him by the elbows and turned him clear around! He felt the two hands that grabbed hold of him so plainly that he made sure Horace had hidden under the bed and jumped out to scare him. So he looked under the bed and in the wardrobe and the [215]

closet, and, for all I know, in the bureau drawers and under the washstand, for the boy. There was nobody in the room but himself, and the door was locked. He says he wouldn't sleep in that room another night for a thousand dollars."

"Nobody is likely to offer it!" retorted Mea, dryly. "I have slept there nearly a thousand nights, and nothing ever caught hold of me."

Passing over what might or might not have been a link in the true, weird history of our bodiless tenant, I leap a chasm of a dozen years to wind up the tale of the "little gray lady," so far as it bears directly upon our family. After the death of her husband and the marriages of sons and daughters left my mother alone in the old colonial homestead, she decided to sell it and to live with my youngest sister.

The property was bought as a "Church Home"—a sort of orphanage, conducted under the patronage of a prominent Episcopal parish renowned for good works. In altering the premises to adapt buildings to their new uses, the workmen came upon the skeleton of a small woman about four feet below the surface of the front yard. She lay less than six feet away from the wall of the house, and directly under the drawing-room window. There was no sign of coffin or coffin-plate. Under her head was a high, richly carved tortoise-shell comb, mute evidence that she had not been buried in cap and shroud, as was the custom a hundred years agone. The oldest inhabitant of a city that is tenacious of domestic legends, had never heard of an interment in that quarter of a residential and aristocratic district. The street, named for the eminent lawyer, must have been laid out since the house was built, and may have been cut right through grounds, then far more spacious than when we bought the place. Even so, the grave was dug in the front garden, and so close to the house as to render untenable the theory that the plot was ever part of a family burying-ground. [216]

The papers took inquisitive note of all these circumstances, and let the matter drop as an unexplained mystery. Within the present occupancy of the house, I have heard that the gray lady still walks on moonlight nights, and, in gusty midnights, visits the bedside of terrified inmates to press small, light hands upon the feet, and so passing upward, to rest upon the chest of the awakened sleeper. I was asked by one who had felt them, if I had "ever heard the legend that a bride, dressed for her wedding, fell dead in that upper chamber ages ago."

My informant could not tell me from whom she had the grewsome tale, or the date thereof. "Somebody had told her that it happened once upon a time." She knew that the unquiet creature still "walked the halls and stairs."

She should have been "laid" by the decent ceremony of burial in consecrated ground, awarded to the exhumed bones.

I have talked with a grandson of our former next-door neighbor, and had from him a circumstantial account of the disinterment of the nameless remains. They must have lain nearer the turf above them, a century back, than when they were found. The young man was a boy when he ran to the hole made by the workmen's spades, and watched the men bring to light the entire skeleton. He verified the story of the high, carved comb. He told me, too, of a midnight alarm of screaming children at the vision of a little gray lady, walking between the double row of beds in the dormitory, adding:

"I told those who asked if any story was attached to the house, that I had lived next door ever since I was born, and played every day with your sisters and brothers, and never heard a whisper that the house was haunted."

So said all our neighbors. We kept our own counsel. It was our father's wise decree.

I have told my ghost-story with no attempt at explanation of psychical phenomena. After all these years I fall back, when questioned as to hypotheses, upon my father's terse dicta: [217]

"How do I account for it? I don't account for it at all!"

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[218]

# XXI

## TWO MONUMENTAL FRIENDSHIPS

Even at that period, when I visited my father's Northern kindred, I failed to bring them to a right comprehension of the frank, and oftentimes intimate, relations existing between the young people of both sexes in my Virginia home. I have marvelled within myself since, how these relations came to be established at the first. We brought to the New World, and retained, scores of English customs of domestic management, and traditions of social obligations. It was never the fashion in England, or in her Northern colonies, for boys to begin "visiting the young ladies" before they discarded roundabouts, and to keep up the fascinating habit until they tottered into the grave at fourscore. For the same dozen young fellows to call at least once a week upon as many young girls; to read, chat, jest, flirt, drive, ride, and walk with them, month after month, and year after year, perhaps choosing one of the dozen as a lifelong partner, and quite as often running off for a season to another county or State, and bringing home a wife, with whom the philosophic coterie speedily got acquainted amiably, widening the circle to take her in, with

never a thought of chagrin.

The thumbnail sketches I have jotted down in my “purposeful” chapter, bring in the same names, again and again. They were, indeed, and in truth, household words. None of the young men and maidens catalogued in the Christmas doggerel I shall speak of, presently, intermarried. Two—perhaps four—had secret intentions that tended toward such a result in the fulness of time. [219] Intentions, that interfered in nowise with their participation in the general hilarity. If there were any difference in the demeanor of the engaged, or partially betrothed, pairs from the behavior of the fancy-free, it was in a somewhat too obvious show of impartiality. Engagements were never “announced,” and if suspected, were ignored in general society. Thus it often happened that a direct proposal took a girl utterly by surprise.

I was but sixteen, and on a summer vacation in Albemarle County, when a collegian of nineteen, who was swinging me “under green apple boughs”—lazily, because the rapid rush through the air would interfere with the chat we were carrying on, in full sight of groups scattered on the porch steps and about the lawn—brought down my thoughts—which had strayed far afield under the influence of the languorous motion, the sunset and the soft mingling of young voices—with stunning velocity, by declaring that he adored me, and “couldn’t keep it to himself any longer.”

With never the suspicion of a blush, I looked him straight in the eyes and begged him not to make a goose of himself, adding: “I didn’t think you mistook me for a girl who enjoys that kind of badinage. It is not a bit to my taste. And we have been such good friends!”

When he suffocated himself dangerously with protestations that actually brought tears to his eyes, I represented that lookers-on would think we had quarrelled if I left the swing and his society abruptly, as I certainly should do if he did not begin to talk sensibly, out of hand. I set the example by calling to a boy who was passing with a basket of apples, and calmly selecting one, taking my time in doing it.

Coquetry? Not a bit of it! I liked the lad too well to allow him to make a breach in our friendship by love-making. When he came to his senses (four years later!) he thanked me for not [220] taking the matter seriously.

We gave, and attended, few large parties. But there were no dead calms in our intercourse. Somebody was always getting up a frolic of some sort. Tableaux, musicales, “sociables,” where, in Christmas week, and sometimes at other times, we played old-fashioned games, such as “Consequences” upon slips of paper, and “Kings of England” with cards, and “What is my thought like?” *viva voce*. We had picnics in warm weather. Richmond College boys invited us out to receptions following orations on February 22d, and we had Valentine parties, with original verses, on February 14th.

Nowhere, and at no time, was there romping. Still less would kissing-games be allowed among really “nice” young people. This was deemed incredible by my Boston cousins, and yet more strange the fact that we kept up among ourselves decorous conventions that appeared stiff and inconsistent to those not to the manor born and bred. For example, while I might, and did, name our most intimate masculine visitors, “Tom,” “Dick,” or “Harry” in chat with my girl friends, I addressed them as “Mr. Smith,” “Jones,” or “Robinson,” and always spoke of them in the same manner in mentioning them to strangers. For a man to touch a lady’s arm or shoulder to attract her attention, was an unpardonable liberty. If a pair were seen to “hold hands,” it was taken for granted that they were engaged or—as I heard a matron say, when she had surprised a couple walking in the moonlight, the fair one’s hand on the swain’s arm, and his laid lightly upon it —“they ought to be.”

The well-bred girl of the fifties might be a rattle; she might enjoy life with guileless abandon that earned her the reputation of “dashing”; she parried shaft of teasing and badinage with weapons of proof; but she was never “fast.” She kept her self-respect, and challenged the [221] reverent respect of the men who knew her best.

To this code of social and ceremonial ethics, and to the ban put upon dancing and card-playing by church and parents, is undoubtedly due the fact that Southern women of that generation were almost invariably what we would call, “good talkers.” In the remembrance, and in contrasting that all-so-long-ago with the times in which we live, I could write a jeremiade upon “Conversation as a Lost Art.”

From the list of names drawn into line by some Yule-tide rhymes of my own, bearing the date of “1852,” I single two that must have more than a passing notice if I would write the true story of my threescore-and-ten years.

Mary Massie Ragland was, at that Christmas-tide, twenty-two years of age. I had liked and admired her from the first. In time she grew into a place in my heart no other friend had ever held, and which, left vacant by her death six years later, has never been taken. I think no man or woman has more than one complete, all-satisfying friendship in a lifetime. Her portrait hangs against the wall in my bedchamber now. I awake each morning to meet her gaze bent, as in life, on mine. In sorrow and in joy, I have gone secretly to my room, as to an oratory, to seek in the depths of the beautiful eyes the sympathy never denied while she was with me, and visible to my dull vision. To a mind stored richly with the best literature, eager to acquire and faithful to retain, she added exquisite fancies, poetic tastes, and love for the beautiful that was a passion. Her heart was warm, deep, tender, and true. It well-nigh breaks mine in remembering *how* true!

In all the ten years in which we lived and loved together in closest intimacy, not a cloud ever crossed the heaven of our friendship.

One remark, uttered simply and with infinite gentleness by her, after a great loss had chastened her buoyant spirits, stands with me as the keynote to action and character. [222]

I was commenting somewhat sharply upon my disappointment in not meeting, from one whom I loved and trusted, the fulness of sympathy I thought I had a right to expect in what was a genuine trial to myself.

"She was hard and critical!" I moaned. "You saw it, yourself! You cannot deny it! And she was absolutely rude to *you!*"

"Dear!" The stroking fingers upon my bowed head were a benediction; the sweet voice was eloquent with compassion. "Don't judge her harshly! She is *good*, and true to you and to the right. But she has never had sorrow to make her tender."

How boundless was the tenderness, my mentor, who comforted while she admonished, learned in the school of pain in which she studied until Death dismissed her spirit, was fully known to Him alone whose faithful disciple she was to the end.

To the world she showed a smiling front; her merry laugh and ready repartee were the life of whatever company she entered, and over and through it all, it might be reverently said of the true, heroic soul, that, to high and humble, "her compassions failed not."

"Refined by nature and refined by grace!" said one above her coffin.

I added, inly: "And by sorrow!"

"The kind of woman to whom a fellow takes off his hat when he thinks of her," a young cousin, who had been as a brother to her, wrote to me after her death. "It took six thousand years to make one such. I shall never know another."

While on a visit to my old and beloved preceptors, Mrs. Nottingham and her daughters, then resident in Lexington, Virginia, I met Junius Fishburn, lately graduated from Washington College —now Washington and Lee. He was an early and intimate friend of the "Ragland girls," and in a way (according to Virginia ways of reckoning kinship) a family connection of theirs, too remote to deserve recognition in any other region or society. But he claimed through this the right to omit the initial steps of acquaintanceship, and I recognized the right. We were quickly friends—so quickly, that it was no surprise to me when he enclosed a note to me in a letter to one of the Ragland sisters, shortly after my return home. I answered it, and thus was established a correspondence continued through a term of years, without serious interruption, up to the day when, in the second year after my marriage, my husband entered my room with a paper in his hand, and a grave look on his face. [223]

"Here is sad, sad news for you," he said, gently. "Professor Fishburn is dead!"

The beautiful young wife, to whom he had been married less than two years, was a sister of "Stonewall Jackson's" first wife, a daughter of Dr. George Junkin, then President of Washington College, and sister of the poet, Margaret Junkin Preston. After "June's" death, Mrs. Preston, my dear friend, wrote to me of a desire her widowed sister hesitated to express directly to me. Her husband had told her that more of his early and inner life was told in this series of letters to me than he could ever relate to any one else. Would I be willing to let her read a few selected by myself? I had known him before he met her. If the request were unreasonable, she would withdraw it.

There could have been no surer proof of the sincerity, the purity, and absolute absence of everything pertaining to love-making and flirtation in our ten-year-long friendship, than was offered in the circumstance that, without a moment's hesitation or the exclusion of a single letter, I made up a parcel of the epistles, and sent it, with my fond love, to the widow of my lamented friend. [224]

His letters were but a degree less charming than his conversation. I considered him, then, and I have not changed my opinion after seeing much more of the world of society men and brilliant women, one of the best talkers I have known.

"You have hit it off happily there," said Mary, at the jolly reading of the lines on New-Year's Day, to "us girls."

And she repeated:

"Social and witty, kind and clever;
His chat an easy, pleasant flow,
A thread you'd never wish to sever."

He was all this, and more. Our correspondence was a stage, and an important, in my education. We discussed books, authors, military and political heroes, psychology, philology, theology, and, as time made us more intimate with the depths underlying the dancing waves of thought and fancy, we talked much of religious faith and tenets.

On August 26, 1850, I wrote to Effie:

> "My long neglect of correspondents (for you are not the only neglected one) has caused letters in abundance to accumulate. Among others there lies before me one from my friend, Junius F., a full sheet, bearing a date anterior to your last, and requesting an 'immediate reply.' He is a fine fellow—one of my 'literary' friends. Have you chanced to see anything of his published work? His poems, essays, etc., would reflect credit upon any one. I give you the preference to-day because it will not hurt him to wait."

The same calm confidence in the liking we bore one another prevailed throughout our intercourse. Untimely storms and sudden gusts belong to the tropics of passion, not to the temperate zone of Platonic affection. [225]

It was about this time that my presumptuous brain conceived the thought that my friend should be in the pulpit, instead of in the professorial chair to which he was appointed after winning his degree from the University of Virginia, whither he had gone from Washington College for a post-graduate course, and a more thorough equipment for his chosen life-work. With the Brahmin traditions strong upon me, and the blue blood of Presbyterianism seething in my veins, I forthwith made out a "call," amplified through six pages of Bath post, and dispatched it to Lexington.

The nearest approach to tenderness in any of our many letters, came out in his reply:

"A brother's fondness gushed up in my heart as I read your earnest pleadings," was the opening sentence of a masterly exposition of the reasons that, as he phrased it, "forbid my unhallowed feet to stand within the sacred desk." I was wrong, and he was right. His fearless utterance of the faith which was the mainspring of life and action, carried force a licensed clergyman seldom gains.

He fought the good fight in the ranks, refusing the commission that had not, as he believed, the King's seal.

I had no living elder brother. I hardly felt the loss while Junius lived. In 1855 he took a year's leave of absence, and spent it in a German university. My father and myself were just setting out for Boston and the White Mountains, and accompanied him as far as New York. Junius and I were promenading the deck of the Potomac steamer when I showed him an ambrotype given me by "a friend whom I am sorry you have never met."

He looked at it intently for a moment, and, in closing the case, searched my face with eyes at once smiling and piercing.

"Are you trying to tell me something?" he asked, in the gentlest of tones.

I answered honestly: "No; there is nothing to tell. We are warm friends—no more." [226]

We were interrupted, and had no more opportunity for confidential chat until that evening, when we strolled from the hotel along the moonlighted streets to the Capitol. He alluded playfully, in a German letter, to the never-to-be-forgotten excursion—our last moonlit ramble, although we did not dream of it then—as "my walk with Corinne to the Capitol."

(Men took time and pains to say graceful things, then-a-days!)

He told me that night—what he had already written in brief in a late letter—of his betrothal, of his happiness, and his ambition to make the best of himself for the dear sake of the woman who was waiting for him in the college town engirdled by the blue Virginian mountains.

The next day but one he sailed. My father and myself bade him "God-speed!" I was glad it so happened.

If I had fewer causes for devout thanksgiving to the Giver of every good and perfect joy than have crowned my life, I should still account myself rich in the memory of these two perfect friendships. In my ignorance of the world that lay without, and far beyond my small circle of thought, and what I believed were activities, I did not rightly appreciate the rarity of the gifts. I did know that they were passing sweet, and longed to prove myself worthy of holding them.

This chapter of my humble record is a sprig of rosemary laid upon Friendship's Shrine.

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# XXII

[227]

## THE "OLD AFRICAN CHURCH"

No description of the Richmond of the forties and fifties would be complete without a sketch of what was, if I mistake not, the first Baptist Church erected in the city. The white congregation that occupied it for some years had built a large, handsome church farther up the hill, and the squat, but spacious, house on the lower slope of Broad Street, was made over to the colored population.

I say “population” advisedly. For perhaps half a century, the Richmond negroes had no other place of public worship, and the communicants in that denomination were numbered by the thousand. They are an emotionally religious race, and I doubt if there were, all told, one hundred colored members of any other sect in the length and breadth of the county of Henrico.

The low-browed, dingy, brick edifice surrendered to their use was said to have a seating capacity of two thousand. It was therefore in demand when mass political meetings were convened. When John B. Gough lectured in our city, no other building could accommodate the crowds that flocked to see and hear him.

Big as it was, the house was filled every Sunday. There was a regular church organization in which deacons and ushers were colored. Of course the Pastor was a white. And oddly enough, or so it seemed to outsiders, the shepherd of the black flock was the President of Richmond College and Divinity School, situated upon the outskirts of the city.

His pastoral duties outside of his pulpit ministrations were not onerous. The Daughters of Zion, [228]
a flourishing society, looked after the sick and afflicted. There were no colored paupers under the slave system, except, once in a great while, “a no ‘count free nigger.” This last word was never applied to a fellow-servant, but freely and disdainfully fitted to the unfortunate freedman.

I was never able to disabuse my mind of appreciation of the comic element in viewing the Rev. Robert Ryland, D.D. (and I am not sure but “LL.D.” as well), in his position as Pastor of the First African Church. He was a staid personage of middle age, who may have been learned. If he were, the incongruity was the more absurd. He was never brilliant. Nor had he the power of adapting himself to his audience that might have saved the situation in some measure. I heard him preach once to his dusky cure of souls. He began by saying, apropos to his text from Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians:

“Shortly after the Apostle’s departure from that place, there arose dissensions in the church at *Co*-rinth.”

A preamble that was greeted by appreciative groans from the women in the audience. As was the assertion, later on, in the same discourse, that—

“Christ may be called the Concrete Idea of our most holy Faith.” Still more pronounced was the murmured applause that succeeded the remark—“This may be true in the Abstract. It is not true in the Concrete.”

“Concrete” was a new word in philosophers’ mouths just then, and he worked it hard.

The anecdote of the parishioner who found “that blessed word ‘Mesopotamia’” the most comforting part of her minister’s sermon, is entirely credible if she were of African descent. Polysyllables were a ceaseless feast to their imaginations. Sesquipedalian periods were spiritual nectar and ambrosia. The barbaric and the florid were bound up in their nature, and the rod of an [229]
alien civilization could not drive it far from them.

In church relations, they recognized and revelled rankly in the levelling principle of Christianity which, within the sacred circle of the bonds of a common faith, made no invidious distinctions between bond and free. The staid D.D. was to them “Brer Ryland” on week-days, as on Sundays. I am sure it never occurred to the humblest of them that whatever of dignity pertained to the relation was his, by virtue of his holy calling, and they were honored in that their spiritual guide belonged to a superior race and was at the head of an institution of learning.

How freely they discussed him and his teachings, will be illustrated by a dialogue overheard by me in my early school-days.

I was walking behind two colored women one Sunday on my way home from church. They were evidently ladies’ maids, from their mincing speech and affected gait, and were invested with what was, as palpably, their mistresses’ discarded finery.

“Brer Rylan’ was quite too severe ’pon dancin’,” was the first sentence that caught my ear. “He is kinder hard ’pon innercint aversions, oncet in a while. You know we read in the Bible that the angels in heaven dance ’round the throne.”

“Yes,” assented the elder of the two, “an’ play ’pon jewsharps! But I’ve been heard that they don’ cross they feet, and that makes a mighty difference in the sin o’ dancin’. Of course, we all of us knows that it’s a sin for a Christyun to dance; but, as you say, Brer Rylan’ is downright oncharitable sometimes in talkin’ ’bout young folks’ ways and frolickin’. He will let them promenade to the music of the band when the students has parties at the college, but never a dancin’ step!”

“Not even,” with a shrill giggle, “if they don’t cross they feet?” [230]

As time whitened the good man’s hair and brought heavier duties to his head and hands, he fell into the habit of delegating the afternoon service at the “Old African” to his neophytes in the Divinity School. He may have judged rightly that it was excellent practice for the ’prentice hand of embryo pulpit orators. One of the brightest of these, who afterward made good the promise of distinguished usefulness in the Southern Church, was the officiating evangelist on a certain Sunday afternoon, when a lively party of girls and collegians planned to attend the “Old African,” in a body, and witness his maiden performance.

He knew we were coming, and why, but he uttered not a word of protest. As he said afterward, “The sooner he got used to mixed audiences, the better.”

What were known as the “Amen benches,” at the left of the pulpit, were reserved for white auditors. They were always full. On this afternoon they were packed tightly. The main body of the church was also filled, and we soon became aware that an unusual flutter of solemn excitement pervaded the well-dressed throng. The front block of seats on each side of the middle aisle was occupied by women, dressed in black, many of them closely veiled, and pocket-handkerchiefs were ostentatiously displayed, generally clasped between black-gloved hands folded upon the pit of the stomach.

“Reminds one of a rising thundercloud!” whispered a graceless youth behind me.

Presently a deacon, likewise lugubrious in aspect, tiptoed into the pulpit, where sat the young theologue, and, holding his silk hat exactly upon the small of his back in the left hand, bent low in offering the right to the preacher.

The subdued rustle and shuffling, incident to the settling into place of a large congregation, prevented us from hearing the low colloquy that succeeded the handshake. We had it in full from [231] one of the actors, that evening.

The functionary began by expressing the gratification of the congregation that “Brer Rylan’ had sent such a talentable young gentleman to ’ficiate ’pon dis occasion.

“We been heerd a-many times of what a promisin’ young gentleman Brer W. is, an’ we is certainly mightily flattered at seein’ him in our midst ’pon dis occasion. I jes’ steps up here, suh, to say dis, an’ to ask is dere anything any of us ken do to resist Brer W. ’pon dis occasion.”

“Thank you, nothing!” responded the other, courteously. “You are very kind. The choir will take care of the music, as usual, I suppose?”

“Suttinly, suh, suttinly! De choir am always dependable ’pon every occasion. An’ dey has prepared special music for dis solemn occasion.”

Reiteration of the word had not aroused the listener’s curiosity. The last adjective, and the tone in which it was brought out, awoke him wide.

“Solemn!” he re-echoed. “Is there anything special in the services of to-day?”

The hand grasping the silk hat executed a half-circle in the air that seemed to frame the black-robed block of sitters for the startled youth.

“Yaas, suh! Surely Brer Rylan’ must ’a’ told Brer W. de nature of our comin’ togedder to-day! It’s a funeral, suh. De dear departed deceasted nigh ’pon two mont’ ago, but we haven’t foun’ it agreeable, as you mought say, to all parties concerned, fur to bring all de family an’ frien’s together tell ter-day. But dey are here now, suh, as you may see fur yourself. An’ we are moughty pleased dat Brer Rylan’ has sont sech a ’sponsible preacher to us as Brer W.”

“Mercy, man!” gasped the affrighted novice, clutching frantically at the notes he had been conning when the deacon accosted him. “I knew nothing of the funeral when I came. I can’t [232] preach a funeral sermon out of hand! There isn’t anything about death in my notes.”

His distress wrought visibly upon the deacon’s sympathies. The hat described a reassuring parabola.

“There, there! It ain’t necessary for Brer W. to discombobberate himself ’pon dat account. A young gentleman of Brer W.’s talents needn’t get skeered at a little thing like an ev’ry-day funeral. All dat Brer W. has to do is to say a few words ’bout de dear deceasted; ’bout de loss to de church, an’ de family, an’ frien’s, an’ de suttinty o’ death, an’ de las’ change. An’ den a few rousements, you know, throwed in at de end. Law! I ken hear Brer W. doin’ it up fine, when I think on it!

“Dar! de choir is a-startin’ de funeral anthim. Thank you, suh, fur comin’ to us, and don’t give yo’self no oneasiness! Sling in dem remarks ’spectin’ de dear deceasted, and you’ll be all right.”

I forget the text of the sermon that followed the anthem and the prayer. I but know that neither it, nor the introduction, had any relevancy to the “occasion.” Our friend became a brilliant speaker in later life. Now, he was no more sophomoric than are nine-tenths of seminary students. But as he went on, we—in the slang of this era—began to sit up and take notice; for with dexterity remarkable in a tyro, he switched off from the main line into a by-road that led, like the paths of glory, to the grave. He had fine feeling and a lively imagination, and the scene and the music had laid hold upon both. As he confessed, subsequently, he surprised himself by his intimate acquaintance with the departed brother. He dwelt upon his fidelity to duty, his devotion to the Church of his love, and what he had done for her best interests. Singling out, as by divination, the widow, whose long crêpe veil billowed stormily with audible sobs, he referred tenderly to her loneliness, and committed her and the fatherless children to the Great Father and [233] Comforter of all. By this time the congregation was a seething mass of emotion. Fluttering handkerchiefs, sighs that swept the church like fitful breezes, and suppressed wails from the central block of reserved seats, drowned the feeling peroration, but we guessed the purport from the speaker’s face and gestures.

As he sat down, the audience arose, as one woman, and broke into a funeral chant never written in any music-book, and in which the choir, who sang by note, took no part:

"We'll pass over Jordan, O my brothers, O my sisters! De water's chilly an' cold, but Hallelujah to de Lamb! Honor de Lamb, my chillun, honor de Lamb!"

This was shouted over and over, with upraised arms at one portion, and, as the refrain was repeated, all joined hands with those nearest to them and shook from head to foot in a sort of Dervish dance, without, however, raising the feet from the floor. It was such an ecstatic shiver as I saw thirty-odd years thereafter, when a Nubian dancer gave an exhibition in a private house in the suburbs of Jerusalem.

I shall have more to say of that chant presently. Return we to the orator of the occasion, whose extemporaneous "effort" had stirred up the pious tumult.

As soon as his share of the service was over, he slipped out of the box-pulpit and sidled through the throng to the corner where we were grouped, watching for a chance to make our exit without attracting the attention of the worshippers. He had just reached us when the quick-eyed, fleet-footed deacon was at his side. We overheard what passed between them.

"Brer W., suh, I come to thank you in the name o' de bereaved fam'ly of de dear deceasted, suh, for yo' powerful sermon dis arternoon. Nothin' could 'a' been better an' mo' suitabler. Dey [234]
all agree on dat ar' p'int, suh. Every one on 'em is *puffickly* satisfied! You couldn't 'a' done no better, suh, ef you 'a' had a year to get ready in."

Poor W., red to the roots of his fair hair, murmured his thanks, and the sable official was backing away when he recollected something unsaid:

"Dar was jes' one little matter I mought 'a' mentioned at de fust, suh (not dat it made no difference whatsomever; de fam'ly, maybe, wouldn't keer to have me speak o' sech a trifle), *but de dear deceased was a sister!*"

Then it was that W. turned an agonized face upon our convulsed group:

"For Heaven's sake, is there a back door or window by which a fellow can get out of this place?"

The choir of the "Old African" was one of the shows of the city. Few members of it could read the words of the hymns and anthems. Every one of them could read the notes, and follow them aright. The parts were well-balanced and well-sustained. Those who have heard the Fisk University Jubilee singers do not need the assurance that the quality of the negro voice is rarely sweet and rich, and that, as a race, they have a passion for music. Visitors from Northern cities who spent the Sabbath in Richmond seldom failed to hear the famed choir of the Old African. On this afternoon, the then popular and always beautiful *Jerusalem, My Happy Home*, was rendered with exquisite skill and feeling. George F. Root, who heard the choir more than once while he was our guest, could not say enough of the beauty of this anthem-hymn as given by the colored band. He declared that one soloist had "the finest natural tenor he ever heard."

But these were not the representative singers of the race. Still less should airs, composed by white musicians and sung all over the country as "negro melodies," pass as characteristic. They are the white man's conception of what the expatriated tribes should think and feel and sing. [235]

More than thirty years after the maiden sermon of which I have written, our little party of American travellers drew back against the wall of the reputed "house of Simon the Tanner" in Jaffa (the ancient Joppa), to let a funeral procession pass. The dead man, borne without a coffin, upon the shoulders of four gigantic Nubians, was of their race. Two-thirds of the crowd, that trudged, barefooted, through the muddy streets behind the bier, were of the same nationality. And as they plodded through the mire, they chanted the identical "wild, wailing measure" familiar to me from my infancy, which was sung that Sunday afternoon to the words "We'll pass over Jordan"—even to the oft-iterated refrain, "Honor, my chillun, honor de Lamb!"

The gutterals of the outlandish tongue were all that was unlike. The air was precisely the same, and the time and intonations.

We have taken great pains to trace the negro folk-lore back to its root. The musical antiquarian is yet to arise who will track to their home the unwritten tunes and chants the liberated negro is trying to forget, and to which his grandparents clung lovingly, all unaware that they were an inheritance more than a dozen generations old.

Trained choirs might learn "book music," and scorn the airs crooned over their cradles, and shouted and wailed in prayer and camp meetings, by mothers and fathers. The common people held obstinately to their very own music, and were not to be shaken loose by the "notions" of "young folks who hadn't got the egg-shells offen they hades."

I asked once, during a concert given by students from Hampton Institute, if the leader would call upon them for certain of the old songs—naming two or three. I was told that they objected to [236]
learning them, because they were associated with the days of their bondage. I did not take the trouble to convince the spruce *maestro* that what I wished to hear were memorials of the days of wildest liberty, when their forbears hunted "big game" in their tangled native forests, and paddled their boats upon rivers the white man had never explored.

# XXIII

## HOW “ALONE” CAME TO BE

[237]

“*June 5th, 1854.*

“... You anticipate from this formidable array of duties, hindrances, etc., that it will be some time, yet, before I can avail myself of your bewitching invitation. I doubt if I shall be ready to accept Powhie’s gallant offer of his escort, although it is tempting. But—

“‘I’m coming! yes, I’m coming!’

in July, wind, weather, and all else permitting.

“You will probably see a more august personage next Sunday. I cannot resist the temptation to let you into the secret of a little manœuvring of my own. I had an intimation a few weeks ago that Miss L. and poor lonely Mr. S., her near neighbor, were nodding at each other across the road. There was an allusion to horseback rides, and a less fertile imagination could have concocted a very tolerable story out of the facts (?) in hand.

“But *didn’t* I make it tell? The plausible tale crashed into the peaceful brain of our worthy uncle-in-law like a bomb-shell into a quiet chamber at midnight. How he squirmed, and fidgeted, and tried to smile! ’Twas all a ghastly grin! I winked at Herbert, who chanced to come in while the narrative was in progress. The rogue had heard but the merest outline, and paid no attention to that; but he made a ‘sight draught’ upon his inventive talents, and—adding to the rides, ‘moonlight walks, afternoon strolls to the tobacco patch, and along the road toward the big gate to see whether the joint-worm was in the wheat,’ and insinuations that these excursions were more to the lady’s taste [238] than ‘sanctuary privileges’—almost drove the venerable wooer crazy.

“‘Yes!’ said he, bitterly, pushing back his chair from the table. ‘*He* has a house and plantation. A land-rope is a strong rope! Women look at these things.’

“He actually followed Herbert to the front door to supplicate—Herbert declares, ‘with tears in both eyes’—that he would at least tell him if his information was ‘authentic, or if it might not be that he was trying to scare him?’ Herbert excused himself upon the plea of pressing business, but invited him to ‘drop into the office some time if he would have further particulars.’

“Our plot works to a charm. The reverend swain sets out ‘this very week’ for Powhatan, and ‘means to have the matter settled.’ So, look out for him!

“All this rigmarole is strictly true. No boy of seventeen was ever more angrily jealous or desperate. You may, if you like, let the Montrosians into the fun, but, until the matter is settled, don’t let the key pass into other hands.

“Isn’t it glorious? Two bald heads ducking and ogling to one fortunate damsel—their bleared eyes looking ‘pistols for two, coffee for one!’ at each other? What an entrancing interruption to the monotony of a life that, until now, has flowed as gently as a canal stream over a grade of a foot to a mile?”

I remark, *en passant*, what will probably interest not a living creature of this generation—to wit, that neither of the competitors won the amiable woman they made ridiculous by their wintry wooing. She returned a kindly negative to both bachelor and widower, and died, as she had lived, the beloved maiden “Auntie” of numerous nieces and nephews.

Before transcribing other passages from the same letter—one of unusual length even for that epistolary age—I must retrace my steps to pick up the first thread of what was in time to thicken into a “cord of stronger twine.”

When I was sixteen I began to write a book. It was a school-girl’s story—a picture crudely [239] done, but as truthful as I could make it—of what was going on in the small world I thought large, and every personage who figured in it was a portrait. In that book I lived and moved, and had my inmost being for that year. I spoke to nobody of what I was doing. The shrinking from confiding to my nearest and dearest what I was writing, was reluctance unfeigned and unconquerable in the case of this, my best-beloved brain-child. None of my own household questioned me as to what went on in the hours spent in my “study,” as the corner, or closet, or room where I planted myself and desk, was named. We had a way of respecting one another’s eccentricities that had no insignificant share in maintaining the harmony which earned for ours the reputation of a singularly happy family.

I was allowed to plan my day’s work, so long as it did not impinge upon the rights or convenience of the rest. Directly after breakfast, I called my two willing little pupil-sisters to their lessons. The rock and shoals of threatened financial disaster that menaced our home for a while,

were safely overpast by now. We were once more in smooth water, and sacrifices might be remitted. I continued to teach my little maids for sheer love of them, and of seeing their minds grow. Both were bright and docile. Alice had an intellect of uncommon strength and of a remarkably original cast. It was a delight to instruct her for some years. After that, we studied together.

Our "school-time" lasted from nine until one. I never emerged from the study until three—the universal dinner-hour in Richmond. If visitors called, as often happened, my mother and sister excused me. In the afternoon we went out together, making calls, or walking, or driving. In the evening there was usually company, or we practised with piano and flute, and, as Herbert grew old enough to join our "band," he brought in his guitar, or we met in "the chamber," and one read [240] aloud in the sweet old way while the others wrought with needle and pencil and drawing-board. This was the routine varied by occasional concerts and parties. Now and then, I got away from the group and wrote until midnight.

In 1853 the *Southern Era*, a semi-literary weekly owned and run by the then powerful and popular "Sons of Temperance," offered a prize of fifty dollars for the best temperance serial of a given length. I had written at sixteen, and recast it at eighteen, a story entitled "Marrying Through Prudential Motives," and sent it secretly to *Godey's Magazine*. It bore the signature of "Mary Vale"—a veiled suggestion of my real name. For four years I heard nothing of the waif. I had had experiences enough of the same kind to dishearten a vain or a timorous writer. It was balm to my mortified soul to reflect that nobody was the wiser for the ventures and the failures.

So I set my pen in rest, and went in for the prize; less, I avow, for the fifty dollars than for the reward for seeing my ambitious bantling in print. So faint and few were my expectations of this consummation, that I went off to Boston for the summer, without intimating to any one the audacious cast I had made. I had been with my cousins six weeks when my mother sent me a copy of the *Southern Era*, containing what she said in a letter by the same mail, "promised to be the best serial it had published." I opened the letter first, and tore the wrapper from the paper carelessly.

How it leaped at me from the outermost page!

**OUR PRIZE STORY!**
**KATE HARPER**
**By Marion Harland**

All set up in what we christened in the last quarter-century, "scare-heads." [241]

As I learned later from home-letters, the editor, after advertising vainly for the author's address, had published without waiting for it. I wrote home that night to my father, pouring out the whole revelation, and stipulating that the secret should be kept among ourselves.

"Marion Harland" was, again, a hint of my name, so covert that it was not guessed at by readers in general. The editor, an acquaintance of my father, was informed of my right to draw the money. I continued to send tales and poems to him for two years, and preserved my incognito.

In the late spring of 1853, "Mea," Herbert, and I were sitting in the parlor on a wild night when it rained as rain falls nowhere else as in the seven-hilled city. My companions had their magazines. Mea's, as I well recollect, was *Harper's New Monthly;* my brother had the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Ned Rhodes had taken *Harper's* for me from the very first issue. My father subscribed conscientiously for the *Messenger* to encourage Southern literature. All right-minded Virginians acknowledged the duty of extending such encouragement to the extent of the subscription price of "native productions."

I had dragged out the rough copy of my book from the bottom of my desk that day, and was now looking it over at a table on one side of the fireplace. Chancing upon the page describing Celestia Pratt's entrance upon school-life, I laughed aloud.

"What is it?" queried my sister, looking up in surprise.

"See if you know her," I responded, and read out the scene. She joined in the laugh.

"To the life!" she pronounced. "Go on!"

I finished the chapter, and the two resumed their magazines. Presently Herbert tossed his aside.

"I say!" with boyish impetuosity. "This is stupid after what you gave us. Haven't you 'anything [242] more of the same sort?'"

It was a slang phrase of the day.

It was the "Open Sesame" of my literary life.

They kept me reading until nearly midnight, dipping in here for a scene, there for a character-sketch, until my voice gave out.

I began rewriting *Alone* next day, and we welcomed stormy evenings for the next two months. When the MS. was ready for the press, I wrote the "Dedication to my Brother and Sister" as a

pleasant surprise to my generous critics. They did not suspect it until they read it in print.

Getting the work into print was not so easy as the eager praises of my small audience might have inclined me to expect. The principal book-store in Richmond at that time was owned by Adolphus Morris, a warm personal friend of my father. The two had been intimate for years, and the families of the friends maintained most cordial relations. Yet it was with sore and palpable quakings of heart that I betook myself to the office of the man who took on dignity as a prospective publisher, and laid bare my project. It was positive *pain* to tell him that I had been writing under divers signatures for the press since I was fourteen. The task grew harder as the judicial look, I have learned to know since as the publisher's perfunctory guise, crept over the handsome face. When I owned, with blushes that scorched my hair, to the authorship of the "Robert Remer" series, and of the prize story in the *Era*, he said frankly and coolly that he "had never read either." He "fancied that he had heard Mrs. Morris speak of the Remer papers. Religious—were they not?"

He liked me, and his pretty wife (who had far more brains and vivacity than he) had made a pet of me. He honored my father, and was under business obligations to him. I was conscious, while I [243]
labored away at my share in my first business interview, that he lent kindly heed to me for these reasons, and not that he had the smallest grain of faith in the merits of my work. I was a child in his sight, and he would humor my whim.

"I am willing to submit your manuscript to my reader," he said, at last.

I looked the blank ignorance I felt. He explained patronizingly. He had patronized me from the moment I said that I had written a book. I have become familiar with this phase of publisherhood, also, since that awful day.

"John R. T. reads all my manuscripts!" fell upon my ear like a trickle of boiling lead. "Send it down when it is ready, and I will put it into his hands. You know, I suppose, that everything intended for printing must be written on one side of the paper?"

I answered meekly that I had heard as much, bade him "Good morning!" and crept homeward, humbled to the dust.

"John R. T.!" (Nobody ever left out the "R." in speaking of him, and nobody, so far as I ever heard, knew for what it stood.)

He was the bright son of a worthy citizen; had been graduated at the University of Virginia; studied *at* the law, and entered the editorial profession as manager-in-chief, etc., of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He had social ambitions, and had succeeded in acquiring a sort of world-weary air, and a gentle languor of tone and bearing which might have been copied from D'Israeli's *Young Duke*, a book in high favor in aristocratic circles. I never saw "Johnny"—as graceless youths who went to school with him grieved him to the heart by calling him on the street—without thinking of the novel. Like most caricatures, the likeness was unmistakable.

And into the hands of this "reader" I was to commit my "brain-child!" I cried out against the [244]
act in such terms as these, and stronger, in relating the substance of the interview to my father.

"Be sensible, little girl! Keep a cool head!" he counselled. "Business is business. And I suppose John R. understands his. I will take the manuscript to Morris myself to-morrow."

"And make him comprehend," I interjected, "that I do not shirk criticism. I see the faults of my book. If I were sure that it would be judged fairly, I wouldn't mind it so much."

The reader kept the manuscript two months. Then my father wrote a civil demand to Mr. Morris for the return of the work. I was too sick of soul to lift a finger to reclaim what I was persuaded was predestined to be a dead failure. Two days later the bulky parcel came back. Mr. Morris had enclosed with it the reader's opinion:

"I regret that the young author's anxiety to regain possession of her bantling has prevented me from reading more than a few pages of the story. Judging from what I have read, however, I should not advise you to publish it upon speculation."

I laid the note before my father after supper that evening. Our mother had early inculcated in our minds the eminent expediency of never speaking of unpleasant topics to a tired and hungry man. We always waited until bath, food, and rest had had their perfect work upon the head of the house. He leaned back in his arm-chair, the evening paper at his elbow, his slippered feet to the glowing grate, and a good cigar between his lips. His teeth tightened suddenly upon it when he heard the note. It was curt. To my flayed sensibilities, it was brutal. I see, now, that it was businesslike and impersonal. Were I a professional "reader," I should indite one as brief, and not [245]
a whit more sympathetic. *Alone* was my first book, and a sentient fraction of my soul and heart.

For a whole minute there was no sound in the room but the bubbling song of the soft coal. I sat upon a stool beside my confidant, and, having passed the letter up to him, my head sank gradually to his knee. I was unspeakably miserable, but I made no moan. He had not patience with weak wails when anything remained to be done. His cigar had gone out, for when I lifted my head at his movement toward the lamp, he had folded the scrap of paper into a spile, and was lighting it. He touched the dead cigar with the flame, and drew hard upon it until it was in working order before he said:

“I believe in that book! I shall send it back to Morris, to-morrow, and tell him to bring it out in good style and send the bill to me.”

“But,” I gasped, “you may lose money by it!”

“I don’t think so. At any rate, we will make the experiment.”

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# XXIV

## THE DAWNING OF LITERARY LIFE

[246]

“*January 28th, 1854.*

“*My very dear Friend*,—I wish you were here this morning! I long to talk with you. There are many things I cannot commit to paper, or of which I might be ashamed as soon as they were written. There are no short-hand and long-tongued reporters at our face-to-face confabulations.

“Of one thing I will give you a hint: Have you any recollection of a certain MS., portions of which were read in your hearing last spring? I should not be surprised if you were to hear something of it before long. Keep your eyes upon the papers for a few weeks, and if you see nothing that looks like a harbinger of the advent, just conclude that I have changed my mind at the last gasp and recalled it. *For it has gone out of my hands!* After the appearance of anything that looks that way, I unseal your mouth.

“Seriously, I have much pending upon this venture. The success of the book may be the opening of the path I cannot but feel that Providence has marked out for me.

“As it is a Virginia story, Southerners should buy it, if it has no other merit. My misgivings are grave and many; but my advisers urge me on, and notices of fugitive articles that have appeared in Northern and Southern papers have inoculated me with a little confidence in the wisdom of their counsel.

“I had not meant to say this, or, indeed, to mention the matter at all, but as the day of publication draws near, I am, to use an expressive Yankeeism —‘fidgety.’

“If anything I have said savors of undue solicitude for the bantling’s welfare, recollect that I am the mother. One thing more: I shall have nothing [247] to do with advertisements. If they laud the work too highly, bear in mind that it is ‘all in the way of trade,’ and that booksellers will have their way.

“Our ‘Musical Molasses Stew’ came off last night. We had a grand ‘time!’ Violin, flute, guitar, piano—all played by masculine amateurs, and a chorus of men’s voices. It was ‘nae sae bad,’ as the Scotch critic said of Mrs. Siddons’s acting. The same might be said of the real frolic of pulling the treacle. My partner was a young Nova Scotian—‘Blackader’ by name—an intelligent, agreeable, and versatile youth who entered gloriously into the spirit of the occasion. He played upon the piano, sang treble, tenor, and bass by turns, and pulled and laughed with me until he had no strength left.”

I was but feebly convalescent from a brief illness when, chancing to pick up the latest number of *Godey’s Magazine*, and fluttering the leaves aimlessly, my eyes rested upon a paragraph in the “Editor’s Table.”

“Will the author of ‘Marrying Through Prudential Motives’ send her address to the editor?”

A queer story followed. The tale, sent so long ago to Mr. Godey that I had almost forgotten it, had fallen behind a drawer of his desk, and lain there for three years and more. When it finally turned up, curiosity, aroused by its disappearance and exhumation, led the editor to read it more carefully than if it had reached him through ordinary channels. He liked it, published it, and waited to hear from the author.

By some mischance that particular number of the “Lady’s Book” had escaped my notice. The story was copied into an English periodical; translated from this into French, and appeared on the other side of the channel. Another British monthly “took up the wondrous tale” by rendering the French version back into the vernacular. In this guise the much-handled bit of fiction was brought across the seas by *The Albion*, a New York periodical that published only English “stuff.” [248] Mr. Godey arraigned *The Albion* for piracy, and the truth was revealed by degrees. Richmond papers copied the odd “happening” from Northern, and Mr. Morris made capital of it in advertising the forthcoming novel.

I have more than once spoken of the Richmond of that date as “provincial.” It was so backward in literary enterprise that the leading bookseller had not facilities at his command for publishing the book committed to him.

On March 9, 1854, I wrote to my Powhatan correspondent:

> "Cousin Joe says he was charged by you to get 'my book.' I am sorry to say that it cannot be procured as yet. Unlooked for delays have impeded the work of publication. But, as the proofs arrive daily, now, I trust that the wheels are beginning to run more smoothly. It is printed in Philadelphia, although copyrighted in Richmond. Not a printer in this city could finish it before the 1st of May, so we were forced to send it to the North....
>
> "You will read and like it, if only because I wrote it. Whether or not others may cavil at the religious tone, and ridicule the simplicity of the narrative, remains to be seen. Thus far I have had encouragement from all sides. My own fears are the drawback to sanguine expectation."

The actual advent of *Alone* was a surprise, after all the waiting and wondering that left the heart sick with hope deferred.

I was setting out for a walk one balmy May morning, and standing on the front porch to draw on my gloves, when Doctor Haxall, who had long had in our family the sobriquet of "the beloved physician," reined in his horses at the gate and called out that he was "just coming to ask me to drive with him." He had often done the like good turn to me.

I was not robust, and he had watched my growth with more than professional solicitude. Had [249]
he been of my very own kindred, he could not have been kinder or displayed more active interest in all my affairs—great to me and small to him.

"Headache?" he queried, with a keen look at my pale face when I was seated at his side.

"Not exactly! I think the warm weather makes me languid."

"More likely overexcited nerves. You must learn to take life more philosophically. But we won't talk shop!"

We were bowling along at a fine rate. The doctor drove fast, blooded horses, and liked to handle the ribbons himself. The day was deliciously fresh, the air sweet with early roses and honeysuckle. I called his attention, in passing Conway Robinson's grounds, to the perfume of violets rising in almost visible waves from a ravine where the grass was whitened by them as with a light fall of snow. I asked no questions as we turned down Capitol Street, and thence into Main Street. Sometimes I sat in the carriage while he paid a professional call. This might be his intention now. We brought up abruptly at Morris's book-store, and the blesséd man leaped out and held his hand to me. He probably had an errand there. He handed me into the interior in his brisk way, and marched straight up to Mr. Morris, who advanced to meet us.

"Good-morning! I have come for a copy of this young lady's book!"

If I had ever fainted, I should have swooned on the spot.

For there, in heaps and heaps upon the front counter—in bindings of dark-blue, and purple, and crimson, and leaf-brown—lay in lordly state, portly volumes, on the backs of which, in gleaming gold that shimmered and shook before my incredulous vision, was stamped:

"ALONE."

I saw, through the sudden dazzlement of the whole world about me, that a clerk had set a chair [250]
for me. I sat down gratefully.

Mr. Morris was talking:

"Opened this morning! I sent six copies up to you. I suppose you got them?"

"No!" I tried so hard to say it firmly that it sounded careless. I would have added, "I did not know it was out," but dared not attempt a sentence.

Mr. Morris attended us to the door to point to placards a porter was tacking to boards put there for that express purpose:

## JUST OUT!!

### ALONE!

### By Marion Harland

The doctor nodded satisfiedly and handed me into the carriage. In taking my seat, I thought, in a dull, sick way, of Bruce at the source of the Nile. I had had day-dreams of this day and hour a thousand times in the last ten years. Of how I should walk down-town some day, and see a placard at this very door bearing the title of a novel written and bound, and lettered in gilt, and PUBLISHED! bearing my pen-name! The vision was a reality; the dream was a triumphant fulfilment. And I was sitting, unchanged, and non-appreciative, by the dear old doctor, and his full, cordial tones were saying of the portly purple volume lying on the seat between us:

"Well, my dear child, I congratulate you, and I hope a second edition will be called for within six months!"

He did not ply me with questions. He may not have suspected that the shock had numbed my ideas and stiffened my tongue. If he had, he could not have borne himself more tactfully. He was a man who had seen the world and hobnobbed with really distinguished live authors. It would not [251] have been possible for him to enter fully into what this day was to me. When I thought of Bruce and the Nile, it was because I did not comprehend that the very magnitude of the crisis was what deprived me of the power of appreciating what had happened.

No! I am not inclined to ridicule the unsophisticated girl whose emotions were too mighty for speech that May noon, and to minimize what excited them. Nothing that wealth or fame could ever offer me in years to come could stir the depths of heart and mind as they were upheaved in that supreme hour.

The parcel of books had been opened and the contents examined, by the time I got home. I stole past the open door of my mother's chamber, where she and Aunt Rice, who was visiting us, and Mea were chatting vivaciously, and betook myself to my room.

When my sister looked me up at dinner-time I told her to excuse me from coming down. "The heat had made me giddy and headachy."

She bade me "lie still. She would send me a cup of tea."

"I'll leave you this for company," she cooed, laying the book tenderly on my pillow. "*We* think it beautiful."

With that she went out softly, shutting me in with my "beautiful" first-born. Mea always had her wits within easy call. The sixth sense was born within her.

I saw of the travail of my soul and was satisfied; was repaid a thousandfold for months of toil and years of waiting, when my father read my book. He did not go down-town again that day, after coming home to dinner. My mother told me, with a happy break in her laugh, how he had hardly touched the food on his plate. Aunt Rice's pleasant prattle saved the situation from [252] awkwardness when he lapsed into a brown study and talked less than he ate. When dessert was brought in, he excused himself and disappeared from general view for the rest of the afternoon. The door of "the chamber" to which he withdrew was fast shut. Nobody disturbed him until it was too dark to read by daylight. My mother took in a lighted lamp and set it on the table by him.

"He didn't see or hear me!" was her report. "He is a quarter through the book already, and he doesn't skip a word."

He spent just fifteen minutes at the supper-table. It was two o'clock in the morning before he reached the last page.

After prayers next morning he put his arm about me and held me fast for a moment. Then he kissed me very gravely.

"I was right about that book, daughter!"

That was all! but it was, to my speechless self, as if the morning stars had sung together for joy.

I record here and now what I did not know in the spring-tide of my happiness. I never had—I shall never have—another reader like him. As long as he lived, he "believed" in me and in my work with a sincerity and fervor as impossible for me to describe as it can be for any outsider to believe. He made the perusal of each volume (and they numbered a score before he died) as solemn a ceremony as he instituted for the first. His absolute absorption in it was the secret jest of the family, but they respected it at heart. When he talked with me of the characters that bore part in my stories, he treated them as real flesh-and-blood entities. He found fault with one, and sympathized with another, and argued with a third, as seeing them in *propia personæ*. It was strange—phenomenal—when one considers the light weight of the literature under advisement [253] and the mental calibre of the man. To me it was at once inspiration and my exceeding great reward.

"*June 5th, 1854.*

"Dear Effie,—From a formidable pile of letters of good wishes and congratulation, I select (not *happen* upon!) your sweet, affectionate epistle, every word of which, if it did not come from your heart, went straight to mine.

"I shall never be a literary iceberg! That is clear. I have had a surfeit of compliments in public and in private, but a word of appreciation from a true, loving friend gives me more delicious pleasure than all else.

"I make no excuse for speaking freely to you of what you say is 'near akin' to you. I thank you heartily for owning the relationship. Two editions have been 'run off' already, and another is now in press—unprecedented success in this part of the world—or so they tell me. Northern papers notice the book more at length and more handsomely than does the Richmond press.

"Of the sales in your county, I know nothing. Oh yes! C. W. told Mr. Rhodes that 'Miss Virginia Hawes's novel is having a tremendous run in Powhatan. Tre-*men*-dous, sir! Why, I had an order to buy a copy and send it up, myself,

sir!’

“Isn’t that characteristic?”

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# XXV

## BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH MY FATE

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THE promised visit to Powhatan was paid in July.

“How happily the days of Thalaba went by!”

I said over the strangely musical line to myself scores of times in the two months of my stay in the dear old county. “Homestead,” the home of the D.’s, was never more beautiful, and the days were full of innocent fun, and junketings without number. College and University boys were at home, and city people were flocking to the country. There were walks, drives, “dining-days,” early and late horseback parties, setting out from one hospitable house before sunrise, and breakfasting at another ten or twelve miles away; or, better yet, leaving home at sunset, and pacing, cantering, and galloping (women never rode trotting horses) along highroad and plantation lane to a house, buried in ancestral woods, in the very heart of the county, for supper, returning by the light of the harvest moon, as fresh as when we set forth. With no premonition that this was to be the most eventful summer and autumn of my hitherto tranquil life, I gave myself up, wholly and happily, to the influences that sweetened and glorified it.

Late in August I resolved rather suddenly to go home. My sister was in Boston; my father would not leave his business for so much as a week; my mother and the younger children ought to be in the country. Since she would not resign my father to what she spoke of as “Fate and servants,” I would throw my now rejuvenated body into the breach, abide by the stuff and her husband and sons, while she took a sadly needed rest with old friends in Nottoway County.

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Recollecting how persistently I clung to the decision in the face of a tempest of protest, my own heart in secret league with the protestants, I acknowledge with humble gratitude the guidance of the “moving finger that writes” out the destinies we think to control for ourselves.

The glow of the halcyon summer had not passed from my spirit when I wrote to my late hostess two days after my return:

“RICHMOND, *August 29th, 1854.*

“MY OWN FRIEND,—I said ‘I will write next week,’ but it suits my feelings and convenience to write this morning.

“In the first place, my heart is so full of happiness that it overflows upon and toward everybody that I love, and don’t you dear Homesteadians—yourself and Powhie, especially—come in for a share?

“Mrs. Noble was very pleasant, but the journey was a bit tedious. It always is! Richmond looked enchanting when at last the spires and chimneys appeared upon the horizon, and my sweet home was never so pretty before.

“Mother had planned an agreeable surprise, and not told me that the painters had been at work elsewhere than in my room. So the freshly painted shutters and the white window-facings and cornices, contrasted with the gray walls, were doubly beautiful, because not expected. Then Percy came tumbling down the steps, clapping his hands and shouting in glee, and Alice’s bright smile shone upon me at the gate, and mother left company in the parlor to give me four kisses—and all I could say was, ‘I have had *such* a pleasant visit, and now I am *so* glad to see you all!’

“Father could not be coaxed to bed that night until one o’clock, although mother reminded him that he had a headache.

“‘Never mind! Daughters don’t come home every night!’

“‘But this one will be tired out!’

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“‘Well, she may sleep late to-morrow morning.’

“He doesn’t know how lazy I have grown of late.

“I am surprised to find vegetation so luxuriant here. My inquiries concerning the ‘late drought’ are answered by a stare of amazement. Rain has been abundant in this region. In our garden the vegetables and grape-vines grow rank and tall. And as for flowers! There were seven bouquets in the parlor, smiling and breathing a welcome. Last night I received one per rail from Horace Lacy (bless his soul!), and Herbert to-night brought up another and a magnificent, when he came to his late supper.

“Mother had delicious peaches for supper the night I got back, but advised

me to ‘eat them sparingly, at first.’ Yesterday I forgot her caution, and I think I am the better for the lapse. Peaches, watermelons, apples, sweet potatoes, etc., were liberally patronized by us all. The cholera ‘scare’ seems to be over. Doctor Haxall advised the members of our family to make no change in their diet while they continued well, and they have prospered wonderfully under his regimen....

“I wish I had time to tell you of some queer letters I found waiting for me. Father would not forward them, ‘for fear of annoying me.’ They are meant to be complimentary, one requesting ‘some particulars of your birthplace, education,’ etc. ‘Wish he may get them!’

“Now, dear, forgive this egotistical scrawl—written as fast as fingers can scratch—but just seat yourself and tell me exactly what you have been doing, saying, and thinking since I left; how our pet, Powhie (the dear old scamp!), is thriving; and the state of your mother’s health, also the news from The Jungle.

“Our Heavenly Father bless and love you, my darling!”

We packed my mother and her younger children off to the country the first of September, and rejoiced unselfishly that they had escaped the fervid heats of the following week. Our house was deliciously cool by comparison with the sultriness of the outer world. The thick walls and lofty [257] ceilings kept the temperature at an equable and comfortable point. We breakfasted early, and by nine o’clock the day was my own—or six consecutive hours of it.

In unconscious imitation of Charlotte Brontë, who began *Jane Eyre* while *The Professor* was “plodding his weary round from publisher to publisher,” I had begun another book by the time *Alone* was turned over to the tender mercies of Mr. Morris’s “reader.” I finished the first draught on the forenoon of September 11th, having wrought at it with the fierce joy in work that ever comes to me after a season of absolute or comparative idleness.

I was very weary when the last word was written:

“Alma was asleep!”

I read it aloud to myself in the safe solitude of my shaded library. I had not heard then that Thackeray slapped his thigh exultantly after describing the touch of pride Becky felt in her husband’s athletic pummelling of her lover. I could have understood it fully at that instant.

“Thackeray, my boy, that is a stroke of genius!” cried the great author, aloud, in honest pride.

The small woman writer sat wearily back in her chair, and said—not murmured: “I flatter myself *that* is a neat touch!”

Then I found that my head ached. Moreover, it had a strange, empty feeling. I compared it to a squeezed sponge. I likewise reminded myself that I had not been out of the house for two days; that my father had shaken his head when I told him it was “too hot for walking,” warning me that I “must not throw away the good the country had done for me.” He would ask me, at supper-time, if I had taken the admonition to heart.

I went off to my room, bathed, and dressed for a round of calls. This I proceeded to make, keeping on the shady side of the street. I called at three houses, and found everybody out. The [258] sun was setting when I stood in front of my mirror on my return, and laid aside bonnet and mantle (we called it a “visite”). The red light from the west shot across me while I was brushing up the hair the hot dampness had laid flat. It struck me suddenly that I was looking rather well. I wore what we knew as a “spencer” of thin, dotted white muslin. It would be a “shirt-waist” to-day. It was belted at what was then a slim waist above a skirt of “changeable” silk. Herbert had said it “reminded him of a pale sunrise,” but there were faint green reflections among shimmering pinks. There must be somebody in the immediate neighborhood upon whom I might call while I was dressed to go out. A dart of self-reproach followed swiftly upon the thought.

My old and favorite tutor, Mr. Howison, had broken down in health two years after accepting a call to his first parish. An obstinate affection of the throat made preaching impracticable. At the end of a year of compulsory inaction, he resumed the practice of law in Richmond, and within another twelve months married the woman he had sought and won before his illness. They lived in a pleasant house upon the next street, so near that we often “ran around” to see each other. “Mary’s” younger sister had died during my absence from home, and as I reminded myself, now, I ought to have called before this.

Half a square from her door, I recalled that the young clergyman who was supplying Doctor Hoge’s pulpit while he was abroad, and whom I had heard preach last Sunday, was staying at the Howison’s. It was not right, in the eyes of the church, that he should go to a hotel, and since he would go nowhere except as a boarder, the Howisons had opened door and hearts to make him at home in his temporary charge. He had given us an interesting sermon on Sunday, and made a pleasing impression generally. I had not thought of him since, until almost at the gate of my [259] friends’ house. Then I said, inly:

“Should the youthful divine be hanging about the porch or yard, I’ll walk on unconcernedly and postpone the call.”

Being familiar with the ways of young sprigs of divinity, and having over twenty blood-relatives who had the right to prefix their baptismal names by “The Reverend,” I had no especial fondness for the brand. Furthermore, three callow clerics and one full-fledged had already invited me to share parsonage and poverty with them. For all I had one and the same reply. It might be my predestined lot, as certain anxious friends began to hint, to live out my earthly days in single blessedness; and, if the ancient anti-race-suicide apostles were to be credited, then to lead apes in Hades for an indefinite period. I would risk the terrors of both states sooner than take upon me the duties and liabilities of a minister’s wife. Upon that I was determined.

The youthful divine was nowhere in sight. Nor did he show up during the half-hour I passed with the Howisons. They proposed walking home with me when I arose to go. Just outside the gate we espied a tall figure striding up the street, swinging his cane in very unclerical style. Mr. Howison stopped.

“Ah, Mr. Terhune! I was hoping you might join us.”

Then he introduced him to me. Of course, he asked permission to accompany us, and we four strolled abreast through the twilight of the embowered street. I had known the sister of Mr. Terhune, who, as the widow of Doctor Hoge’s most intimate friend, was a frequent visitor to Richmond. I asked civilly after her, and was answered as civilly. We remarked upon the heat of the day and the fine sunset; then we were at our gate, where my father and brother were looking out for me.

My escorts declined the invitation to enter garden and house; Mr. Howison passed over to me [260]
a big bunch of roses he had gathered from his garden and brought with him, and, having exchanged “Good-evenings,” we three lingered at the gate to admire the flowers. There was no finer collection of roses in any private garden in town than those which were the lawyer’s pets and pride. My face was buried in the cool deliciousness of my bouquet when, through the perfect stillness of the evening, we heard our new acquaintance say:

“Your friend, Miss Hawes, walks well.”

He had, as we had noticed on Sunday, a voice of marvellous compass, with peculiar “carrying” qualities. He had not spoken more loudly than his companions, and, having reached the corner of the street, he fancied himself beyond earshot. Every word floated back to us.

We laughed—all three of us. Then I said, deliberately:

“If that man ever asks me to marry him, I shall have to do it! I vowed solemnly, long ago, to marry the first man who thinks me handsome, if he should give me the chance. Let us hope this one won’t!”

“Amen!” responded my hearers, my father adding, “His cloth rules him out.”

It may have been a week later in the season that I was strolling down Broad Street in company with “Tom” Baxter, Mr. Rhodes’s chummiest crony. He had overtaken me a few squares farther up-town, and was begging me, in the naïve way most girls found bewitching, to take a turning that would lead us by an office where he was to leave a paper he had promised to deliver at that hour.

“Then,” he pursued, with the same refreshing simplicity of tone and look, “there will be nothing to hinder me from going all the way home with you.”

I refused point-blank, and he detained me for a minute at the parting of the ways, entreating and arguing, until I cut the nonsense short by saying that *I* had an engagement which I must [261]
keep without regard to *his* convenience, and walked on. Tom was an amusing fellow, and handsome enough to win forgiveness for his absurdities. I was smiling to myself in the recollection of the little farce, when I met, face to face, but not eye to eye—for we were both looking at the pavement—the man who had said that I walked well. He stepped aside hurriedly; the hand that swung the cane went up to his hat, and we went our separate ways.

That evening I was surprised to receive a call from our pastor *pro tempore*. He told me, months afterward, that he was homesick and lonely on that particular afternoon. At least two-thirds of the best people in the parish were out of town, and he found little to interest him in those he met socially.

“You smiled in such a genial fashion when we met on that blesséd corner that I felt better at once. The recollection of that friendly look gave me courage to call, out of hand.”

Whereupon, I brought sentimentality down on the run by asking if he had ever heard the negro proverb, “Fired at the blackbird and hit the crow”?

“That was Tom Baxter’s smile—not yours!”

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## XXVI [262]

## LITERARY WELL-WISHERS—GEORGE D. PRENTICE—MRS.

## SIGOURNEY—GRACE GREENWOOD—H. W. LONGFELLOW—JAMES REDPATH—"THE WANDERING JEW"

AUTHORS were not so plentiful then as to attract no attention in a crowd of non-literary people. Men and women who had climbed the heights had leisure to glance down at those nearer the foot of the hill, and to send back a cheering hail. I had twenty letters from George D. Prentice, known of all men as the friend and helper of youthful writers. All were kind and encouraging. By-and-by, they were fatherly and familiar. As when I lamented that I had never been able to make my head work without my heart, he responded, "Hearts without heads are too impulsive, sometimes too hot. Heads without hearts are too cold. Suppose you settle the matter by giving the heart into my keeping, in trust for the happy man who will call for it some day?"

His letters during the war were tinged with sadness. In one he wrote: "My whole heart is one throbbing prayer to the God of Nations that He will have mercy upon my beloved country."

In reply to a letter of sympathy after the death of a gallant young son, who fell on the battle-field, he said:

> "My dear boy never gave me a pang except by entering the army (in obedience to what he felt was the call of duty), and in dying. A nobler, more dutiful son never gladdened a father's heart."

Our correspondence was continued as long as the poet-editor lived. I owe him much. I wish I had made him comprehend how much. [263]

Mrs. Sigourney, then on "the retired list" of American authors, sent me a copy of her latest volume of poems—*A Western Home*—and three or four letters of motherly counsel, one of which advised me to take certain epochs of American history as foundation-stones for any novels I might write in future, and bidding me "God-speed!"

Grace Greenwood opened a correspondence with the younger woman who had admired her afar off, and we kept up the friendship until she went abroad to live, resuming our intercourse upon her return to New York in the early eighties.

From Mr. Longfellow I had two letters. One told me that Mrs. Longfellow was "reading *Alone* in her turn."

> "I am pleased to note upon the title-page of my copy, '*Sixth Edition*.' That looks very like a guide-board pointing to Fame. I should think you would feel as does the traveller in the Tyrol who sees, at a turn in the rocky pass, a finger-post with the inscription—'TO ROME.' Hoping that you will not be molested by the bandits who sometimes infest that route, I am sincerely yours,
>
> HENRY W. LONGFELLOW."

I have carried the letter, word for word, in my heart for more than half a century. A patent of nobility would not have brought me keener and more exquisite pleasure.

Not that I deceived myself, for one mad hour, with the fancy that I could ever gain the right to stand for one beatific moment on a level with the immortals whom I worshipped. In the first flush of my petty triumph, I felt my limitations. The appreciation of these has grown upon me with each succeeding year. "Fred" Cozzens, the "Sparrowgrass" of humorous literature, said to me once when I expressed something of this conviction:

"Yet you occupy an important niche." [264]

I replied in all sincerity: "I know my place. But the niche is small, and it is not high up. All that I can hope is to fill it worthily, such as it is."

The history of one bulky packet of letters takes me back to the orderly progress of my story, and to the most singular and romantic episode of that first year of confessedly literary life.

*Alone* had been out in the world about three months, when I received a letter from a stranger, postmarked "Baltimore," and bearing the letter-head of a daily paper published in that city. The signature was "James Redpath." The writer related briefly that, chancing to go into Morris's book-store while on a visit to Richmond, he had had from the publisher a copy of my book, and read it. He went on to say:

> "It is full of faults, as you will discover for yourself in time. Personally, I may remark, that I detest both your politics and your theology. All the same, you will make your mark upon the age. In the full persuasion of this, I write to pledge myself to do all in my power to forward your literary interests. I am not on the staff of the Baltimore paper, although now visiting the editor-in-chief. But I have influence in more than one quarter, and you will hear from me again."

I laid the queer epistle before my father, and we agreed that my outspoken critic was slightly demented. I was already used to odd communications from odd people, some from anonymous admirers, some from reviewers, professional and amateur, who sought to "do me good," after the

disinterested style of the guild.

I was therefore unprepared for the strenuous manner in which Mr. James Redpath proceeded to keep his pledge. Not a week passed in which he did not send me a clipping from some paper, [265] containing a direct or incidental notice of my book, or work, or personality. Now he was in New Orleans, writing fiery Southern editorials, and insinuating into the body of the same, adroit mention of the rising Southern author. Now he slipped into a Cincinnati paper a poem taken from *Alone*, with a line or two, calling attention to the novel and the author; then a fierce attack upon the "detested politics and theology" flamed among book-notices in a Buffalo journal, tempered by regrets that "real talent should be grossly perverted by sectional prejudice and superstition." Anon, a clever review in a Boston paper pleased my friends in the classic city so much that they sent a marked copy to me, not dreaming that I had already had the critique, with the now familiar "J. R." scrawled in the margin. The climax of the melodrama was gained during the struggle over "bleeding Kansas" in 1855. A hurried note from the near neighborhood of Leavenworth informed me that a pro-slavery force, double the size of the abolitionist militia gathered to resist it, was advancing upon the position held by the latter. My dauntless knight wrote:

> "Farewell, dear and noble lady! If I am not killed in the fight, you will hear from me again and again. Should I be translated to another sphere, I shall still (if possible) rap back notices of your work through the Fox sisters or other mediums."

Hearing nothing more of or from him for two months, I was really unhappy in the apprehension that his worst fears had been realized. I had grown to like him, and my gratitude for his disinterested championship was warm and deep. My father expressed his conviction that the eccentric was the Wandering Jew, and predicted his safe deliverance from the pro-slavery hordes, and reappearance in somebody's editorial columns. His prophecy was fulfilled in a long [266] report in a Philadelphia sheet of a meeting with the "new star of the South," in the vestibule of the church attended by the aforesaid. Nothing that escaped my lips was set down, but my dress and appearance, my conversational powers and deportment were painted in glowing colors, the veracious portraiture concluding with the intelligence that I would shortly be married to the son of a former Governor of Virginia—"a man, who, despite his youth, has already distinguished himself in the political arena, and we are glad to say, in the Democratic ranks."

I thought my father would have an apoplectic fit when he got to that!

"See here, my child! I don't presume to interfere with Salathiel, or by what other name your friend may choose to call himself, and there are all manner of tricks in the trade editorial, but this is going a little too far. He sha'n't marry you off, without your consent—and to a Democrat!"

I had the same idea, and hearing directly from Mr. Redpath soon afterward, I said as much, as kindly as I could. The remonstrance elicited a gentlemanly rejoinder. While the style of the "report" was "mere newspaper lingo," he claimed that the framework was built by an *attaché* of the Philadelphia daily, whom he (Redpath) had commissioned to glean all he could of my appearance, etc., during a flying trip to Richmond. The young fellow had written the article and sent it to press without submitting it to Salathiel. The like should not occur again. In my answer to the apology, I expressed my profound sense of gratitude to my advocate, and confessed my inability to divine the motive power of benefactions so numerous and unsolicited. His reply deepened the mystery:

"Your book held me back from infidelity. Chapter Sixteenth saved my life. Now that you know thus much, we will, if you please, have no more talk on your part of gratitude."

Five years elapsed between the receipt of that first note signed "James Redpath," and the [267] explanation of what followed. I may relate here, in a few sentences, what he wrote to me at length, and what was published in an appreciative biographical sketch written by a personal friend after his death.

He was born in Scotland; emigrated in early manhood to America, and took up journalistic work. Although successful for a while, a series of misfortunes made of him a misanthropic wanderer. His brilliant talents and experience found work and friends wherever he went, and he remained nowhere long. Disappointed in certain enterprises upon which he had fixed his mind and expended his best energies, he found himself in Richmond, with but one purpose in his soul. He would be lost to all who knew him, and leave no trace of the failure he believed himself to be. He put a pistol in his pocket and set out for Hollywood Cemetery. There were sequestered glens there, then, and lonely thickets into which a world-beaten man could crawl to die. On the way up-town, he stopped at the book-store and fell into talk with the proprietor, who, on learning the stranger's profession, handed him the lately-published novel. Arrived at the cemetery, Redpath was disappointed to see the roads and paths gay with carriages, pedestrians, and riding-parties. He would wait until twilight sent them back to town. He lay down upon the turf on a knoll commanding a view of the beautiful city and the river, took out his book and began reading to while away the hours that would bring quiet and solitude. The sun was high, still. He had the editorial knack of rapid reading. The dew was beginning to fall as he finished the narrative of the interrupted duel in the sixteenth chapter.

I believed then, and I am yet more sure, now, that other influences than the crude story told by one whose experience of life was that of a child by comparison with his, wrought upon the lonely [268] exile during the still hours of that perfect autumnal day. It suited his whim to think that the book

turned his thoughts from his design of self-destruction.

Before he slept that night he registered a vow—thus he phrased it in his explanatory letter—to write and publish one thousand notices of the book that had saved his life.

When the vow was fulfilled—and not until then—did I get the key to conduct that had puzzled me, and baffled the conjectures of the few friends to whom I had told the tale.

I met James Redpath, face to face, but once, and that was—if my memory serves me aright—in 1874. He was in Newark, New Jersey, in the capacity of adviser-in-chief, or backer, of a friend who brought a party of Indians from the West on a peaceful mission to Washington and some of the principal cities, in the hope of exciting philanthropic interest in their advancement in civilization.

“He is as enthusiastic in faith in the future of the redman as I was once in the belief that the negro would arise to higher levels,” remarked Salathiel, with a smile that ended in a sigh. “Heigho! youth is prone to ideals as the sparks to fly upward.”

Learning that I was in the opera-house where the “show” was held, he had invited me into his private stage-box, and there, out of sight of the audience, and indifferent to the speech-making and singing going on, on the stage, we talked for an hour with the cordial ease of old friends. My erst knight-errant was a well-mannered gentleman, still in the prime of manhood, with never a sign of the eccentric “stray” in feature, deportment, or the agreeable modulations of his voice. He told me of his wife. He had written to me of his marriage some years before. She was his balance-wheel, he said. I recollect that he likened her to Madam Guyon. At the close of the entertainment, we shook hands cordially and exchanged expressions of mutual regard. We never met again. [269]

How much or how little I was indebted to him for the success of my first book, I am unable to determine. I shall ever cherish the recollection of his generous spirit and steadfast adherence to his vow of service, as one of the most interesting and gratifying episodes of my authorly career.

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# XXVII

## MY NORTHERN KINSPEOPLE—“QUELQU’UN” AND A LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP

I REWROTE the new book that winter, reading it, chapter by chapter, aloud to my father, in the evening. He was a judicious critic, and I need not repeat here how earnest and rapt a listener. I had received proposals for the publication of my “next book” from six Northern publishers. In the spring my father went to New York and arranged for the preliminaries with the, then, flourishing firm of Derby & Jackson.

It was brought out while I was in Boston that summer, under the title of *The Hidden Path*. I anticipate dates in jotting down here that I had my first taste of professional envy in connection with this book.

My journeying homeward in September was broken by a fortnight’s stay at the hospitable abode of the Derbys in Yonkers. I was at a reception in New York one evening, when my unfortunately acute hearing brought to me a fragment of a conversation, not intended for my edification, between my publisher and a literary woman of note. Mr. Derby was telling her, after the tactless manner of men, how well *The Hidden Path* had “done” at the Trade Sales just concluded.

“Ah!” said the famous woman, icily. “And I suppose she is naturally greatly elated?”

Mr. Derby laughed.

“She hides it well if she is. Have you read the book?”

“Yes. You were good enough to send me a copy, you know. It is quite a creditable school-girl production.” [271]

I moved clean out of hearing. I told Mr. Derby, afterward, what I had heard, adding that my chief regret was at the lowering of my ideal of professional generosity. Up to that moment I had met with indulgent sympathy and such noble freedom from envious hypercriticism, as to foster the fondly-cherished idea that the expression of lofty sentiment presupposes the ever-present dwelling of the same within the soul. In simpler phrase, that the proverb—“Higher than himself can no man think,” had its converse in—“Lower than himself can no man be.”

In this I erred. I grant it, in this one instance. I had judged correctly of the grand Guild to which I aspired, with yearnings unutterable, to belong.

It was an eventful summer. My father and I had gone on to Boston from New York, setting out, the same week, for a tour through the White Mountains. I was the only woman in the party. Our friend, Ned Rhodes, a distant cousin, Henry Field, of Boston, and my father completed the quartette. Ten days afterward, we two—my father and I—met a larger travelling party in New York. Mr. and Mrs. William Terhune, Mrs. Greenleaf, the widow of Doctor Hoge’s friend; “Staff”

Little, the brother of Mrs. William Terhune, and Edward Terhune, now the pastor of a church at Charlotte C. H., Virginia, composed the company which joined itself to us, and set forth merrily for Niagara and the Lakes.

The trip accomplished, I settled down comfortably and happily in Boston and the charming environs thereof for the rest of the season.

Another halcyon summer!

If I have made scant mention of my father's kindred in the land of his birth, it is because this is a story of the Old South and of a life that has ceased to be, except in the hearts of the very few who may take up the boast of the Grecian historian—"Of which I was a part." [272]

I should be an ingrate of a despicable type were I to pass by as matters of no moment, the influences brought to bear upon my life at that date, and through succeeding years, by my association with the several households who made up the family connection in that vicinity.

My grandmother's brother, Uncle Lewis Pierce, owned and occupied the ancient homestead in Dorchester. He was "a character" in his way. Handsome in his youth, he was still a man of imposing presence, especially when, attired in black broadcloth, and clean shaven, he sat on Sunday in the pew owned by the Pierces for eight generations in the old church on "Meeting House Hill." He did not always approve of the doctrine and politics of the officiating clergyman. He opened his mind to me to this effect one Sunday that summer, as we jogged along in his low-hung phaeton, drawn by a horse as portly and as well-set-up as his master.

"The man that is to hold forth to-day is what my wife scolds me for calling 'one of those higher law devils,'" he began by saying. "He is of the opinion that the law, forbidding slavery and denying rights to the masters of the slaves and all that, ought to set aside the Constitution and the laws made by better men and wiser heads than his. He'd override them all, if he could. I've nothing to say against a man's having his own notions on that, or any other subject, but if he's a minister of the gospel, he ought to preach the truth he finds in the Bible, and keep his confounded politics out of the pulpit."

He leaned forward to flick a fly from the sleek horse with his whip.

"I've been given to understand that he doesn't like to see me and some others of the same stripe in church when he preaches for us. I pay no attention to that. If he, or any others of his damnable way of thinking, imagine that I'm to be kept out of the church in which the Pierces owned a pew before this man and his crew were ever thought of, he'll find himself mistaken. That's all there is about it!" [273]

It was worth seeing, after hearing this, the sturdy old representative of the Puritans, sitting bolt upright in the quaint box-pew where his forbears had worshipped the God of battles over a century before, and keeping what he called his "weather eye" upon the suspected expounder of the gospel of peace. The obnoxious occupant of the ancient and honorable pulpit was, to my notion, an amiable and inoffensive individual. He preached well, and with never an allusion to "higher law." Yet Uncle Lewis kept watch and ward throughout the service. I could easily believe that he would have arisen to his feet and challenged audibly any approach to the forbidden territory.

The day and scene were recalled forcibly to my memory by a visit paid to my Newark home in 1864 by Francis Pierce, the protestant's oldest son, on his way home from Washington. He was one of a committee of Dorchester citizens sent to the Capital to look after the welfare of Massachusetts troops called into the field by a Republican President.

The wife of the head of the Pierce homestead was one of the loveliest women ever brought into a world where saints are out of place. Near her lived an old widow, who was a proverb for captiousness and wrongheadedness. I never heard her say a kind or charitable word of neighbor or friend, until she astounded me one day by breaking out into a eulogy upon Aunt Pierce and Cousin Melissa, Francis's wife:

"We read in the Scriptures that God is love. I allers think of them two women when I hear that text. It might be said of both of 'em: they are jest *love*—through an' through!"

I carried the story to the blesséd pair, you may be sure. Whereupon, my aunt smiled compassionately. [274]

"Poor old lady! People who don't know how much trouble she has had, are hard upon her. We can't judge one another unless we know all sides of a question. She is greatly to be pitied."

And Cousin Melissa, in the gentle tone she might have learned from her beloved mother-in-law —"I always think that nobody is cross unless she is unhappy."

*Aurora Leigh* had not been written then. If it had been, neither of the white-souled dears would have read a word of it. Yet Mrs. Browning put this into the mouth of her heroine:

"The dear Christ comfort you!
You must have been most miserable
To be so cruel!"

The old house was a never-ending delight to me. It was built in 1640 (see Chapter I), ten years after the good ship *Mary and John* brought over from Plymouth the Massachusetts Bay Colony, landing her passengers in Boston. Robert Pierce (or Percie) was, although a blood connection of the Northumberland Percies, the younger son of a younger son, and so far "out of the running" for title or fortune on that account, that he sought a home and livelihood in the New World.

My ancestress, Ann Greenaway, whose tedious voyage from England to Massachusetts was beguiled by her courtship and marriage to stalwart "Robert of Dorchester," bore him many robust sons and "capable," if not fair daughters, dying at last in the Dorchester homestead at the ripe age of one hundred and four.

From her the long line of descendants may have inherited the stout constitutions and stouter hearts that gave and kept for them a place in every community in which they have taken root. [275]

The story of the Pierce Homestead is told in *Some Colonial Homesteads* more at length than I can give it here.

The Virginia cousin was cordially welcomed to the cradle of her foremothers, and a warm attachment grew up between me and each member of the two households. My cousin Francis had built a modern house upon a corner of the homestead grounds, and I was as happily at home there as in the original nest.

Another adopted home—and in which I spent more time than in all the rest put together—was that of my cousin, Mrs. Long, "the prettiest of the three Lizzies" referred to in one of my letters. Her mother, my father's favorite relative, had died since my last visit to Boston. Her daughter was married at her death-bed. She was a beautiful and intelligent woman, wedded to a man of congenial tastes who adored her. The intimacy of this one of our Yankee cousins and ourselves began before Mea and I had ever seen her. My sister and "Lizzie" were diligent correspondents from their school-days. To a chance remark of mine relative to their letters, I owe one of the most stable friendships that has blessed my life.

We sisters were in the school-room at recess one day when I was fourteen, Mea sixteen. I was preparing a French exercise for M. Guillet, Mea writing to Boston. We had the room to ourselves for the time. My sister looked up from her paper to say:

"What shall I say to Lizzie for you?"

"Give her my love, and tell her to provide me with a correspondent as charming as herself."

In her reply Lizzie begged leave to introduce a particular friend of her own, "intelligent and lovable—altogether interesting, in fact." This friend had heard her talk of her Southern cousins and wished to know them; but I must write the first letter. I caught at the suggestion of what [276] commended itself to me as adventure, and it was an epistolary age. Letters long and numerous, filled with details and disquisitions, held the place usurped by telephone, telegraph, and post-cards. We had time to write, and considered that we could not put it to a better purpose. So the next letter from my sister to my cousin contained a four-pager from me, addressed to "Quelqu'une." I gave fancy free play in conversing with the unknown, writing more nonsense than sober reason. I set her in the chair opposite mine, and discoursed *at* her of "divers sayings." If not

> "Of ships and shoes and sealing-wax
> And cabbages and kings"—

of wars and rumors of wars, and school duties, and current literature.

In due time I had a reply in like strain, but to my consternation, written in a man's hand, and signed "Quelqu'un." He apologized respectfully for the ambiguous terms of the introduction that had led me into a mistake as to his sex, and hoped that the silver that was beginning to stipple his dark hair would guarantee the propriety of a continued correspondence.

"Time was," he mused, "when I could conjugate *Amo* in all its moods and tenses. Now I get no further than *Amabam*, and am constrained to confess myself in the tense at which I halt."

We had written to one another once a month for two years before the sight of a note to Lizzie tore the mask from the face of my graybeard mentor, and confirmed my father's suspicions as to his identity with Ossian Ashley, the husband of Aunt Harriet's elder daughter. The next visit I paid to Boston brought us together in the intimacy of the family circle. He never dropped the rôle [277] of elderly, and as time rolled on, of brotherly friend. He was, at that date, perhaps thirty-five years of age, and a superb specimen of robust manhood. I have seldom beheld a handsomer man, and his port was kingly, even when he had passed his eightieth birthday. Although a busy man of affairs, he was a systematic student. His library might have been the work-shop of a professional *litterateur;* he was a regular contributor to several journals upon financial and literary topics, handling each with grace and strength. His translation of Victor Cherbuliez's *Count Kosta* was a marvellous rendering of the tone and sense of the original into elegant English. He was an excellent French and Latin scholar, and, when his son entered a German university, set himself, at sixty-odd, to study German, that he "might not shame the boy when he came home."

Before that, he had removed to New York City, and engaged in business there as a railway

stock-broker. He was, up to a few months prior to his death, President of the Wabash Railway, and maintained throughout his blameless and beneficent life, a reputation for probity, energy, and talent.

Peace to his knightly soul!

He was passing good to me that summer. In company with his wife, we drove, sailed, and visited steamships, Bunker Hill Monument, and other places of historic interest. In their society I made my first visit to the theatre, and attended concerts and lectures. He lent me books, and led me on to discuss them, then, and when I was at home. And this when he was building up his business, looking after various family interests, not strictly his own (he was forever lending a hand to somebody!), and studying late into the night, as if working for a university degree. I am told that such men are so rare in our time and country as to make this one of my heroes a phenomenon.

It is not marvellous that friendships like these, enjoyed when character and opinion were in [278] forming, should have cultivated optimism that has withstood the shock and undermining of late disappointments. It may well be that I have not known another man who, with his fortune to found, a household to support, and a press of mental toil that would have exhausted the energies of the average student, would have kept up a correspondence with a child for the sake of pleasing and educating her, and carried it on out of affectionate interest in a provincial kinswoman.

Affection and genial sympathy, with whatever concerned me or mine, endured to the end. He was my husband's warm friend, a second father to my children—always and everywhere, my ally.

My last sight of him, before he succumbed to lingering and mortal illness, is vividly present with me. We had dined with him and his wife, and said to ourselves as we had hundreds of times, that time had mellowed, without dimming her beauty, and made him magnificent. The word is none too strong to describe him, as he towered above me in the parting words exchanged in light-heartedness unchecked by any premonition that we might never chat and laugh together again this side of the Silent Sea. He was over six feet in height; his hair and flowing beard were silver-white; his fine eyes darker and brighter by contrast; his smile was as gentle and his repartee as ready as when he had jested with me in those bygone summers from which the glory has never faded for me.

My upturned face must have expressed something of what filled heart and thoughts, for he drew me up to him suddenly, and kissed me between the eyes. Then, with the laugh I knew so well, he held out his hand to my husband:

"You mustn't be jealous, my dear fellow! I knew her a long time before you ever saw her. And such *good* friends as we have been for—bless my soul!—can it be more than fifty years?" [279]

Again I say: "God rest his knightly soul!" It is worth living to have known one such man, and to have had him for my "*good* friend" for "more than fifty years."

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## XXVIII [280]

## MY FIRST OPERA—"PETER PARLEY"—RACHEL AS "CAMILLE"—BAYARD TAYLOR—T. B. ALDRICH—G. P. MORRIS—MARIA CUMMINS—MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY

The three weeks passed in New York on my way home were thronged with novel and enchanting "sensations." I saw my first opera—*Masaniello*, and it was the début of Elise Henssler. The party of which I was a member included Caroline Cheeseboro, Elizabeth Oakes Smith, and Samuel Griswold Goodrich—"Peter Parley." To my intense satisfaction, my seat was beside the kindly old gentleman.

Was not *Parley's Magazine* the first periodical I had ever read? And had not I devoured every book he had written, down to a set of popular biographies for which my father had subscribed as a gift to me on my eighteenth birthday? That I should, really and truly, be sitting at his side and hearing him speak, was a treat I could hardly wait until to-morrow to dilate upon in my home-diary letter. He was social and amusing, and, withal, intelligently appreciative of the music and actors. He rattled away jovially in the *entr'actes* of other operas and personal traits of stage celebrities, theatrical, and operatic. He told me, too, of how he had been ridiculed for embarking upon a career his friends thought puerile and contemptible, when he issued the initial number of *Parley's Magazine*. If I was secretly disappointed that his affection for his juvenile constituency was more perfunctory than I had supposed from his writings, I smothered the feeling as disloyal, [281] and would be nothing short of charmed.

I wrote to my mother next day that he was "a nice, friendly old gentleman, but impressed me as one who had outlived his enthusiasms." If I had put the truth into downright English, I should have said that the circumstance that he was enshrined in thousands of young hearts as the aged man with a sore foot propped upon a cushion, and whose big heart was a fountain of love, and his brain a store-house of tales garnered for their delectation—was of minor importance to the profit popularity had brought him. I was yet new to the world's ways and estimate of values.

The next night I saw Rachel in *Les Horaces*. I had never seen really great acting before. I had, however, read Charlotte Brontë's incomparable portraiture, in *Villette*, of the queen of the modern stage. Having no language of my own that could depict what was done before my eyes, and uttered to my rapt soul, I drew upon obedient memory. Until that moment I had not known how faithful memory could be. In the breathless excitement of the last act of the tragedy, every word was laid ready to my hand. I seemed to read, with my subconscious perceptions, lines of palpitating light, the while my bodily sight lost not a gesture or look of the stricken tigress:

"An inordinate will, convulsing a perishing mortal frame, bent it to battle with doom and death; fought every inch of ground, sold every drop of blood; resisted to the last the rape of every faculty; *would* see, *would* hear, *would* breathe, *would* live, up to, within, well-nigh *beyond* the moment when Death says to all sense and all being—'Thus far and no farther!'"

I saw others—some said as great actors—in after years. Among them, Ristori. I do not think it was because I had seen none of them before the *Vashti* of Charlotte Brontë's impassioned periods [282] flashed upon my unaccustomed sight, that I still hold her impersonation of Camille in *Les Horaces* to be the grandest triumph of the tragedian's art mine eyes have ever witnessed. Ristori was always the gentlewoman, born and reared, in whatever rôle she assumed. Rachel—and again I betake myself to the weird word-painting:

"Evil forces bore her through the tragedy; kept up her feeble strength.... They wrote 'HELL' on her straight, haughty brow. They tuned her voice to the note of torment. They writhed her regal face to a demoniac mask. Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate, she stood."

I fancy that I must have been whispering the words as I gathered up my wraps and followed my companions out of the box. I recollect that one or two persons stared curiously at me. In the *foyer* I was introduced to some strangers, and went through certain civil forms of speech. I did not recollect names or faces when we got back to the hotel. After I was in bed, I could not sleep for hours. But one other actor has ever wrought so mightily upon nerves and imagination. When I was forty years older I was ill for forty-eight hours after seeing Salvini as Othello.

During this memorable stay in New York I met Bayard Taylor. At the conclusion of his first call, I rushed to my desk and wrote to my sister:

"He has a port like Jove.

"'Nature might stand up
And say to all the world: "'This is a MAN!'"'"

For once my ideal did not transcend the reality. Would that I could say it of all my dream-heroes and heroines! At his second call, Mr. Taylor was accompanied by Richard Henry Stoddard. At his first, he brought Charles Frederick Briggs, journalist and author, whose best-known book, [283] *Harry Franco*, I had read and liked. I met him but once. Mr. Taylor honored me with his friendship until his lamented death. My recollections of him are all pleasant.

We met seldom, but our relations were cordial; the renewal of personal association was ever that of friends who liked and understood each other. I reckoned it a favor that honored me, that his widow accepted me as her husband's old acquaintance, and that his memory has drawn us together in bonds of affectionate regard.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was then (in 1855) a mere stripling, yet already famous as the author of *Babie Bell* and *Elsinore*, poems that would have immortalized him had he not written another line. I came to know him well during my Northern sojourn. His charming personality won hearts as inevitably as his genius commanded admiration. Halleck's hackneyed eulogy of his early friend might be applied, and without dissent, to the best-belovéd of our later poets. To know him was to love him. The magnetism of the rarely-sweet smile, the frank sincerity of his greeting, the direct appeal of the clear eyes to the brother-heart which, he took for granted, beat responsive to his, were irresistible, even to the casual acquaintance. His letters were simply bewitching—as when I wrote to him after each of us had grown children, asking if he would give my youngest daughter the autograph she coveted from his hand.

He began by begging me to ask him, the next time I wrote, for something that he *could* do, not for what was impossible for him to grant. He had laid it down as a rule, not to be broken under any temptation, whatsoever, that he would never give his autograph.

> "If I could make an exception in the present case, you know how gladly I would do it, only to prove that I am unalterably your friend,
>
> "THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH."

He graced whatever he touched, and made the commonplace poetic. The ineffable tenderness [284] and purity of his verse were the atmosphere in which the man lived and moved and breathed. The mystic afflatus of the born poet clothed him, as with a garment.

George P. Morris I met again and again. With the frank conceit, so permeated with the amiability and naïveté of the veteran songster, that it offended nobody, he told me how Braham had sung *Woodman, Spare That Tree*, before Queen Victoria, at her special request, and that *Jenny Marsh of Cherry Valley* was more of an accepted classic than *Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch*. He

narrated, too, the thrilling effect produced upon an audience in New York or Philadelphia by the singing for the first time in public of *Near the Rock Where Drooped the Willow*, and smiled benignantly on hearing that it was a favorite ballad in our home. He was then associated with N. P. Willis in the editorship of *The New York Mirror*, and agreed fully with me that it had not its peer among American literary periodicals.

My mother had taken it for years. We had a shelf full of the bound volumes at home. I have some of them in my own library, and twice or three times in the year, have a rainy afternoon-revel over the yellowed, brittle pages mottled with the mysterious, umber thumbmarks of Time.

Colonel Morris's partner, Nathaniel Parker Willis, who had not yet taken to writing out the name at full length, was at his country-seat of "Idlewild." He was ten years older when I saw him last, and under circumstances that took the sting from regret that I had not met him when life was fresh and faiths were easily confirmed.

While in Dorchester I had enjoyed improving my acquaintanceship with Maria Cummins. Encyclopædias register her briefly as "An American novelist. She wrote *The Lamplighter*." In 1855, no other woman writer was so prominently before the reading public. *The Lamplighter* was [285] in every home, and gossip of the personality of the author was seized upon greedily by press and readers. Meeting Augusta Evans, of *Rutledge* and *St. Elmo* and *Beulah*, four years thereafter, I was forcibly reminded of my Dorchester friend, albeit they belonged to totally different schools of literature. Both were quietly refined in manner and speech, and incredibly unspoiled by the flood of popular favor that had taken each by surprise. Alike, too, was the warmth of cordiality with which both greeted me, a stranger, whom they might never meet again.

An amusing incident connected with one of Maria Cummins's visits broke down any lingering trace of strangerhood. She was to take tea at the house of my cousin, Francis Pierce. I was sitting by the window of the drawing-room, awaiting her arrival and gazing at the panorama of Boston Bay and the intervening hills, when an old lady, a relative-in-law of "Cousin Melissa," stole in. She was over eighty, and so pathetically alone in the lower world that Melissa—the personation of Charity, which is Love—had granted her home and care for several years. She had donned her best cap and gown; as she crept up to me, she glanced nervously from side to side, and her withered hands chafed one another in agitation she could not conceal.

"I say, dearie," she began, in a whisper, bending down to my face, "would you mind if I was to sit in the corner over there"—nodding toward the back parlor—"and listen to your talk after Miss Cummins comes? I won't make the least mite of noise. I am an old woman. I never had a chance to hear two *actresses* talk before, and I may never have another."

I consented, laughingly, and she took up her position just in time to escape being seen by the incoming guest. We chatted away cheerily at our far window, watching the sunset as it crimsoned [286] the bay and faded languidly into warm gray.

"Summer sunsets are associated in my mind, in a dreamy way, with the tinkle of cow-bells," observed my companion, and went on to tell how, as a child, living in Salem, she used to watch the long lines of cows coming in from the meadows at evening, and how musically the tinkle of many bells blended with other sunset sounds.

"I have the same association with my Virginia home," I answered. "So had Gray with Stoke Pogis. But *his* herd lowed as it wound slowly over the lea."

"Perhaps English cows are hungrier than ours," Miss Cummins followed, in like strain. "I prefer the chiming bells."

We dropped into more serious talk after that. The unseen listener carried off, up-stairs, when she stole out, like my little gray ghost, but one impression of the "actresses'" confabulation. Cousin Melissa told me of it next day. The old lady was grievously disappointed. We had talked of nothing but cows and cow-bells, and cows coming home hungry for supper, and such stuff. "For all the world as if they had lived on a dairy-farm all their days!"

I supped with Miss Cummins and her widowed mother a day or so later, and we made merry together over the poor crone's chagrin.

It was rather singular that in our several meetings neither of us spoke of Adeline D. T. Whitney. She had not then written the books that brought for her love and fame in equal portions. But she was Maria Cummins's dear friend, and a near neighbor of the Pierces. When we, at last, formed an intimacy that ceased only with her life, we wondered why this should have been delayed for a score of years, when we had so nearly touched, during that and other visits to my ancestral home.

At our earliest meeting in her Milton cottage, whither I had gone by special invitation, she [287] hurried down the stairs with outstretched hands and—"I cannot meet you as a stranger. My dear friend, Maria Cummins, has often talked to me of you!"

In the hasty sketch of a few representative members of the Literary Guild of America, as it existed a half-century ago, I have made good what I intimated a few chapters back, in alluding to my introductory experience of professional jealousies, which, if cynics are to be credited, pervade the ranks of authors, as the mysterious, fretting leprosy ate into the condemned garment of the ancient Israelite. In all frankness, and with a swelling of heart that is both proud and thankful, I aver that no other order, or class, of men and women is so informed and permeated and colored

with generous and loyal appreciation of whatever is worthy in the work of a fellow-craftsman; so little jealous of his reputation; so ready to make his wrongs common property, and to assist the lowliest member of the Guild in the hour of need.

I make no exception in favor of any profession or calling, in offering this humble passing tribute to the Fraternity of American Authors. I could substantiate my assertion by countless illustrations drawn from personal observation, had I space and time to devote to the task. In my sixty years of literary life, I have known nearly every writer of note in our country. In reviewing the list, I bow in spirit, as the seer of Patmos bent the knee in the presence of the shining ones.

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# XXIX

[288]

## ANNA CORA (MOWATT) RITCHIE—EDWARD EVERETT—GOVERNOR WISE—A MEMORABLE DINNER-PARTY

In 1854, Anna Cora Mowatt, "American actress, novelist, dramatist, and poet," as the cyclopædias catalogue her, left the stage to become the wife of William Foushee Ritchie, of Richmond, Virginia.

Mrs. Mowatt, *née* Ogden, was the daughter of a prominent citizen of New York. She was born in France, and partially educated there. Returning to America, she married, in her sixteenth year, James Mowatt, a scholarly and wealthy man, but much the senior of the child-wife. By a sudden reverse of fortune he was compelled to relinquish the beautiful country home on Long Island, to which he had taken his wife soon after their marriage. With the romantic design of saving the home she loved, Mrs. Mowatt began a series of public readings. Her dramatic talent was already well known in fashionable private circles. At the conclusion of the round of readings given in New York and vicinity, she received a proposal from a theatrical manager to go upon the stage. For nine years she was a prime favorite with the American theatre-going public, and almost as popular abroad. She never redeemed "Ravenswood," and her husband died while she was in the zenith of her brilliant success.

Her union with William Ritchie, who had admired her for a long time, was a love-match on both sides. He brought her to quiet Richmond, and installed her in a modest cottage on our side of the [289] town, but three blocks from my father's house. The Ritchies were one of the best of our oldest families; Mrs. Mowatt belonged to one as excellent; her character was irreproachable. I recollect Doctor Haxall insisting upon this when a very conservative Mrs. Grundy "wondered if we ought to visit her."

"You will see, madam, that she will speedily be as popular here as she has been elsewhere. She is a lovely woman, and as to reputation—hers is irreproachable—absolutely! No tongue has ever wagged against her."

I listened with curiosity that had not a tinge of personal concern in it. It went without saying that an ex-actress was out of my sphere. The church that condemned dancing was yet more severe upon the theatre. True, Mrs. Ritchie had left the stage, and, it was soon bruited abroad, never recited except in her own home and in the fine old colonial homestead of Brandon, where lived Mr. Ritchie's sister, Mrs. George Harrison. But she had trodden the boards for eight or nine years, and that stamped her as a personage quite unlike the rest of "us."

So when William Ritchie stopped my father on the street and expressed a wish that his wife and I should know each other, he had a civil, non-committal reply, embodying the fact that I was expecting to go North soon, and would not be at home again before the autumn.

During my absence my father sent me a copy of the *Enquirer* containing a review of *The Hidden Path*, written by Mrs. Ritchie, so complimentary, and so replete with frank, cordial interest in the author, that I could not do less than to call on my return and thank her.

She was not at home. I recall, with a flush of shame, how relieved I was that a card should represent me, and that I had "done the decent thing." The "decent thing," in her opinion, was that the call should be repaid within the week.

No picture of her that I have seen does her even partial justice. In her youth she was extremely [290] pretty. At thirty-eight, she was more than handsome. Time had not dimmed her exquisite complexion; her hair had been cut off during an attack of brain-fever, and grew out again in short, fair curls; her eyes were soft blue; her teeth dazzlingly white. Of her smile Edgar Allan Poe had written: "A more radiant gleam could not be imagined." In manner, she was as simple as a child. Not with studied simplicity, but out of genuine self-forgetfulness.

She struck what I was to learn was the keynote to character and motive, before I had known her ten minutes. I essayed to thank her for what she had said of my book. She listened in mild surprise:

"Don't thank me for an act of mere justice. I liked the book. I write book-reviews for my husband's paper. I could not do less than say what I thought."

And—at my suggestion that adverse criticism was wholesome for the tyro—"Why should I look

for faults when there is so much good to be seen without searching?”

A woman of an utterly different type sounded the same note a score of years afterward.

I said to Frances Willard, whose neighbor I was at a luncheon given in her honor by the wife of the Commandant at Fort Mackinac:

“You know, Miss Willard, that, as General Howard said just now of us, you and I ‘don’t train in the same band.’”

“No?” The accent and the sweet candor, the ineffable womanliness of the eyes that sought mine, touched the spring of memory. “Suppose, then, we talk only of the many points upon which we do agree? Why seek for opposition when there are so many harmonies close at hand?”

Of such peacelovers and peacemakers is the kingdom of heaven, by whatsoever name they are called on earth.

Mrs. Ritchie was a Swedenborgian. I had learned that in her *Autobiography of an Actress*. All [291]
denominations—including some whose adherents would not sit down to the Lord’s Supper with certain others, and those who would not partake of the consecrated “elements” if administered by non-prelatic hands—united in shutting and bolting the door of heaven in her face.

In the intimate companionship, unbroken by these and other admonitions, I never heard from Mrs. Ritchie’s lips a syllable that was not redolent with the law of kindness. I learned to love her fondly and to revere her with fervor I would not have believed possible, six months earlier. It was not her fascination of manner alone that attracted me, or the unceasing acts of sisterly kindness she poured upon me, that deepened my devotion. She opened to me the doors of a new world: broadened and deepened and sweetened my whole nature. We never spoke of doctrines. We rarely had a talk—and henceforward our meetings were almost daily—in which she did not drop into my mind some precious grain of faith in the All-Father; of love for the good and noble in my fellow-man and of compassion, rather than blame, for the erring. Of her own church she did not talk. She assumed, rather, that we were “one family, above, beneath,” and bound by the sacred tie of kinship, to “do good and to communicate.” She had a helpful hand, as well as a comforting word, for the sorrowing and the needy. As to her benefactions, I heard of them, now and again, from others. Now it was an aged gentlewoman, worn down to the verge of nervous prostration, and too poor to seek the change of air she ought to have, who was sent at the Ritchies’ expense to Old Point Comfort for a month; or a struggling music-mistress, for whom Mrs. Ritchie exerted herself quietly to secure pupils; or a girl whose talent for elocution was developed by private
lessons from the ex-actress; or a bedridden matron, who had quieter nights after Mrs. Ritchie ran [292]
in, two or three evenings in a week, to read to her for half an hour in the rich, thrilling voice that had held hundreds enchanted in bygone days.

To me she was a revelation of good-will to men. She lectured me sometimes, as a mother might and ought, always in infinite tenderness.

“I cannot have you say that, my child!” she said once, when I broke into a tirade against the hypocrisy and general selfishness of humankind at large, and certain offenders in particular. “Nobody is all-wicked. There is more unconquered evil in some natures than in others. There is good—a spark of divine fire—in every soul God has made. Look for it, and you will find it. Encourage it, and it will shine.”

And in reply to a murmur during the trial-experiences of parish work, when I “deplored the effect of these belittling cares and petty commonplaces upon my intellectual growth,” the caressing hand was laid against my hot cheek.

“Dear! you are the wife of the man of God! It is a sacred trust committed to you as his helpmate. To shirk anything that helps him would be a sin. And we climb one step at a time, you know—not by bold leaps. Nothing is belittling that God sets for us to do.”

She, and some other things, gave me a royal winter.

Another good friend, Mrs. Stanard, had notified me that Edward Everett, then lecturing in behalf of the Mount Vernon Association, was to be her guest while in Richmond, and raised me to the seventh heaven of delighted anticipation by inviting me to meet him at a dinner-party she would give him. Mrs. Ritchie forestalled the introduction to the great man by writing a wee note to me on the morning of the day on which the dinner was to be.

The Mount Vernon Association had for its express object the purchase of Washington’s home
and burial-place, to be held by the Nation, and not by the remote descendant of Mary and [293]
Augustine Washington, who had inherited it. Mrs. Ritchie was the secretary of the organization.

Her note said:

> “A committee of our Association will wait upon Mr. Everett at the Governor’s house this forenoon. I will smuggle you in, if you will go with us. I shall call for you at eleven.”

When we four who had come together were ushered into the spacious drawing-room of the gubernatorial mansion, we had it to ourselves. Mrs. Ritchie, with a pretty gesture that reminded one of her French birth, fell to arranging five or six chairs near the middle of the room, into a seemingly careless group. One faced the rest at a conversational angle.

“Now!” she uttered, with a playful pretence of secrecy; “you will see Mr. Everett seat himself just there! He can do nothing else. Call it a stage trick, if you like. But he *must* sit there!”

The words had hardly left her lips when Mr. Everett entered, accompanied by a younger man, erect in carriage and bronzed in complexion, whom he presented to us as “My son-in-law, Lieutenant Wise.”

To our secret amusement, Mr. Everett took the chair set for him, and this, when three remained vacant after the ladies were all seated.

Lieutenant Wise and I, as the non-attached personages present, drifted to the other side of the room while official talk went on between the orator-statesman and the committee.

The retentive memory, which has, from my babyhood, been both bane and blessing, speedily identified my companion with the author of *Los Gringos* (The Yankees), a satirical and very clever work that had fallen in my way a couple of years before. He was a cousin of the Governor. I [294]
learned to-day of his connection with the Everetts.

He was social, and a witty talker. I had time to discover this before the Governor appeared with his daughter, a charming girl of seventeen, who did the honors of the house with unaffected grace and ease.

I had met her before, and I knew her father quite well. Mrs. Ritchie had taken herself severely to task that very week for speaking of him as “our warm-hearted, hot-headed Governor.”

The characterization was just. We all knew him to be both, and loved him none the less for the warm temper that had hurried him into many a scrape, political and personal. We were rather proud of his belligerency, and took real pride in wondering what “he would do next.” He was eloquent in debate, a bitter partisan, a warrior who would fight to the death for friend, country or principle. Virginia never had a Governor whom she loved more, and of whom she was more justly proud.

This was early in the year 1856. I do not recollect that I ever visited the state drawing-room of the mansion again, until I stood upon a dais erected on the very spot where Lieutenant Wise and I had chatted together that brilliant winter day, and I lectured to crowded parlors in behalf of the Mary Washington Monument Association. Another Governor reigned in the stead of our warm-hearted and hot-headed soldier. Another generation of women than that which had saved the son’s tomb to the Nation was now working to erect a monument over the neglected grave of the mother.

When the throng had dispersed, “Annie” Wise, now Mrs. Hobson—and still of a most winsome presence—and I withdrew into a corner to speak of that five-and-forty-year-old episode, and said: “The fathers, where are they? And the prophets—they do live forever!”

Of the group collected about Mr. Everett, on the noon preceding the delivery of his celebrated [295]
oration, but we two were left alive upon the earth.

Of the Stanard dinner I retain a lively recollection. Among the guests were Lieutenant Wise; Mr. Corcoran, the Washington banker and philanthropist; his slim, engaging young daughter (afterward Mrs. Eustis), and Mr. Everett’s son, Sidney. Mrs. Stanard was the most judicious and gracious of hostesses. “A fashionable leader of fashionable society!” sneered somebody in my hearing, one day.

Mrs. Ritchie took up the word promptly. Detraction never passed unchallenged in her presence.

“Fashionable, if you will. But sincere. She is a true-hearted woman.”

In subscribing heartily to the truth of the statement, I append what I had abundant reason to know and believe. She was a firm friend to those she loved, steadfast in affection that outlasted youth and prosperity.

She made life smooth for everybody within her reach whenever she could do it. She had the inestimable talent of divining what would best please each of her guests, and ministered to weakness and desire.

On this night, she did not need to be told that a personal talk with the chief guest would be an event to me. She lured me adroitly into a nook adjoining the drawing-room, and as Mr. Everett, who was staying in the house, passed the door, she called him in, and presently left me on his hands for half an hour. He was always my *beau ideal* of the perfect gentleman. He talked quietly, in refined modulations and chaste English that betokened the scholar. Like all really great men, he bore himself with modest dignity, with never a touch of bluster or self-consciousness. In five minutes I found myself listening and replying, as to an old acquaintance. His voice was low, and so musical as to fasten upon him the sobriquet of the “silver-tongued orator.” I could repeat, [296]
almost verbatim, his part of our talk on that occasion. I give the substance of one section that impressed me particularly.

We spoke of *Hiawatha*, then a recent publication. Mr. Everett thought that Longfellow transgressed artistic rules, and was disobedient to literary precedent in translating Indian names in the text of the poem. The repetition of “Minnehaha—Laughing Water,” “The West Wind—Mudjekeewis,” “Ishkooda—the Comet,” etcetera, was affected and tedious.

“Moreover,” he continued, smiling, “I have serious doubts respecting the florid metaphors and highly figurative speech which Cooper and other writers of North American Indian stories have put into the mouths of their dusky heroes.” He went on to say that, when Governor of Massachusetts, he received a deputation of aborigines from the Far West. In anticipation of the visit, he primed himself with an ornate address of welcome, couched in the figurative language he imagined would be familiar and agreeable to the chiefs. This was delivered through an interpreter, and received in blank silence. Then the principal sachem replied in curt platitudes, with never a trope or allegorical allusion. Mr. Everett added that he had learned since that the vocabulary of the modern Indian is meagre and prosaic in the extreme.

The justice of the observation was borne in upon me when I sat in James Redpath’s box at the Indian Exhibition I have spoken of in another chapter, and heard snatches of alleged oratory as transmitted by a fluent interpreter to the Newark audience. Anything more tame and bare it would be hard to imagine.

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## XXX

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## A MUSICAL CONVENTION—GEORGE FRANCIS ROOT—WHEN “THE SHINING SHORE” WAS FIRST SUNG—THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS—BETROTHAL—DEMPSTER IN HIS OLD AGE

Reversing the wheel of Time by a turn or two, we are in the thick of preparations for the Christmas of 1855.

It is less than a year since I read and re-read a letter that had lain among the leaves of my journal for a long term of years. It was never read by any eyes except my own, and those of him who wrote it. In the solemn conviction that for any other—no matter how near of kin and dear of heart—to look upon the lines, would be profanation, I burned the old letter. Life is short and uncertain. I would take no risks. And what need of keeping what I can never lose while memory remains faithful to her trust?

I require no written or printed record to remind me what set that Yule-tide apart from all the anniversaries that had preceded it, and distinguished it from all that were to follow in its train.

We had had a guest in the house for three weeks. A Musical Convention—the first ever held in Richmond—was in session under the conduct of Lowell Mason and George Francis Root. My father, my sister, my brother Herbert, and myself were members of a flourishing Sacred Music Society, composed principally of amateurs, and we had engaged the distinguished leaders in the profession to preside over the Conference, by which it was hoped public taste in the matter of choir and congregational singing might be improved. Classes were formed for the study of [298] methods and for drill in vocalization. The course would be closed by a grand concert, in which no professional artists would take part.

The thought that the imported leaders in the programme should be allowed to put up at a hotel was opposed to the genius of Southern hospitality. Doctor and Mrs. Lowell Mason were the honored guests of Mr. Williams, the President of the Society. My father invited Mr. Root “to make our house his home while he was in our city.”

That was the old-fashioned form of asking strangers to take bit and sup and bed with us. We made good the words, too. The “home” was theirs as truly as it was ours. The Convention was advertised to last ten days. When the time was nearly expired, the extraordinary success of the experiment induced the projectors to extend the time to a month. Mr. Root was for removing to a hotel, but we arose up in arms and forbade it. His bonhomie, intelligence, and general attractiveness of manner and disposition had endeared him to us all. We hailed as a reprieve the postponement of the date of departure. He had never seen a Virginia Christmas, and here was a special providence he must not overlook. Household machinery moved as if he had not been there. He entered jovially into plans, and connived at confidences—the necessary deceits that are to be condoned by agreeable surprises in the fulness of time. When the personage whom Mea had long ago dubbed “The Young Evangelist,” appeared upon the scene a week in advance of the holiday, and spent three-fourths of each day under our hospitable roof—a state of affairs that evidently was no new thing—the Professor took in the situation without the quiver of an eyelash, and asked never a question. He did more to prove how cordially he was one with the family. Discovering, in the course of the first evening after the new arrival had enlarged our circle, that [299] he had an exceptionally fine voice, and knew how to use it, he pressed him eagerly into service as “the basso he had been longing for,” and the two sang themselves into each other’s good graces inside of twenty-four hours.

I had had a cold for a fortnight, and I made the most of my demi-semi-invalidism when there were sessions of the Convention at uncanny hours, and secured, instead, quiet evenings at home. All of which was transparent to our Professor, as I suspected then, and knew subsequently. He did not disturb a tête-à-tête one December afternoon by bringing down into the parlor a freshly written sheet of music he wished to try on the piano. His quartette clustered about the instrument at his summons, and the hymn was sung over and over. I sat by the fire and listened. At the third repetition, I asked:

“The music is yours, but where did you get the words?”

Mr. Root answered that his mother had clipped them from a Western paper, and handed them to him. The music fitted itself to them in his mind at the first reading. He struck the chords boldly in saying it, and the four rendered the whole hymn with spirit.

“I am no prophetess,” I commented, “nor the daughter of a prophet; but I predict that that will be the most popular of your compositions. It has all the elements of life, and a long life, in it. Once more, please!”

They sang it with a will:

“My days are gliding quickly by,
And I, a pilgrim stranger,
Would not detain them as they fly,
Those hours of toil and danger.
For, oh, we stand on Jordan’s strand,
Our friends are passing over:
And just before, The Shining Shore,
We may almost discover.”

Millions have sung it since. Millions more will yield heart, soul, and voice to the bound and [300]
swing and exultant leap of the melody “thought out” by the composer in the earliest reading of the anonymous verses. “Almost” has been “quite” with him for many a year.

It was during that Christmas week that I attended a full rehearsal of the programme to be given at the grand concert. Near the close of the rehearsal, Mr. Root came down to the back of the house and dropped into a seat by me, among the auditors and lookers-on. He was tired, he explained, “and would loaf for the rest of the affair.” The “affair” wound up with Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus. My “loafing” neighbor pricked up his ears, as the war-horse at sound of the trumpet; sat upright and poured the might of heart and voice into the immortal *opus*. With the precision of a metronome, and the fire of a seraph, he went through it, from the first to the last note, with never a book or score. It was more to us, who had the good fortune to be near him, than all the rest of the performance.

It was inevitable that two of us should recall and speak together in awed tones, of Handel’s rejoinder to a query, as to his emotions in writing the Chorus:

“I did verily believe that I saw the Great White Throne and Him Who sat thereon, and heard the harpers harping with their harps, and all God’s holy angels.”

I was watching the fine, uplifted head and rapt unconsciousness of him whose whole frame throbbed and thrilled with clarion tones that pealed out, “Hallelujah! hallelujah!” when a voice on the other side of me murmured in my ear:

“And all that sat there, steadfastly watching him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”

I cherish a hundred pleasant and dear memories of our musical visitor. I like none other so
well as this vision. It so befell that my one and only visit to the grave of Oliver Goldsmith was [301]
made when the choir of the adjacent Temple church was practising the Hallelujah Chorus. Although in the heart of mighty London, the place was strangely still and solitary. We lingered there until the last chord died into silence. It was not necessary for either of us to put into words what held the fancy of both. Only—as we turned away we looked up to the sky, and one whispered, “He is singing it, still!”

Engagements of marriage were never announced in Old Virginia. We took more pains to keep them secret than family and friends take nowadays to trumpet them abroad. Mr. Derby ran on from New York to spend Christmas and the next day with us. He came and departed without an intimation of any change in the feelings and prospects of his last September guest. Mr. Terhune went back to his Charlotte parish; letters travelled regularly and frequently back and forth. Some were addressed to me; more bore my brother’s name on the envelope, to hoodwink village post-office gossips. Young men, who were habitual visitors, called as often and were received with the olden friendliness; I accepted the escort of this, that, and the other one impartially, and at will. “The Young Evangelist” was in town for a few days of every month, and was more with us than anywhere else. And why not? He had visited us more intimately than at any other house during his six months’ occupancy of Doctor Hoge’s pulpit. It happened repeatedly that he was one of three or four callers in the evening. On these occasions he, magnanimously, as he phrased it, “never interfered with another fellow’s running.” He was as assiduous in his attentions to girls who chanced to be present as Ned Rhodes, Tom Baxter, or any other Tom, Dick, or Harry of the party could be to me. At ten o’clock he arose, made his adieux in decorous sort to the ladies of
the house and to the company generally, and withdrew. If nobody showed a disposition to follow [302]
his example, he, to quote again from his tactics, “took account of stock,” and, having assured himself that the others lived in different directions, appeared in the open door, overcoat on, hat in hand, and in his mouth a jaunty query as to the probability of having company in his walk to the Exchange Hotel, where he usually put up. Few were bold enough to loiter later when the privileged habitué of the house showed so plainly that the family kept early hours. After his

regrets at the prospect of a lonely tramp were uttered, he departed in good earnest. He had made but a few rounds of the block when the shutters of the front parlor window were closed, the signal that the course was clear for a return.

In mid-April he came to Richmond to receive his widowed sister, who passed some weeks with us. Mea and I had had an engagement with Messrs. Rhodes and Baxter to go to a Dempster concert. The pair were so often on escort duty that they were dubbed "The Circumstances" by our saucy brothers and sisters. It was, according to the younglings, a settled matter, when we based our prospective presence at any festive scene upon "circumstances," that Damon and his Pythias should show up in season to take us thither.

Mrs. Greenleaf arrived on Tuesday. Her brother came by the noon train on Wednesday. It was not until I noted the grave wonder in her blue eyes, as I congratulated her and him that they would have the evening to themselves and home-talk, that it dawned upon me how unconventional was the proceeding altogether. North of Mason and Dixon's line it would have been downright impropriety for an engaged girl to walk off coolly, in the escort of another man, within a few hours after the coming of the betrothed whom she had not seen for a month.

The person who would be supposed to suffer most discomfort from the outrage to conventionality was, fortunately, more *au fait* to Virginia manners and social usages than his relative. When I took an opportunity to express misgivings lest I might lose ground in her good graces if I kept the engagement to hear the famous ballad-singer, I was bidden not to "waste a thought on that matter, but to enjoy the concert with all my heart. For his part, he was delighted that I had the chance to go." [303]

So, when our escorts appeared, I carried off a light heart, and was obedient to the injunction to get all the enjoyment that Dempster, then evidently in the decadence of his powers, could give a music-lover.

I heard him but that once. I do not regret that I went then, although sadness mingled with pleasure while we listened. Dempster's rendition of English ballads, without other accompaniment than the piano played by himself, with no effort after brilliancy of execution, had moved two continents to smiles and tears. One searches vainly for his name in cyclopædias and dictionary lists of the famous dead. He was now a gray and flabby oldish man. His voice was broken in the high register, and thickened on the lower; his breath was irregular and short. Yet certain passages—notably in the *Irish Emigrant's Lament*—had sympathetic sweetness that helped one to credit the stories of his former successes. He sang Tennyson's *May Queen* all through, not skipping a stanza of the three parts. It was a dreary performance, that grew absolutely painful before the consumptive was finally relegated to the bourne

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest."

"Thank Heaven!" sighed Mr. Rhodes as the last word quavered forth; and Mea—"She ought to apologize for being such an unconscionably long time in dying."

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# XXXI

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## WEDDING BELLS—A BRIDAL TOUR—A DISCOVERED RELATIVE—A NOBLE LIFE

"Richmond, *August 16th, 1856.*

"My very dear Effie,—My long silence has seemed strange and may have appeared unkind to you, but there have been a thousand hindrances to my writing.

"A sudden fit of illness interrupted the health that had remained firm throughout the warm spring weather, and obliged me to make my visit to Goochland earlier than I intended. For a week or more after my arrival there I was worse than I had been at home. When I began to recover, the amendment was rapid.

"To cut short these details, I am most unromantically well and robust, am gaining flesh daily, and boast an appetite that would throw a sentimental young woman into convulsions were she to witness my gastronomic exploits. Yet I have delayed writing to you because I wished to arrange everything relating to the final 'performances' before notifying you of the same.

"There have been sundry alterations in the programme since you and I last consulted over these things, the principal of which is the change of the day and hour. We expect, now, to leave home on Tuesday fortnight (September 2d) in the morning, instead of (as was first spoken of) on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 3d. This will allow us two days in Philadelphia, and, being the

plan most approved of by father and Mr. Terhune, of course I am submissive.

"The bridal party will spend both Monday and Tuesday evenings, besides breakfasting here on Tuesday morning. So you girls may bring evening dresses.

"The bridesmaids are to wear blue muslin or lawn skirts, with white muslin [305]
basques—a neat breakfast costume that will look pretty as a uniform, and be becoming to all of you, without throwing my quiet travelling attire too much into the shade. You know that at a morning wedding it is customary for each to dress as she pleases. This never pleased my fancy. The company wears a motley look. Full bridal robes would be equally out of place. Therefore, we have selected this medium.

"Now, *ma chère!* cannot you keep your intention of the Richmond trip as profound a secret as you have other matters we wot of? Your father and mother must be apprized of it, and Colonel and Mrs. Graves; but, for a few days, cannot the story be kept within the two families? I trust you to do this for me.

"The Charlotte party will come down on Monday, the 1st. We shall expect you and Virginia some days in advance of that date. I hope to have everything in readiness, even to packing my trunks, by the middle of the preceding week, and to have time to enjoy your society. Write as soon as your plans are formed, and let that time be very soon. As to my trousseau—thanks to nimble and kind fingers, the work is nearly done. Next week my time is to be divided between the dressmaker and a gentleman who writes that he has 'business to attend to in Richmond,' and who, it is fair to presume, may call occasionally. The latest gossip is that there is to be a double wedding here next month; that both sisters are to be dressed precisely alike and be married in the evening. Therefore, come prepared for the worst—or the best, as the case may seem.

"To drop business and jesting together—it is very hard to realize that, if Providence permit, one little fortnight will bring such a change into my life. Here, in the home of my girlhood, where all else is unaltered, and I seem to be welded, as it were, into the household chain, I cannot believe that my place is so soon to be vacant. Brain and heart are so full of crowding thoughts and emotions that I marvel how I preserve a composed demeanor. The past, with its tender and hallowed memories; the present, with a wealth of calm, [306]
real happiness; the bright, although vague future, alike strive to enchain my mind.

"I long to see you; to have a good, old-fashioned chat, a familiar interchange of our plans and our hopes. There is a sentence in your last that promises much—a promise I shall surely call upon you to redeem when we meet. I would have you feel that by this union you gain, not lose a friend....

"My love to your mother and to 'Cousin Mag.' May I not ask from them a sincere 'God-speed'?

"You will not disappoint me, now, dear one? Write at once that you are all coming. You and Virginia G. will require little preparation—besides the blue skirt and the thin muslin spencer (which you are sure to have!), a pair of white gloves will be all you need.

"This is a hasty and, I fear, an incoherent letter, but a full freight of love goes with it. As I began, I end with 'COME!'"

As may be gathered from this letter, the wedding was to be a simple affair—so quiet that it could not be called a social function.

We were of one mind on that point. To secure the presence of our most intimate friends, we went through the form of selecting bridesmaids and groomsmen. It was the custom to have a long train of attendants at large wedding-parties, and we took advantage of the fashion to limit the company to be assembled on that early September morning to "the bridal party" and the family. The exceptions to the limit were dear old Doctor Haxall (whose wife was out of town) and three friends of the bridegroom. Two were from New Jersey and family connections, although not related by blood. The other was Mr. Word, of Charlotte, the gentlest-hearted of old bachelors—known affectionately by his intimates as "Cousin Jimmy."

Genial old saint! My heart swells now at the flashlight picture fastened upon memory of my first sight of, and speech with him. He was more closely shaven than I ever saw him afterward— [307]
and he was ever the pink of neatness. An expanse of white vest and shirt-bosom covered a broad chest that palpitated visibly, as, enfolding my hand in both of his, he said, in the best manner of the gentleman of the old school (and there are no finer gentlemen anywhere):

"My dear madam, let me entreat you to regard me from this moment as a BROTHER!"

No capitals can endow the word with the meaning he put into it. He fulfilled his part of the compact nobly.

To go back to the preparation for the quiet bridal: A Richmond fashion I have never known elsewhere, and which outlasted the war by some years, was that the bride-elect and two or three of her bridesmaids drove from house to house a day, or two or three, before the marriage, and left cards upon acquaintances who were not bidden to the ceremony. This was done in cases where, as with me, it was to be a house-wedding, and the attendants were confined to a few family friends. If there were to be a church-wedding, followed by a reception, or if the ceremony at home were to be witnessed by a large party of guests, the drive and delivery of cards preceded the "occasion" by a week or ten days. To send an invitation to any social gathering by post would be a transgression of decorum and precedent—a cheap trick unworthy of any one tolerably well versed in social forms. The delivery by the bride and her suite was delicately complimentary to those she wished to honor.

In furtherance of our design of keeping even the date of the marriage secret up to the last possible hour, we had delayed the delivery of my "P. P. C." cards until Monday.

At the very bottom of the box of time-discolored letters preserved by the friend of my childhood and intimate of my girlhood, I found one of these cards. Time's thumbmarks have not spared the bit of glazed pasteboard. My maiden name is there, and, in the left-hand lower corner, "P. P. C." [308]
That was all the information it deigned to give the curious and the friendly. I was going away—somewhere. Just when and where was nobody's business.

It will hardly be believed that we kept our own counsel so well that our own servants, while they might have their suspicions, were only certain that I was going North on Tuesday, as I had often gone on other summers, and that the girls who had been visiting me for a week were to remain to a party my sister would give on Tuesday evening. Not until Monday morning were any of them, except "Mammy Rachel," informed what was on foot.

The day dawned—if dawn it could be called—through steady sheets of rain. No delusive adage of "Rain before seven, clear before eleven" ever gained currency in Richmond. It was as clear to our dismayed souls that this was an all-day rain, as that the drive and cards could not be postponed until to-morrow. Sampson, the carriage-driver, whom we did not dub "coachman" until after the war, was notified by the mouth of Tom, the young dining-room servant, that he must have the carriage at the door at ten o'clock, and prepare for a long expedition. We were at the breakfast-table when word came back that "it warn't a fittin' day for no young ladies to go out. Nor for his carriage an' horses. De ladies will have to put off their shoppin' for another time."

Mea turned upon the respectful emissary with the snap of the eyes and incisive accent he knew full well:

"Say to Sampson that Miss Virginia is to be married to-morrow, and that we have to take out cards. He will be here on time!"

We had an answer before we left our chairs.

"Yes, ma'am! He says he'd go if it *killed* him and the horses!"

We set forth at the appointed hour. Mea, Effie, Virginia Graves, and myself, wrapped up as for [309]
a winter journey, but in as high spirits as if the sun had shone and birds sung blithely in trees that shivered and shrank and streamed under the weight of the bitter rain. Poor Tom—for the nonce, the footman whose duty it was to jump down from his perch at every door before which we signalled Sampson to stop, to receive the enveloped card upon a silver tray, and to scamper up a walk or up a flight of steps, his umbrella held low over the precious consignment—had the worst of it all. He was soaked to the skin by the time the route was finished and we turned homeward. We were out four hours. And in all the four hours the rain never intermitted one drop, and the wind only changed from the east to blow from all quarters of the heavens at once. If coachman and patient footman were drenched, we were more than moist, and so chilled that we rejoiced with exceeding great joy at the sight of blazing fires in chambers and dining-room on our return.

The home atmosphere was all that it should be on the eve of the first wedding in a household where the happiness of one was the joy of all. Maybe I took it too much as a matter of course, then. I value the recollection with something akin to jealous fondness. How, all day long, while the skies streamed without and the wind dashed the water by pailfuls against the windows, mirth and frolic within went on like a peal of joy-bells, and every look, gesture, and word carried to my heart the sweet persuasion that I was not absent from the thoughts of one of them for a moment.

So certain were we that nothing could "gang agley"—and this in the teeth of the storm that had abated naught of its fury by nightfall—that when Herbert, who had gone to the station to meet the Charlotte party (including Doctor Hoge, who was returning from his vacation), brought back a rueful countenance and the news that "the flood had washed away a bridge on the [310]
Danville Railway and made it impracticable for trains to run for twenty-four hours," we fell upon him with a hail-storm of laughing reproaches that swept away the pretence of sorrowful sympathy.

How could anything go wrong? Not one of us was hoaxed for the fraction of a second.

We took for granted, with the like gay confidence, that the tempest would rage itself faint by morning. It was no surprise that the day was so brilliantly clear, so fresh and fragrant, that Doctor Hoge was reminded of

“The rose that was newly washed by the shower”—

and, after the ceremony, strayed from one to another of the thirty present, asking if any one could tell him who was the author of the line.

Which quest, when comparison of notes elicited the fact that ten persons had been catechised, took a place among our family jests.

One incident of the journey to Washington stands out in my mind among the thousand and one “coincidences,” falsely so-called, that star or mar every human life, if we will but heed them and their consequences. Mr. Terhune, and Mr. Cardwell, one of the groomsmen, who went as far as Baltimore with us, on his way to speak at a political meeting, had gone to look to the luggage after settling me in the car in Richmond. The air was close, and I tried to raise the window by me.

“Allow me!” said a pleasant voice in my ear, and a strong hand reached forward to perform the trifling service.

I said, over my shoulder, “Thank you!” catching sight of a fine, manly face, lighted by a pair of kind, gray eyes. I saw the shadow of the hand that went up to his hat, as he uttered some conventional phrase in acknowledgment, and thought no more of him until we had taken the Potomac boat at Acquia Creek. I recognized my neighbor of the train then, in the tall man who [311] tramped the deck to stretch long limbs cramped by sitting in the car, and checked his walk to pick up and comfort a child that fell headlong in running away from its nurse. I was struck by the gentleness of the handsome giant in handling the baby, and the tact he displayed in taking the weeper in his arms, and directing his attention to a passing steamer. The little fellow stopped crying at once, and, when the frightened nurse found the runaway, he clung to the stranger’s neck, much to the amusement of the latter. He carried him to the far end of the boat, talking cheerily with him, and finally handed him over to the woman, with a kiss upon the baby-lips held up to him.

The call to dinner diverted my mind from the little scene, and it was not until we were in our hotel in Washington that I alluded to it, and told Mr. Terhune of the courtesy the stranger had rendered me on the train.

“I wish you had mentioned it before,” he said. “I should have thanked him. I saw him at the hotel last night. His name is Brookes, I think. He is a cousin of Doctor Hoge. By-the-way, he must be related to your mother. And”—laughingly—“naturally, to yourself.”

“Of course!” I broke in, excitedly. “I wish I had guessed who he was. It must be the Rev. James Brookes, my mother’s cousin. You needn’t laugh! and you must not say ‘Another?’ He is a splendid fellow. His mother was Judith Lacy, and named for my grandmother!”

As the genealogist of the family, I reckoned up the “handsome giant” forthwith. I even knew incidents of his family history he never heard until I rehearsed them to him in his St. Louis home, thirty years afterward. He was, by then, to me the best-belovéd of all my clerical kinsmen. I upbraided him, when we were made known to one another, for not letting me know who he was [312] at our first encounter.

“My dear cousin! On your wedding-day!” was his exclamation. “Even the tie of kindred blood would not have justified the intermeddling of a stranger at that time.”

We made up for the delay of a quarter-century by full and glad recognition of the blood-claim. He was a master in Israel; eloquent in the pulpit; as a writer, strong and convincing; in parish ministrations, as tender as a woman and helpful as a brother. He adorned his profession; as a citizen he fought evil with a lion’s strength, and succored the erring with the wisdom of Paul, the gentleness of John.

What strength and comfort I drew from intimate association with this wise, tender, and leal kinsman, may not be told here. I can never acknowledge it aright until I speak with the tongue of angels.

More than a dozen years have passed since the Easter noon, when the lightning leaped along a thousand miles of telegraph lines, to bring me this message from his son-in-law:

“*James H. Brookes fell asleep at sunrise on Easter morning.*”

Since that glorious awakening he has dwelt forever with the Lord.

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# XXXII

[313]

## PARSONAGE LIFE—WILLIAM WIRT HENRY—HISTORIC SOIL—JOHN RANDOLPH—THE LAST OF THE RANDOLPHS

The village of Charlotte Court-House was a rambling hamlet in 1856. The plank-road from the nearest railway station (“Drake’s Branch”) entered the village at one side, and cut abruptly into the main street. This thoroughfare meandered leisurely from a country road at each end, through the entire length of the shiretown. It was lined irregularly with public and private buildings. The

Court House, three or four stores, a couple of hotels, and perhaps half a dozen residences, made up the nucleus of the place. Beyond, and on either side, dwellings—some of brick, some of wood—were surrounded by spacious grounds embracing shrubbery, plantations, groves, and gardens. The "Village Church," a brick edifice hoary with years, and redolent of ecclesiastical traditions, stood at the left of the plank turnpike as one approached the village from the station. A porticoed manor-house, that had a history almost as old, faced it across lawn and shrubbery on the opposite side of the way. When one had left the turnpike for the main street, and driven a quarter of a mile or so toward the "real country," one passed the Parsonage. It stood well away from the street, from which it was screened by a grove of native oaks. Behind it lay a large yard, at one side of which were the kitchen and other domestic offices. A picket fence divided the yard from a garden, and at the left of this were the stables and pasture. Back of the garden a field lost itself [314] in a wood of virgin growth.

The house was a white cottage, a story-and-a-half high, fronted and backed by wide porches. A hall cut the lower floor in half, and ran from the entrance to the back door. On the left of the hall was a parlor of fair dimensions, with windows at the front and rear. "The chamber," of like shape and proportions, was on the other side. The dining-room was one wing, and "the study" another. Both connected directly with a deep portico which filled the intermediate space. Two bedrooms above stairs, and a store-room adjoining the dining-room, completed the tale of rooms.

A modest establishment in very truth, but not contemptible from the Old Virginia standpoint. Small as it was, we did not have it to ourselves until after Christmas. I esteemed this a fortunate circumstance from the first, considering how much I had to learn of housekeeping and parish work. Subsequently, I knew it for one of the signal blessings of a life that has been affluent in goodness and mercy.

For the occupants of the Parsonage, pending the completion of a house of their own in building at the other end of the village, were Mr. and Mrs. Wirt Henry, a young married couple with one child. They had rented the cottage for the year ending January 1st, and kindly consented to receive us as boarders until the term had expired.

From the moment that Wirt Henry came out to assist me to alight from the carriage that had brought us from the station, one mid-October day, to the end of his honored and useful life, his friendship for us knew no variableness nor shadow of turning. He was already my husband's staunch right hand in church and community. He took me upon trust for the time. I learned to love husband and wife long before we became separate households. To this day, his widow is to [315] me as a sister. In the care-free three months of our happy companionship, Mrs. Henry helped me tactfully through the initial stages of acquaintanceship with parish and neighborhood. To the manor born, and connected by blood with two-thirds of the best families in the county, her gentle "coaching" was an inestimable benefit to the stranger within her gates.

Her husband was a grandson of Patrick Henry, and a lawyer of note, although not yet thirty years of age. He attained eminence in his native county as time went on, and in Richmond, to which city he removed after the War. His *Life and Letters of Patrick Henry* is a standard biographical and historical classic; he filled with distinction several public offices, among them that of President of the American Historical Society, and Delegate to the Historical Congress at The Hague, in 1897.

In private life he was the best of husbands and fathers, sweet-hearted to the core, a thorough gentleman always and everywhere, and a genial and delightful comrade. When I turned study and pen in the direction of Colonial historical research, he was an invaluable auxiliary. I told him, over and over, that he was to me an exhaustless reservoir of information. I had only to open a sluiceway, to draw in copious measure in my hour of need. As a faint expression of my sense of overwhelming obligation to him, I dedicated to him my first volume on *Colonial Homesteads and Their Stories*, published in 1896.

I cannot say that my thirst for Colonial traditions and histories was created by my residence in Charlotte. From childhood I had been indefatigable in the pursuit of genealogical details and the tales of real life and happenings collected from the converse of my elders of the "former days," which they rated as better than these in defiance of Solomon's admonition. But it was not possible to live for three years, as I did, in a region where the very earth was soaked in historical [316] associations; where every other name mentioned in my hearing was interwoven with recitals of deeds of valor and of statesmanship performed by the fathers of American history, and not be kindled into zealous prosecution of my favorite studies.

The Court House, built in 1823, was designed by Thomas Jefferson. A more interesting building was a shabby, tumbledown house, not far from the site of the newer and better edifice. It was the "Court House" in the stirring days when the paternal Government would not squander money upon Colonial seats of justice. From the porch of this, Patrick Henry delivered his last speech to his adoring constituents. He was tottering upon the verge of the grave, into which he sank gently a few weeks later. A crisis of national and state importance had called him from his home at Red Hill, a dozen miles away. Keyed up by a sense of the imminence of the peril to the country he had saved, his magnificent will-power responded to the call; the dying fire leaped high. He had never reasoned more cogently, never pleaded with more power than on that day. But as the last word fell from his lips, he sank fainting into the arms of his attendants. Dr. John Holt Rice stood on the outskirts of the crowd. As the dying lion fell in his tracks, the clergyman cried out: "The sun has set in all his glory!"

From the same homely rostrum John Randolph (whose homestead of “Roanoke” is but a few miles from the county-seat) made his maiden speech, and addressed for the last time those of whom he declared—“No other man ever had such constituents.” In this address he recounted the history of that relation, from the hour when the beardless boy had raised his reedy voice to confute the arguments of the people’s idol—Patrick Henry—to the date of this, his resignation of his office.

“Men of Charlotte!” The piercing voice that carried further in his weakness than more [317]
stentorian tones, sent the farewell to the outskirts of the breathless throng—“Forty years ago you confided this sacred trust to me. Take it back! Take it back!”

The gesture, as of rolling a ponderous weight from heart and arms, was never forgotten by those who saw it. With it he left the platform, mounted his horse without another word, and rode off to Roanoke.

Mr. Jacob Michaux, of Powhatan County, was at that time a student in Hampden-Sidney College, and came over to Charlotte for the express purpose of hearing the famous orator. I had from his lips the description of the scene. John Randolph, as is well known, never used notes in speaking. It sent a sort of shudder, therefore, through the audience, when he took a folded paper from his pocket and opened it, saying:

“The infirmities of advancing age, and the consequent failure of memory, have made it expedient that I should bring with me to-day a few notes to remind me of what I would say to you.”

He held the paper in his hand while speaking, and referred to it twice in the exordium. Warming to his work, he waved it aloft in his impassioned gesticulation, evidently forgetful of it and what was written on it. At last, it escaped from his fingers and fluttered down to Mr. Michaux’s feet. The crowd, engrossed in the fervid oratory, did not notice what had happened. The student put his foot upon the bit of paper, without change of place or position. “It flashed across my mind that I would secure it when the speech was over, and keep it as a souvenir,” he said. “The next moment I forgot it, and everything else except what the man before me was saying. It was a Vesuvian tide of eloquence, and carried thought, feeling, imagination along with it. One hears nothing like it in these degenerate days. I did not recollect the paper until I was a [318]
mile away from the Court House, and the orator’s voice began to die out of my ears.”

What a souvenir that would have been! I do not know that this anecdote has ever been published before. I had it, as I have said, directly from Mr. Michaux’s lips, and vouch for the authenticity.

Many of the stories that clung to the Parsonage had to do with the Orator of Roanoke. The house was at one time the home of Captain “Jack” Marshall, the father of the late Judge Hunter Marshall. The latter was, during our residence in Charlotte, a near neighbor and charming acquaintance. His father, “Captain Jack,” was one of the cronies whom John Randolph’s eccentricities and fits of violent rage had not estranged. Politically, his constituents adored Randolph. Personally, they found him intolerable. Mrs. Eggleston, of whom I shall have more to say by-and-by, told me of visiting a playfellow in the Marshall home while John Randolph was staying with Captain Marshall. The two little girls were busy with their dolls in the lower hall, when a hand-bell was rung furiously above stairs.

Little Lucy looked wonderingly at her companion.

“Who is that? And what does it mean?”

“Oh, it’s Mr. Randolph trying to frighten away the devil. He has just got up, you see, and he says the devil creeps from under his bed as soon as he wakes up.”

The ringing continued at intervals for some minutes, and Lucy, terrified by the fancy that the fleeing demon might appear on the stairs, ran off home with the tale.

“My mother had heard it often, before,” said my friend, laughing at my horrified incredulity. “It was but one of his crazy antics. No-o-o!” doubtfully, as I put a question. “I *don’t* believe it was delirium tremens. He took opium at times. I don’t know that he drank heavily. Everybody took his toddy in those days, you know. John Randolph was *queer*, through and through, from the cradle [319]
to the grave, and like no other man that ever lived! We children were terribly afraid of him.”

One of the numerous stories Mr. Henry told of the eccentric was of his asking a neighboring planter who was dining at Roanoke, if “he would not take a slice of cold meat upon a hot plate?”

As “Juba,” Mr. Randolph’s body-servant, was at the guest’s elbow with the hot plate, the gentleman thought he was expected to say “Yes,” and fearing to anger the choleric host, took the plate, accepting the offered cold meat. Whereupon, Randolph swore savagely at him for a “lickspittle,” and a “coward.”

“You dare not speak up to me like a man!” he snarled. “I asked the question to see what you would say.”

He was as brutal to members of his own family. A clergyman, who studied divinity under Doctor Rice in Richmond, told me of a conversation between John Randolph and his sister-in-law, the widow of Richard Randolph. She was very fond of the Rices, spending weeks together at their

home, and at last, dying while on one of these visits. Some months prior to her death, she joined the Presbyterian Church, and shortly after taking this step, had a call from her terrible brother-in-law. Regardless of the fact that two of the students were in the next room, and that what he shrieked in his piercing falsetto must be heard from the top of the house to the bottom, the irate Congressman berated Mrs. Judith Randolph in the coarsest terms for the disgrace she had brought upon an honorable name in uniting with "the Dissenters."

He stayed not for any law, written or tacit, of respect due to host or hostess, reviling both as scheming hypocrites and wolves in sheep's clothing, who had decoyed her into their "conventicle" in the hope of securing her fortune for themselves.

Yet, there is extant a letter which I have read, from John Randolph to Doctor Rice, written after his sister-in-law's death, extolling her piety, thanking her late host for his great goodness to the sainted deceased, and winding up by saying that he had, all day, been possessed by the idea that he could see her spirit, "mild, loving, and benignant, hovering above him!" [320]

We must fall back upon Mrs. Eggleston's dictum—"*Queer*, through and through, from the cradle to the grave, and like no other man that ever lived!"

Before quitting my gossip of the Randolphs, I must touch upon one of the most pitiful of the many tragedies that darken the history of the aristocratic clan.

The Sunday after my arrival in my new home, I saw, from my seat in church, a late-comer stride up the aisle to one of the pews running at right angles with those filling the body of the building. The tardy worshipper was a man above the medium height, and erect as a Virginia pine. He walked like an Indian, as I observed at once, planting his feet straight forward, and rising on his toes with a loping motion. His hair was snowy white, and hung down to the collar of his coat. When he took his seat, and faced the congregation, one saw that his eyes were dark and piercing; his eyebrows black; his features finely chiselled. A full white beard added to his venerable appearance and accentuated the quaintness of the figure in a community where shaven chins and upper lips were the rule.

I had hardly noted these peculiarities when he bowed his head upon his hands, resting his elbows upon his knees, evidently in silent devotion, and remained thus for several minutes. The choir was singing the introductory anthem when he sat upright, and perceived the occupant of the pulpit. A brilliant smile irradiated the grave features; to my amazement he arose, ran up the steps of the sacred desk, and held out his hand to the preacher, the other hand upon his heart, and bowed deferentially. Mr. Terhune arose, with no sign of surprise or annoyance, and bowed silently over the locked hands. As nimbly as he had mounted the steps, the eccentric individual ran down and resumed his seat. Neither man had unclosed his lips, but the pantomime of welcome and acknowledgment was so significant that words would have been superfluous. The Unknown appeared to hearken devoutly to reading and to sermon, accompanying his listening by actions foreign to the behavior of latter-day church-goers. They were singularly expressive to me, whose eyes wandered to him covertly every few minutes. Nobody else paid any attention to him. Now, his joined hands were raised almost to his chin, and the bowed head shaken over them, as in deep contrition—an attitude that recalled the "publican standing afar off." Once he beat softly upon his breast. Again, he nodded approval of what he heard. Often he closed his eyes, and his lips moved in prayer. He was the foremost of the retiring congregation to leave the church after the benediction, passing down the aisle with the free, sweeping lope that had reminded me of an Indian. [321]

I had the story over our early Sunday dinner. When Mr. Henry finished it, I recalled that I had heard, when a mere child, my mother speak of meeting at Doctor Rice's, in her early girlhood, a nephew of John Randolph—St. George Randolph by name—who was deaf and dumb.

"One of the handsomest young men I ever saw," she subjoined, "with flashing black eyes and dark, beautiful curls. He frightened me by offering to teach me the finger alphabet; but his manners were very pleasant, and he seemed gay, in spite of his affliction. He was educated in France, and had just come home when I saw him."

Obedient memory, following this clue, unearthed a passage in Garnett's *Life of John Randolph*, which was part of my biographical library. In a letter to an old friend the uncle lamented that his nephew St. George had become insane. He had made several efforts to marry, and was unsuccessful—as he was given to understand—on account of his infirmity. [322]

Mr. Henry's narrative brought the biography down to date. The unhappy youth—sole heir to his father's and his uncle's wealth after the death of his younger brother, Tudor—was committed to an asylum for the insane. How long this man—born in the purple, highly educated, refined in taste, and elegant in bearing—was allowed to linger in the filthy inferno of the old-time "mad-house," I would not recollect if I could. Then the creaking wheel of his fortunes took an unexpected turn. By some legal manipulation I do not pretend to understand, Mr. Wyatt Cardwell, of Charlotte, the father of our groomsman and travelling companion in the first stage of our wedding-journey, became the guardian of the almost forgotten lunatic. A visit to his afflicted charge wrought so powerfully upon Mr. Cardwell's sympathies, that he left no stone unturned until the last of the direct line of Randolphs was a free man, and domesticated in the home of his guardian. The remnants of his once fine library were placed at his disposal; he had his own riding-horse, and other luxuries—in short, all that he was able to enjoy. The Charlotte people respected his misfortunes, and treated him kindly whenever occasion offered. He read, and

apparently enjoyed books, reading French, Latin, and English at pleasure. His reminiscences of his distinguished uncle, and the politics of his unquiet day, were distinct, and to those who communicated with him by signs or by writing, extremely entertaining.

His fellow-citizens came to have a pride in the relic of the heroic age. His shrewd comments upon men he had known in his prime, and the acquaintances of to-day, were repeated as *bon mots*.

Sane, he would never be. The splendid intellect, that should have surmounted the frightful [323] disability imposed at birth, was hopelessly shattered. But he was a local celebrity, about whom clung a glamour of romantic importance.

I entered fully into this feeling within three weeks after I had my earliest glimpse of him.

The Rev. Mr. ——, from another county, who had filled the pulpit of the Village Church more frequently in past years than was quite agreeable to the congregation, chanced to spend the Sunday in the neighborhood, and was invited to preach. He arose to announce the opening hymn just as St. George Randolph lifted his head from his private devotions. The expression of ineffable disgust, when he discovered who was to officiate that forenoon, was unmistakable and indescribable. Then he deliberately went through the pantomime of sharpening a pencil, a forefinger doing duty as the pencil, three fingers of the right hand holding an imaginary pen-knife. The sharpening done, he blew the imaginary refuse into the air with a disdainful puff. We all witnessed the operation, and the dullest could not miss the meaning. More than one was unable to join in the song of praise selected by the only man who was unconscious of the by-play. In the forty-five years of his active pastorate, my husband but twice violated pulpit and pew proprieties so far as to exchange meaning and amused glances with me. That was one of the times. As for Wirt Henry, nothing but an agonized ray from his wife's eye kept him from disgracing himself.

Having testified to the nature and sincerity of his sentiments with respect to the obnoxious interloper, as he considered him, our local wit turned a cold shoulder toward the pulpit and buried himself in the pages of a small, much-worn volume he drew from his pocket, never vouchsafing another glance at desk or occupant during the service.

The little book was a collection of devotional readings he carried with him everywhere. His [324] mother had given it to him when he went abroad. From her, too, he had learned to kneel by his bed each night and pray, as he had done at her knee in infancy. He never remitted the habit. I used to wonder, with a hard heartache, if he kept it up during that dark, dreadful age in the asylum.

Less than three years after my first sight of him, the deaf, dumb and lunatic heir of the vast Randolph estate joined the mother he had not forgotten, nor ceased to love and venerate in the long night that had no star of hope, and which was to know no dawning this side of heaven.

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[325]

# XXXIII

## PLANTATION PREACHING—COLORED COMMUNICANTS—A "MIGHTY MAN IN PRAYER"

In the group of midland counties that embraced Charlotte, Prince Edward and Halifax—names that fell into line, as by natural gravitation, in the thought and speech of the "Old Virginian"—the Presbyterian was the leading denomination. Rice, Lacy, Hoge, Alexander, and Speece had left their mark upon preceding generations, and a fragrant memory—as of mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense—through all the Southern Church.

Five out of seven of the leading planters in the region were Presbyterians. The others were, almost without exception, Episcopalians, and the two denominations affiliated more cordially than with Baptists, Methodists, and the sparse sprinkling of Campbellites, or "Christians," as they preferred to call their sect.

Slavery existed in Virginia in its mildest possible form, and nowhere was the master's rule more paternal than in the group of counties I have named. The negroes were permitted to hold their own prayer-meetings in their cabins whenever it pleased them; they attended religious services as regularly as their owners, and, in a majority of the old families, were called in to family worship with the children of the household. No more convincing proof of their religious freedom could be desired than the fact that the bulk of the colored population belonged to the Baptist Church. Why, I could never make out. The Methodists would seem likely to attract them [326] with equal force, their methods appealing to the emotional, excitable natures of the semi-tropical race as strongly as those of the denomination that found favor in their sight. Yet, when one of our servants "got through" the spiritual conflicts that ushered in a state of grace, we expected him, or her, to join the Baptist Church as confidently as we looked for the child of the Covenant, "ordered in all things and sure," to confirm, when it arrived at "the age of discretion," the vows taken by parents and sponsors in baptism.

It was not singular, therefore, that the new pastor of the Village Church at Charlotte Court-

House should find, at his installation in his cure of souls, the name of but one colored person upon the roll of communicants. We never spoke of them as “negroes” in that benighted age.

“Uncle Cæsar,” the trusted “headman” upon the plantation of Colonel Marshall—Mrs. Henry’s father—had once partaken of the Lord’s Supper in the church in which his master was an elder. Which violation of the laws of his denomination, being duly reported, was the occasion of a case of discipline long talked of throughout the colored community. The recusant was sharply reprimanded, and notified that a second offence would be punished by ex-communication. The doughty old servitor thereupon declared that, as he hoped to sit down to the supper of the Lamb in heaven with his master, so he would continue to do on earth, when the Lord’s table was spread in the Village Church. An example was made of him for the edification of others, and Cæsar became a Presbyterian, taking his seat among the communicants gathered in the main body of the church, whenever a Communion season came around.

With a broad catholicity of spirit that appears, in perspective, incompatible with the narrowness of creeds and ordinances prevalent, even among the educated Christians of that [327] time, the “plantation preachings” held regularly during the summer at various homesteads in those parts of the county near the churches, were attended by the colored population in large numbers, irrespective of the sect to which the officiating minister might belong. It was an established custom in the Village Church that the second Sunday service should be, in summer, at the house of some neighboring planter, and held for the colored people, in particular. That the whites, within a radius of five or six miles, drove over for the afternoon service, did not alter the expressed purpose of the meeting, or the manner of conducting it.

Autumn was tardy in approach that year, and so it fell out that notice was given on the second Sunday morning after my arrival at my new abode, of “a plantation preaching to be held, at three o’clock, at the residence of Mr. Richard I. Gaines, to which all are cordially invited.”

We had an early dinner in consequence of the service. Over the dessert—the servants having been excused, that they might get ready for the “preaching”—we talked more freely of their ideas and mode of worship, than would have been kind in their presence. Among other anecdotes I related one I had had from Ned Rhodes last summer, when he had, as he reported, been “blackburying” on Sunday afternoon.

The cemetery of the colored people was then, as now, situated upon high, rising ground, overlooking the ravine separating Shockoe Hill from the adjacent country. Mr. Rhodes and a friend, in the course of a Sunday afternoon walk, were drawn to the spot by the sight of a great crowd of negroes and a string of mourning coaches.

When the two young men were near enough to the concourse to hear what was going on, they were espied by the orator of the day, who instantly soared into what his ilk admired as “dictionary English.” Upon the heap of red clay beside the grave was a tiny coffin. The new- [328] comers agreed, in telling the story, that they had never beheld a smaller, and that the size of the pitiful little casket, wrapped with flowers, by contrast with the number of attendants upon the pompous service, set the stamp of absurdity upon the whole performance before they caught what the man was saying.

That this was in keeping with the rest, they speedily perceived. In hortatory tones that thundered to the remotest auditor, he dilated upon the uncertainty of life:

“... Even de distinguished lives of de two ‘lustr’ous strangers what has honored us by comin’ among us dis blessed arternoon, to jine in our mo’nin’. What is they? And what is we? And what is any man, bo’n o’ woman, my brethren? Up ter-day wid de hoppergrass, and down ter-morrow wid de sparrergrass! Like de flower ob de corn-fiel’, so he spreads hisself, like a tree planted by de horse-branch. Den de win’ rises and de tempes’ blows, an’ beats upon dat man—and whar is he? An’ he shan’ know dat place o’ his’n, no mo’.”

Pausing in mid-career, he touched the pathetically ridiculous box with a disdainful foot.

“As fur dis *t’ing!*” rising on his toes in the energy of his contempt—“as fur dis ’ere *itum*—put de t’ing in de groun’! *It’s too small fer to be argyin’ over!*”

Mr. Henry followed with a story of a darky, who prayed that “we might grow up befo’ de Lord, like calves and beeves of de stall, and be made *meat* for de kingdom o’ heaven.”

Mrs. Henry had a tale of a man who prayed at a plantation-meeting at Woodfork—Dr. Joel Watkins’s homestead—that Rev. John Rice, Mr. Terhune’s immediate predecessor and a nephew of “Aunt Rice’s” husband—“might soon cease from his labors, and his works, may dey foller him!”

“After which performance,” she continued, “my uncle—his master—had a private interview [329] with him, and forbade him ever to pray in public again.”

Then I heard that, within the two years’ incumbency of the present pastor, ten colored members had been added to the Village Church, much to the satisfaction of their owners. Among them, one Dabney and his brother Chesley, or Chelsea (I am not sure which), were prominent in all good words and works. Both could read and write, and both were skilled carpenters, who had hired their time from their master, and were working at their trade for themselves—respectable citizens in all but the right of franchise. The pastor spoke seriously and gratefully of their influence for good among their fellows, and of his hopes for the class they represented.

“Dabney is especially gifted in prayer,” commented Mr. Henry, gravely.

I did not then comprehend why his eyes twinkled, and why the others laughed. I was to know before the day was done.

The Gaines homestead was a fine old brick building, fronted by a broad veranda (we said “porch” then, in true English fashion). A spacious lawn stretched between the house and the gate. Under the trees shading the turf were ranged long rows of benches, occupied, that Sunday afternoon, by men and women from the Gaines plantation and from other freeholdings for miles around. There may have been four hundred, all told. A healthier, happier peasant class could not be found on either side of the ocean. All were clean; all were well-dressed. The younger women were gay with the discarded finery which was the perquisite of house-servants, ladies’ maids in particular.

The porch and the windows of the drawing-room were filled with guests of fairer complexion, but in demeanor and general behavior not a whit more quietly reverent. The brief invocation, the [330] reading of the Scriptures, and the sermon were the duty of the presiding clergyman. He stood at the head of the short flight of steps, facing the dusky throng, and paying no more heed to the small audience behind him than if it had not been. It was the “colored people’s” service. In the selection of hymns the leader was guided by his knowledge of what would be familiar to them. The first went with a swing and a rush, that shook the branches above the singers’ heads, and brought down slow showers of tinted leaves upon the grass.

It was a perfect afternoon. The fields were golden brown; no frost had fallen to blacken or bleach them. Hickories were canopies of warm amber; oaks were reddening, and the maples were aglow with autumnal fires. The still air was nutty sweet.

The prayer, immediately preceding the sermon, was offered by an aged farm-hand, upon whom the leader called to conduct our devotions. His hair was pale chinchilla; his back was bent, and his thin voice quavered sadly. All the same, he voiced the petitions of every heart for strength, wisdom, and righteousness, briefly and pertinently. The sermon over, Dabney was bidden to “lead us in prayer.”

I was more than curious to hear the “gifted” brother. I had, on the drive out from the village, illustrations of his practice of introducing pointed personalities into extempore blending of supplication, confession, and adoration. How, the year before, when the smallpox appeared in the lower end of the village, Doctor Flournoy, a leading physician in the county, undertook the charge of the few cases of the dreaded disease, quarantining himself from the homes of other patients and acquaintances. In the cold weather, the second service of the Sabbath was still for the negroes. But they occupied the lower part of the church, and the whites sat in the gallery, reversing the order of the morning services. There were few in the gallery when Doctor Flournoy, [331] peeping in at the door, thought it safe to slip into a seat in the choir-loft, which was quite empty.

Dabney’s falcon eye had descried him, and when he arose to pray he “improved” the incident:

“O Lord! we beseech Thee to bless and take care of the good doctor who has *crope* into the gallery up yonder, ’cause why, he’s afeerd he may carry smallpox in his clo’es to some of us. Be a shield about that good man whose heart so faints for the courts of the Lord that he jes’ can’t keep away. See to it, O Shepherd of Thine Isrul! that he don’t ketch the smallpox himself!”

With all this, I was so far unprepared for what was to follow the uprising of the tall figure from the ranks of the believers, collected in the heart of the congregation, that I shrank back, out of sight of those who might have their eyes open and focussed upon me, in my seat just within a front window.

For thus held forth the man mighty in prayer, when he had disposed comfortably of the world at large and the brotherhood of saints in especial:

“O Lord! have mercy upon the hardened and hell-defying, hell-desarvin’ sinners, in these ’ere low-groun’s of sin an’ sorrow, ’roun’ about Charlotte Coate-House, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth.

“Bring ’em to mou’n as one mou’ns fer his first-born, and come a flockin’ into the kingdom, as doves to their windows, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth.

“Bless the master an’ mistis of this home, an’ pour out on ’em the riches of the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth.

“O Lord! in the plentifulness of Thy mercy, bless with all manner of mercies the great and notable man of God, whom Thou hast placed over us in speritual things. Bless him in his rising [332] up, and goin’ about, and among the sheep of his parstur’, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth.

“Bless her who Thou hast given to him to be a pardner in the lan’ what flows wid milk an’ honey, an’ in de was’ and desolate po’tions, whar no water is, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth.

“May they two live together for many a long year, like two turtle-doves in one nes’, with nary a jar between, from the rivers to the ends of the yearth!”

“A powerful figure—that of the family jars!” said my companion, when we had had our

confidential laugh out, driving homeward between the hedgerows of the plantation-road and the cool depths of forest-lands. “And the only one he did not borrow from the Bible. He knows but one book.”

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# XXXIV

[333]

## MY NOVITIATE AS A PRACTICAL HOUSEWIFE—MY COOK “GETS HER HAND OUT”—INCEPTION OF “COMMON SENSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD”

Fifty years after it was written, I found among some family papers a letter from my husband to his father, dated “February 20, 1857.” His description of the cottage home in which we were now installed, as master and mistress, reads like a pastoral. He was not addicted to sentimental rhapsodies. If this were ever his style, he would have curbed the disposition to effervesce, in writing to another man. But the tone of the whole epistle is that of one thoroughly content with his home and the management thereof.

One sentence brought deep gratification to me, blended oddly with amusement and a tinge of melancholy:

> “Virginia is very well and very busy. I confess to some surprise at her skill in housewifery. She seems as much at home in the kitchen as in the drawing-room, to which she is summoned many times a day to receive visitors.”

Until I read that letter, I had not meant to devote so much as a page—much less a chapter—to the crucial experiences of that novitiate in domestic lore. Now, I feel it incumbent upon me, as a duty I owe to the countrywomen I have tried to help along these lines, for forty-odd years, to lift the veil from the homely, ill-appointed kitchen in which I successfully deluded a quick-eyed, quick-witted man into believing I was mistress of the situation.

[334]

In my father’s house I was considered to have a turn, if not a talent, for housewifery. From childhood it was my delight to haunt the laundry, where the finer branches of cookery were carried on when the washing was out of the way. My mother was a very Mrs. Rundle in the excellence of her preserves and pickles. Mary Anne, the comely Indo-mulatto, was proficient in the composition of cakes, jellies, and pastries, syllabubs and creams. She liked to have me “help” her, as she put it. That is, I whipped eggs and beat butter and pounded spices, peeled fruit, topped and tailed gooseberries, when I felt like it, and kept her amused with my chatter.

At ten, I was trusted to carry the key-basket and to “give out” ingredients required for the day’s cooking and serving. At fourteen, I believed myself to be a clever cake-maker, and at sixteen, proudly assumed the responsibility of putting up preserves and pickles for the winter’s consumption, one summer, when my mother’s health obliged her to leave town in the height of the fruit season. When she came home, the stern old granddame, with whom I was rather a favorite (if she ever indulged her buckram-clad spirit in the weakness of having a favorite), informed her gentle daughter-in-law that “Mary”—as she persisted in calling me—“had kept the house so well that we had hardly missed her mother.”

It was not strange, therefore, that I took the helm of my newly launched barque with faint and few misgivings as to my ability to navigate the unknown seas that looked calm and bright from the shore.

Ours was a prosperous country parish, and liberal hospitality was the law of daily living. The Henrys vacated the Parsonage a few days before Christmas, and I went down to Richmond for a fortnight, to complete the household plenishing we had begun during the honeymoon. My sisters-in-law—with whom I was ever upon cordial terms—had lent advice and co-operation in the [335] selection of furniture at the North. My carpets were bought in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where Judge Terhune was an old and honored resident. My mother had seen to the outfit of household linen. I smile now, in recollecting how care-free was my mood through that happy Christmas fortnight, after the receipt of a letter from the member of the firm who abode by the stuff for ten days of my holiday, apprised me of the arrival of the furniture from New Brunswick and from Richmond, likewise, that “Mrs. Eggleston and Mrs. Henry, with some other ladies, kindly insist upon having the house cleaned, the carpets made and put down, and the furniture settled in place while you are away.”

The proceedings would astound me now that I know more of humankind, and of parishes. Still more extraordinary would I consider the cool, matter-of-course way in which I received the intelligence. It was the Old Virginia atmosphere in that long-dead-and-buried time.

I did open my eyes, and break into ecstatic gratitude, when, on taking formal possession of our real home, where we had expected to live in picnic fashion upon the provisions we had laid away in baskets and trunks before leaving Richmond, we beheld the table set in the dining-room for supper, and fires alight in every room. Further search revealed that the house was in perfect order, the curtains hung, carpets down, and the larder stocked to overflowing with staples and delicacies. The cook and chambermaid hired for the year—as was the invariable custom of the

“system”—were on hand, and John, the man-of-all-work, had met us at the station. Not another human creature was visible. For any evidence furnished to the contrary, by sight or hearing, the “surprise” might have been the work of benevolent pixies. My sister Alice—a girl of fourteen—would be an inmate of our house for most of the time, and study with us as heretofore. She and I [336] ran about the house like two madcaps, after supper and until bedtime, calling out excitedly at each fresh discovery.

Two barrels of flour and one of corn-meal; two of apples and one of potatoes; a half-barrel of sugar, and other staple groceries, in divers measures, made the foundation of the abundant supply for creature wants. The upper shelves of the store-room were crowded with pickles, preserves, and all manner of conserved fruits for which the Virginia housewife was justly famed. Truly, the lines had fallen to us in pleasant places.

Excitement was renewed next morning by the appearance at the outer gate, and streaming down the walk, of a procession of colored men and women, each laden with basket, or pail, or tray, or parcel. The women bore their burdens on their heads, the men upon shoulders or in their arms. All, like the Greeks of old, came bearing gifts, and of a more perishable nature than those that loaded pantry and store-room shelves. Honey, breads of all shapes and characters; cakes, butter, and eggs; chickens, dressed for the table; sausage, spareribs, hams, and shoulders; a roast of beef; custards and puddings and mince-pies—seemed designed to victual a garrison rather than a family of three whites and three servants. To crown the profusion and add to the variety, the elegant young lawyer, Mr. Cardwell, who had figured in our bridal train, drove up through the main street, in at our front gate, and down to the Parsonage door, a cow and calf, to the unbounded delight of the village urchins who flocked at his heels up to the gate. The cow, “Old Blue,” as she was dubbed, because her color could not be more accurately described, gave the richest milk I ever skimmed. I would let no one else take care of it after one week’s experience had taught me the necessity of giving my personal attention to each department of housewifery, if I would not be cheated at every conceivable opportunity.

Thus gayly began my training in a school from which I have not yet been graduated. [337]

My mother was a good housekeeper, and the wheels of her machine ran in smooth ruts. She had old and competent servants. I doubt if she had ever swept a room, or roasted a piece of meat, in her life. The cook we had hired from a neighboring planter had excellent recommendations. True, she had been one of the superfluous “hands” who were hired out from year’s end to year’s end, and such were not warranted as first-class workers. They were prone to become shiftless and indifferent to their work, by reason of frequent changes. Still, Emily was reputed to be a fair cook and laundress. Among the cuts of fresh meat sent in by the friends, whose consistent generosity moved me to the invention of the phrase “kitchenly-kindness,” was a noble beefsteak. I ordered it to be cooked for breakfast the second day of our incumbency.

Emily *fried* it brown—almost to a crisp!

Five cook-books were in my just-unpacked library. Breakfast over, I sought out Miss Leslie’s *Complete Cook-Book*, and read up on beefsteak.

Two more were sent in that day from country parishioners. Next morning, I hied me surreptitiously to the kitchen before my husband or sister was awake. I bore the steak upon a charger—*alias*, a crockery platter. It had been under lock and key until then; otherwise, its fair proportions would inevitably have been shorn. The honesty of the hired hand was an axiomatic negligible quantity; and the most faithful of family servants seldom resisted successfully the temptation to appropriate to their own use an unlawful share of eatables. They were a gluttonous race, and the tenet that “taking from marster wasn’t stealing,” stood high in their creed.

I had told Emily overnight that I would show her how a steak should be cooked, and she was more than ready for me.

I had never touched a bit of raw meat before, and the clamminess of the gory cut sent “creeps” [338] all over me. It was *very* bloody to my eyes, and I washed it well in cold water preparatory to laying it upon the broad bottom of the frying-pan, heated and buttered, which, I had learned from another of the five manuals, was “a passable substitute for a gridiron if the young housekeeper had failed to provide herself with this important utensil.” Emily had not found a gridiron in the box of kitchen utensils unpacked before my arrival, and there was no time to look it up. The steak, dripping wet, went into the broad pan set over a bed of red coals. We cooked with wood in Old Virginia. It hissed and spluttered and steamed like the escape-valve of a balky locomotive. Miss Leslie said, “Turn it at the end of eight minutes.” The sodden pallor of the exposed side did not look right to me, somehow.

“Oh!” quoth Emily, “you is gwine to stew it—is you?”

Pass we quickly over the abhorrent tale! The steak never attained unto the “rich brown” which, according to my cook-book makers, it should display when ready for table. I turned it four times, and, with a vague idea that butter browned more readily than meat, I added a great spoonful to the juices oozing from the steak. There was a great deal of gravy in the dish when it was served, and my companions pronounced it “extremely savory.”

“But you should not have gone out into the kitchen,” demurred my husband. “Does not the cook understand her business?”

“Few of her class can do without teaching,” I rejoined, valiantly.

I had already made a resolve from which I never swerved: If my cook did not understand her business, and I understood it even less, I would not confess it. As time went on, I was to feel such test of the heroic resolve as I had never anticipated. For, as the knowledge of Emily’s ineptitude [339] grew upon me, the conviction of my own crass and comprehensive ignorance waxed into a haunting horror. I was as unlearned as the babe unborn in everything that a practical housekeeper should know. I could not make a batch of bread, or boil a potato, or broil a chop, had my eternal welfare—or my husband’s happiness—depended upon it. As for soup-making, roasting, stewing, and boiling meats, frying and baking fish—the very commonest and coarsest rudiments of the lore in which I was supposed to be proficient—I was as idiotically void of comprehension as if I had never heard of a kitchen. How I maintained a brazen show of competency is a mystery to me at this distance from that awful trial-period. I studied my quintette of cook-books with agonized earnestness. And when I was tolerably positive that I had mastered a recipe, I “went and did it” with Squeersian philosophy. How many failures were buried out of the sight of those who loved me best, and were most constantly with me, would have shocked the frugal housewife into hysterics. My mastery of this and of that process was painfully slow, but it began to tell upon our daily fare. I got out the gridiron, and learned to cook to perfection the steaks my husband’s soul loved, and from my nonpareil of neighbors, Mrs. Eggleston, I got a recipe for quick biscuits.

To the acquisition of that particular formula, and the conversation that embedded the gift, I attribute a large measure of the success which eventually rewarded the striving unto blood, that was my secret martyrdom for half a year.

She was a “capable” housewife, according to Mrs. Stowe’s characterization of the guild. She was, moreover, warm-hearted, sensible, and sympathetically reminiscent of her own early struggles with the housekeeping problem. When I took her into confidence as to my distrust of my quintette of manuals, she laughed out so cheerily that I felt the fog lift from my spirits.

“All written by old maids, or by women who never kept house,” she declared. “To my certain [340] knowledge, Miss Leslie has boarded in a Philadelphia hotel for twenty years. I wouldn’t give a guinea a gross for their books. Make your own! *I* do! When I get a tiptop, practical recipe—one that I have tried for myself and proved, I write it down in my own every-day language; then I have met *that* enemy, and it is mine!”

We were in her house, and she brought out the manuscript book in which her victories were recorded. Next, she offered to lend it to me.

“I don’t think,” she subjoined, tactfully, “that old-fashioned housekeepers, like your mother and mine—yes, and my mother-in-law—take the lively interest in learning new ways of doing things that *we* do. I am very proud of some discoveries and a few inventions that I have written down there. Those quick biscuits, for instance, are my resource when the bread doesn’t turn out just right. They never fail. And speaking of bread, here is a sort of short-cut to excellence in that direction. That is my composition, too. Take the book with you, and copy anything you fancy.”

“Bread is Emily’s strong point,” I remarked, complacently, in accepting the loan. “Nevertheless, I shall try your composition.”

The promise was fulfilled in a way I had not expected. I had been keeping house now about four months, and was beginning to justify, in some degree, the fond boast of the son to the father of my familiarity with kitchen-craft, when Emily announced one morning, as I was “giving out” for the day:

“Tain’ no use measurin’ out dat ar’ flour, Miss Virginny!” (The old-time servant never said “Mrs.” to, or of anybody.) “I done got my han’ out makin’ bread! I’d jes’ spile yer flour an’ things ef I was to try to make a batch o’ bread.”

“What is the matter with your hands?” I looked at the members, brown and brawny, and [341] apparently uninjured.

She spread them out as a bat might his wings, and regarded them in affectionate commiseration.

“As I tole you, I done got my han’ out for makin’ bread. Nobody don’ know how-come a body’s han’ gits out for somethin’ or ’nother. Sometimes, it’s fur bread, an’ then agin it’s fur cake, or maybe cookin’ chickens, or the likes o’ that. Thar’s some as thinks it’s a sort of bewitched, or conjurin’. Some says as how it’s the ole Satan what takes his spite on us that ’ar way. I don’t know nothin’ bout how that may be. I jes’ know that my han’ done got out for makin’ bread. I been done feel it soon’s I got out o’ bade this mornin’.”

“And may I ask,” I interrupted, in freezing politeness that was utterly wasted, “how long your hand is likely to stay out?”

She shook her head, sadly, imperturbably.

“Nobody can’ never say how long, Miss Virginny. Maybe six days, and maybe two mont’s. Sis’ Phœbe” (fellow church-members were always “Brother” and “Sister” even in every-day speech), “what b’long to Mars’ Wyatt Cardwell, she got her han’ out for two or three t’ings at oncet las’ year, an’ sho’s you’re born an’ I’m standin’ here in this yere blessed sto’-room, she ain’t got it in

agin fur better'n six mont. I's certainly mighty sorry fur you an' Mars' Ed'ard, but the Lord's will is jes' p'intedly got to be done."

Constant to my vow of discretion in all things pertaining to domestic tribulations, I said never a word to the other members of the smitten household of what menaced them. The congestion was the more serious, inasmuch as there was not a baker within twenty miles, and we baked fresh bread and rolls every day. I was in poor physical case for culinary enterprise, for one of the [342] constitutional headaches which I had inherited from both parents had warned me of its approach; I ought to keep quiet and discourage the advance. Instead of which, I girded up the loins of my spirit and concluded that there could hardly be a more propitious opportunity for trying Mrs. Eggleston's bread recipe. Since a knowledge of practical bread-making was one of life's stringent necessities in this latitude, "better sune than syne."

I set the sponge at noon, in pursuance of directions laid down so explicitly that a novice with a headache that was by now a fixed fact, could not err therein. I could not sit up to supper for the blinding pain. Alice was taking that meal, and was to spend the evening with a friend, and my husband had a business call in his study. No one would be privy to the appeal I meditated making to my tyrant. I sent for her, and ordered her to bring to my room the sponge I had left in a secluded corner of the dining-room. When it came, I bade her bring kneading-tray and flour. These set in order on the table, I called her attention to the hopeful and enticing foaming condition of the sponge, and assured her that no evil could befall the dough if she were to knead in the flour and prepare the mass for the night's working, there under my eyes.

She planted herself in the middle of the floor and surveyed me mournfully—a sphinx done in chocolate.

"I suttinly is mighty sorry for you, Miss Virginny, an' I'd do anyt'ing what I *could* do fur to help you out o' you' trouble. But thar ain't no manner o' use in my layin' my han' to that ar' dough. It wouldn't never rise, not 'tell the jedgment-day. It would be temptin' Providence, out and out. When a body's han' is out, it's *out* for good and all! I done do my best to make you onderstan' what's happen' to me, an' angels couldn't do no mo'! Lord 'a' mercy! what is you goin' to do?"

I had jumped up and belted in my dressing-gown, rushed to the wash-stand, and washed my [343] hands furiously. Without a syllable I tackled the sponge, measured and worked in the flour, and fell to kneading it in a blind rage. Pretty soon my strength flagged; the pain in my temples and back of the eyes beat me faint. To get a better purchase on the stiffened mass, I set the tray down on the floor and knelt over it. That bread had to be made if I perished in the attempt.

The chocolate-colored sphinx surveyed me sorrowfully, without stirring an inch from her place on the hearth-rug.

Neither of us heard the door open, softly and cautiously, lest the noise might disturb my slumbers. Both of us started violently at the voice that said:

"What is the meaning of this?"

I sat up on my knees and faced the speaker, essaying a miserable imitation of a laugh.

"Emily has got her hand out in bread-making, and I am trying mine. This is almost ready now."

He walked across the floor and lifted me to my feet; laid me incontinently upon the lounge, and confronted the cook.

"Take up that tray!" She obeyed dumbly. "Carry it out into the kitchen and finish the bread. Yes! I mean it! Get your hand in before you are a minute older, or I'll know the reason why. And if the bread is not good, I shall send you back to your master to-morrow morning, and tell him I have no further use for you."

He would have cut his hand off before he would have struck a woman, and the creature knew it as well as I did, but she cowered before the blue blaze of his eyes, as at a lightning flash.

His call stayed her on the threshold.

"Do you understand what I have said?"

The sphinx crumbled:

"Ya'as, suh!" [344]

"You understand, too, that your hand is not to get out again?"

"Not ef I can holp it, Mars' Ed'ard!"

"See that you *do* help it!"

Then I held my head hard with both hands to keep the sutures from flying asunder, and laughed until I cried.

From the stress and toils, the mortifications and bewilderment of that year, grew into a settled purpose the longing to spare other women—as ill-equipped as I was, when I entered upon my housewifely career—the real anguish of my novitiate. The foundation of *Common Sense in the Household* was laid in the manuscript recipe-book begun at Mrs. Eggleston's instance. I had learned, to my bitter woe, that there was no printed manual that would take the tyro by the hand

and show her a plain path between pitfalls and morasses. I learned, by degrees, to regard housewifery as a profession that dignifies her who follows it, and contributes, more than any other calling, to the mental, moral, and spiritual sanity of the human race. I received my call to this ministry in that cottage parsonage.

My departure from the beaten track of novel-writing, in which I had achieved a moderate degree of success, was in direct opposition to the advice of the friends to whom I mentioned the project. The publishers, in whose hands my first cook-book has reached the million mark, confessed frankly to me, after ten editions had sold in as many months, that they accepted the work solely in the hope that I might give them a novel at some subsequent period. Even my husband shook a doubtful head over the wild scheme. It was the only book published by me that had not his frank and hearty approval. Upheld by the rooted conviction that I had been made, through my own shortcomings and battles, fit to supply what American women lacked and needed sorely, I never debated or doubted.

My husband found me "gloating" over a copy of *Common Sense* the week after it was published. [345]

"I verily believe," he said, wonderingly, "that you take more pride in that book than in all the rest you have written."

I answered, confidently, "It will do more good than all of them put together."

This was fifteen years after Emily's hand got out, and I knelt on the carpet in my bedroom to knead my trial batch of bread.

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# XXXV [346]

## THE STIRRED "NEST AMONG THE OAKS"—A CRUCIAL CRISIS

"Charlotte C. H., *April 12th, 1857.*

"My still-remembered Friend,—It is a raw, cloudy Sunday afternoon; Mr. Terhune is suffering somewhat from a cold, and is, moreover, fatigued by the labors of the day. I have persuaded him to take a siesta on the lounge. Even my birds are quiet under the drowsy influence of the weather, and only the fire and clock interrupt the stillness of my pleasant chamber....

"I have been on the point several times of writing to you (despite your broken promise of last September), begging you to visit us during the summer. Need I say how happy we should be to see you in our *Home?*

"It is a sweet word to my ear, a sweet place to my heart, for a happier was never granted to mortals. I do not say this as a matter of course. You should know me too well than to suppose that. It comes up freely—joyously—from a brimming heart. My only fear is lest my cup should be too full, for what more could I ask at the hands of the Giver of mercies? I have a dear little home, furnished in accordance with my own taste; delightful society, and an abundance of it; perfect health, having scarcely seen a sick day since my marriage—and the best husband that lives upon the globe....

"This is a large and flourishing church, demanding much hard work on his part; but he is young and strong, and he loves his profession. We visit constantly together, and here end my out-of-door 'pastoral duties.' Within doors, my aim is to make home bright; to guard my husband from annoyance and intrusion during study-hours; to entertain him when he is weary, and to listen sympathizingly to all that interests him. I shall never be a model [347] 'minister's wife.' I knew that from the first, so I have never attempted to play the rôle. Fortunately, it is not expected, much less demanded.

"We shall make a flying visit to Richmond in May. After that, we shall be at home, off and on, certainly until September. Our cottage parsonage—the 'little nest among the oaks,' as Alice calls it—is ever ready to receive you, and so are our hearts.

"Were my other and very much better half awake, he would join me in love and good wishes, for I have taught him to know and to love you all."

A year after my marriage, the friend of my childhood and the intimate correspondent of my girl-life, was married to Rev. William Campbell, the pastor of "Mount Carmel," the pretty country church in which my forebears and contemporaries had worshipped for generations, the church for which my great-grandfather gave the land; in which he was the first ordained elder, and in which my beloved "Cousin Joe" ("Uncle Archie") had succeeded him in the same office. In Mount Carmel I had taken my first Communion, and here the new wife of the pastor was to be welcomed into full fellowship with her husband's flock in November. My husband was invited by Mr. Campbell to take the service on that day, and I was warmly pressed to accompany him.

"CHARLOTTE C. H., *November 8th, 1857.*

"MY OWN DEAR FRIEND,—A fact overlooked by Mr. Terhune and myself, occurred to me a little while ago—*viz.*, that there is only a semi-weekly mail to Smithville. Therefore, to insure your reception of this in season at Montrose, it should go from this place to-morrow. It was Mr. Terhune's intention to drop a line to Mr. Campbell to-night; but I have begged that I might write to you instead.

"I have many and bright hopes for you. Hopes, not 'as lovely as baseless,' but founded upon a knowledge of your character and that of him whom God has given you as your other and stronger self. When I rejoiced in your union, it was with sincere and full delight. You have a mate worthy of you—one whom you love, and who loves you. What more does the woman's heart crave? You have chosen wisely, and happiness, such as you have never known before, must follow. [348]

"Will you not come up and see us this winter? Nothing would give me more pleasure than to see you in our dear little home.

"Mr. Terhune is very anxious that I should accompany him to Powhatan, but I dare not suffer my mind to dwell upon a project so charming. He cannot, all at once, get used to visiting without me, but in the crib, over in the corner, lies an insurmountable obstacle—tiny to view, but which may not be set aside.

"I wish you could see my noble boy, who will be two months old to-morrow! He is very pretty, says the infallible 'Everybody.' To us, he is passing dear. Already he recognizes us and frolics by the half-hour with us, laughing and cooing—the sweetest music that ever sounded through our hearts and home. Nothing but the extreme inconvenience attendant upon travelling and visiting with so young a child, prevents me from accompanying the Reverend gentleman....

"I have no advice to give you except that you shall be *yourself*, instead of following the kind suggestions of any Mrs. Grundy who has an ideal pattern of the 'Minister's Wife' ready for you to copy. I am confident that you will be 'helpmeet' for the *man*, and since he will ask no more, his parish has no right to do it.

"My warm regards to Mr. Campbell. When I see him I will congratulate him. You would not deliver the messages I would send to him. 'Eddie' sends a kiss to 'Auntie Effie.'"

In folding, almost reverently, the time-dyed letter and laying it beside the rest in the box at the bottom of which I found the sallowed "P.P.C." card, date of "September 2, 1856," I feel as if I were shutting the door and turning the key upon that far-away time; bidding farewell to a state of [349] society that seems, by contrast with the complex interests of To-day, pastoral in simplicity. In reviewing the setting and scenes of my early history, I am reading a quaint chronicle, inhaling an atmosphere redolent of spices beloved of our granddames, and foreign to their descendants.

It is not I who have told the story, but the girl from provinces that are no more on earth than if they had never been. The Spirit of that Past is the narrator. I sit with her by the open "chimney-piece," packed as far as arms can reach with blazing hickory logs; as she talks, the imagery of a yet older day comes to my tongue. We knew our Bibles "by heart" in both senses of the term, then, and believed in the spiritual symbolism of that perfervid love-Canticle—the song of the Royal Preacher. I find myself whispering certain musical phrases while the tale goes on, and the story-teller's face grows more rapt:

"Thy lips drop as the honey-comb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon;

"Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard;

"Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon."

It is not a mystic love-chant, or a dreamy jargon, that I recite under my breath. The sadly few (more sad and few with each year) who recall with me the days that are no more—and forever—will feel what I cannot put into words.

Soon after the dawn of the year 1858, we had news of the death of my husband's youngest sister, a bright, engaging matron, of whom I had grown very fond in my visits to her New Jersey home. The happy wife of a man who adored her, and the mother of a beautiful boy, she had but one unfulfilled wish on earth. When a baby-girl was put into her arms, she confessed this, and [350] that now she could ask nothing more of heaven. The coveted gift cost her her life.

In March, my dearest friend, Mary Ragland, paid a long-promised visit to the "nest among the oaks." She had not been strong all winter. She was never robust. I brought her up from town, in joyous confidence that the climate that had kept me well and vigorous would brace her up to concert pitch. For a few weeks she seemed to justify that belief. Then the languor and slow fever

returned. She faded before our incredulous eyes as a flower droops on the stem. She had no pain, and so slight was the rise in temperature that made her thirsty by night, that we would not have detected it had she not mentioned casually at breakfast that she arose to get a drink of water, and chanced to see, through the window, a lunar rainbow. This led to the discovery that she always arose two or three times each night to quench her thirst. It was characteristic that she saw the rainbow, and was eager to report it next day. Beautiful things floated to her by some law of natural attraction. She never took to her bed. To the last, she averred, laughingly, that she was "only lazy and languid." She "would be all right very soon."

As a sort of low delirium overtook her senses, her fantasies were all of fair and lovely sights and sweet sounds. She asked me "where I got the chain of pearls I was wearing, and why she had never seen it before?" She exclaimed at the beauty of garlands of flowers wreathing pictures and window-cornices, invisible to our eyes. Music—a passion of her life—was a solace in the fearful restlessness of the dying hours. She would have us sing to her—first one, then the other, for an hour at a time—lying peacefully attent, with that unearthly radiance upon her face that never left it until the coffin-lid shut it from our sight, and joining in, when a favorite hymn was sung, with the rich contralto which was her "part" in our family concerts. [351]

"She is singing herself away," said my husband, at twilight on the ninth of May—my mother's birthday.

At nine o'clock that evening the swan-song was hushed.

We carried her down to Richmond, the next day but one.

I have said elsewhere that it is not given to one to have two perfect, all-satisfying, friendships this side of the Land that is all Love. She had gladdened our cottage for little over a month. It was never quite the same after she flew heavenward. Nor was my life.

To everybody else, it seemed that the "stirring" of the nest began during the visit we paid to Northern friends that summer.

Our vacation was longer than usual. It could not be gay, for our mourning garments expressed but inadequately the gloom from which our spirits could not escape, with the memory of two bereavements fresh in the minds of all.

It was during this sojourn with the relatives, whose adoption of me had been frankly affectionate from the beginning of our association, that I learned of the desire of my father-in-law to have his son removed nearer to the rest of the family. The old Judge was proud and fond of the boy, and Virginia was a long distance away from New York—to him, and other loyal Middle Statesmen, as truly the Hub of Civilization as Boston to the born Bostonian. Moreover, the Village Church at Charlotte Court-House was a country charge, although eminently respectable in character, and honorable in all things pertaining to church traditions. Other men as young, and, in the father's opinion, inferior in talent and education, were called to city parishes. "It was not right for Edward to bury himself in the backwoods until such time as he would be too near the dead line, with respect to age, to hope for preferment."

All this and more of the like purport fell upon unheeding ears, when addressed to me. I had but [352] one answer to make, after listening respectfully to argument and appeal:

"I promised Edward, of my own free will and accord, before our marriage, that I would never attempt to sway his judgment in anything relating to his profession. Least of all, would I cast the weight of what influence I might have into either scale, if he were called upon to make a change of pastorate. He must do as he thinks best."

More than one church had made overtures to the rising man, and his kindred were hanging eagerly upon his decision. The initial "stir" had been given. It was a positive relief when we turned our faces southward.

The nest was full that autumn. My husband's widower brother-in-law, crushed by his late bereavement, and compelled to resign the home in which his wife had taken just pride; helpless, as only a man of strictly domestic tastes can be in such circumstances, abandoned his profession of the law, and resolved to study divinity. My brother Herbert turned his back upon a promising business career, and made the same resolution. Both men were rusty in Latin and Greek, and neither knew anything of Hebrew. My husband—ever generous to a fault in the expenditure of his own time and strength in the service of others—rashly offered to "coach" them for a few months. I think they believed him, when he represented that Latin was mere play to him, and that an hour or two a day would be an advantage to him in refreshing his recollection of other dead languages.

Alice and I bemoaned ourselves, in confidence and privily, over the loss of the quietly-happy evenings when we sewed or crocheted, while the third person of the trio read aloud, as few other men could read—according to our notion. We grudged sharing the merry chats over the little round table with those who were not quite *au fait* to all our *mots de famille*, and did not *[353]* invariably sympathize with our judgment of people and things. Mr. Frazee was one of the most genial of men—*good* through and through, and as kind of heart as he was engaging in manner. My brother was a fine young fellow, and his sisters loved him dearly. It was ungracious, ungenerous, and all the other "uns" in the English language, to regret the former order of every-day life. We berated ourselves soundly, at each of our secret conferences, and kept on doing it. Home was still passing lovely, but the stirring went on.

Is everything—moral, spiritual, and physical—epidemic? I put the question to myself when, less than a week after the arrival of an invitation to become the leader of the Third Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, and before a definite answer was returned, the mail brought an important document, portentous with signatures and seals official, requesting Rev. Edward Payson Terhune to assume the pastorate of the First Reformed Church in Newark, New Jersey.

Here was a crucial test of my voluntary pledge never, by word, look, or deed, to let my husband suspect the trend of my inclinations with respect to any proposed change of clerical relations!

For, as I am at liberty now to confess, I wanted to go to Richmond *horribly!* Family, friends, ties of early association, strengthened by nearly fifteen years of residence at the formative period of life; the solicitations of parents, brothers, sisters, and true and tried intimates, who wrote to say how delighted they were at the prospect of having me "back home"—tugged at my heartstrings until I needed Spartan firmness of will and stoical reticence, to hold me fast to my vow. Meanwhile, letters bearing Northern postmarks were fluttering down upon the one whose must be, not the casting vote alone, but the responsibility of the decision of what he felt was one of the most momentous problems he was ever to face. Fortunately, neither of us knew then the [354] full gravity of the crisis.

Looking back from the top of the hill, I see so clearly the working out of a benign and merciful design in what was then perplexity, puzzle, and pain, that I cannot say whether humility or devout gratitude has the ascendancy in my thoughts. Especially is this true when I reflect that strength was vouchsafed to me to hold my peace, even from what I conceived was "good," when my husband brought both calls to me, after four days of anxious deliberation, and bade me speak one word in favor of, or against, either.

Side by side, they lay upon my table, and with them a paper upon which he had set down, clearly and fairly, the pros and cons of each.

He read these aloud, slowly and emphatically, then looked up at me.

"I am in a sore strait! Can you help me?"

In my heart I thought I could, and that right speedily. With my tongue I said: "No one has a right to say a word. It is a matter between God and yourself."

He took up the papers silently, and went to the study. And I prayed, with strong crying and tears, that God would send us to Richmond.

An hour later he came back. The light of a settled purpose was in his face. All he said was:

"I have decided to go to Newark. We will talk it over to-morrow morning."

He slept soundly that night, for the first time in a week. So did not I!

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# XXXVI

## MIGRATION NORTHWARD—ACCLIMATION—ALBERT EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, IN NEW YORK—POLITICAL PORTENTS

One who had known my husband well for fifty years, wrote of him soon after his translation: "More than any other man I ever knew, he had a genius for friendship."

This testimony is amply supported by the fact that he kept, to his journey's end, the friends whose loving confidence he gained during the five years of his Charlotte pastorate. Those who loved him in his youth loved him to the end—or so many of them as remained to see the beautiful close of his long day.

We left our Parsonage home and the parish, which was our first love, laden with proofs of the deep affection inspired by devoted service in behalf of a united constituency, and the rare personal gifts of the man who suffered, in the parting, a wrench as sharp as that which made the separation a grief to each member of the flock he was leaving. It was a just tribute to his integrity of purpose and conscientiousness that the purity of his motives in deciding upon the step were never questioned. Leading men in the church said openly that they could not have hoped to keep him, after his talents and his ability to fill worthily a wider field were recognized in the world outlying this section of the Great Vineyard. They had foreseen that the parting must come, and that before long. He was a growing man, and the sphere they offered was narrow.

It was in no spirit of Christian philosophy that I dismantled the nest among the oaks, and packed my Lares and Penates with a fair show of cheerfulness. Inly, I was in high revolt for a full [356] week after the die was cast. The final acceptance of the inevitable, and the steadfast setting of my face Northward, ensued upon the persuasion that the one and only thing for a sensible, God-fearing woman to do was to make the very best of what no human power could avert.

It is a family saying, based upon the assertion of my eldest daughter, that "if mother were set down in the middle of the Desert of Sahara, and made to comprehend that she must spend the

rest of her days there, she would, within ten minutes, begin to expatiate upon the many advantages of a dry climate as a residential region."

By the time we stayed our flight in Richmond, where we spent our Christmas, I took from the worn and harassed man of the hour the burden of explanation and defence of the reasons for tearing ourselves up by the roots and transplanting the tender vine into what some of our best wishers called, "alien soil." I had worked myself into an honest defender of the Middle States in contradistinction to "Yankee land," before we departed, bag, baggage, and baby, for the new home.

Mr. Terhune had preached twice in Newark, in December, after formally accepting the call. We removed to that city in February of 1859.

With the Saharan spirit in full flow, I met the welcoming "people"; settled in the house we bought in a pleasant quarter of the growing city—then claiming a population of less than seventy-five thousand—installed white servants; received and returned calls, and was, for the first time in my life, homesick at heart for three months.

In the recollection of the eighteen years that succeeded that period of blind rebellion against the gentle leading which was, for us, wisdom and loving-kindness throughout, I write down the [357] confession in shame and confusion of face, and abasement of soul.

I stay the course of the narrative at this point to record, devoutly and gratefully, that never had pastor and pastor's wife, in any section of our land, a parish in which "pleasant places" did more richly abound. I would write down, yet more emphatically and thankfully, the amazing fact that, in the dozen-and-a-half years of my dwelling among them, I never had a word of unkind criticism of myself and my ways; not a remark that could wound or offend was ever addressed to me.

I wish I might have that last paragraph engraved in golden capitals and set to the everlasting credit of that Ideal Parish! To this hour, I turn instinctively in times of joy and of sorrow, as to members of the true household of faith, to the comparatively small band of the once large congregation who are left alive upon the earth.

For eighteen years I walked up the central aisle of the church, as I might tread the halls and chambers of my father's house in that far Southern town, with the consciousness that we were surrounded by an atmosphere of affectionate appreciation, at once comforting and invigorating.

All this—and I understate, rather than exaggerate, the real state of circumstance and feeling I am trying to depict—was the more surprising, because I went to this people young, and with little experience as a clergyman's wife. In Charlotte, I had, as we have seen, done no "church work." I was petted and made much of, in consideration of my position as the wife of the idolized pastor, and my newness to the duties of country housekeeping and the nursery. In Newark, I was gradually to discover that I could not shirk certain obligations connected with parish and city charities. The logic of events—never the monitions of friends and parishioners—opened my eyes to the truth. When, at length, I took charge of a girls' Bible Class, and, some years after, worked [358] up the Infant Class from tens to hundreds, there was much expression of unfeigned gratification and eager rallying to my help, not an intimation of relief that I "had, at last, seen my way clear to the performance of what everybody else had expected of a minister's wife."

I have never had a higher compliment than was paid me by the invitation, a dozen years back, to address the Alumni of Union Theological Seminary in New York City upon the subject of "Ministers' Wives."

I took occasion, in the presence of that grave and reverend assembly of distinguished theologues, to pay a brief tribute, as strong as words could make it, to that Ideal Parish. I could not withhold it then. I cannot keep it back now. I believe my experience in this regard to be highly exceptional. More's the pity and the shame!

Five children were born to us in those happy, busy years. Each was adopted lovingly by the people, so far as prideful affection and generous deeds implied adoption. We were all of one family.

Returning to the direct line of my narrative—the spring of 1860 found us well, at work, and contented. I had good servants, kindly neighbors, and a growing host of congenial acquaintances. Our proximity to New York was an important factor in the lives of both of us, bringing us, as it did, within easy reach of the best libraries and shops in the country, and putting numberless means of entertainment and education at our very door. There were two babies by now—healthy, happy, bright—in every way thoroughly satisfactory specimens of infant humanity. In the matter of children's nurses, I have been extraordinarily blessed among American women. In the twenty-one years separating the birth of our elder boy from the day when the younger was released from nursery government, I had but three of these indispensable comforts. Two married after years of [359] faithful service; the third retired upon an invalid's pension. All were Irish by birth. After much experience in, and more observation of, the Domestic Service of these United States, I incline to believe that, as a rule, we draw our best material from Celtic emigrant stock.

So smoothly ran the sands of life that I recall but one striking incident in the early part of 1860. That was the visit of the Prince of Wales to this country. We witnessed the passage of the long procession that received and escorted him up-town, to his quarters at the, then, new and fashionable hostelry—the Fifth Avenue Hotel. My husband went down to the Battery to see the

princeling's review of the regiments drawn up in line before him, as he rode from end to end of the parade-ground.

Joining us at the window, from which we had a splendid view of the pageant, the critic, who was an accomplished horseman, reported disdainfully that "the boy was exceedingly awkward. He had no seat to speak of, leaning forward, until his weak chin was nearly on a line with the horse's ears, and sticking his feet out stiffly on each side."

Our impression of the imperial youth was not more agreeable. He sat back in the open coach, "hunched" together in an ungainly heap, looking neither to the right nor the left, evincing no consciousness of the existence of the shouting throngs that lined the pavements ten deep, other than by raising, with the lifeless precision of a mechanical toy, the cocked hat he wore as part of the uniform of a British colonel.

There was a big ball the next night, at which gowns of fabulous prices were sported, and reported by the newspapers, and Albert Edward flitted on to his mother's dominions of Canada, leaving not a ripple in the ocean of local and national happenings.

That ocean was stilling and darkening with the brooding of a threatening storm. Newspapers [360]
bristled with portents and denunciations; demagogues bellowed themselves hoarse in parks and from stumps; torchlight processions displayed new and startling features.

"So much for so little!" sighed I, upon our return from a lookout at the nearest corner, commanding long miles of marching men. "It was ingenious and amusing; but what a deal of drilling those embryo patriots must have gone through to do it so well! And for what? The President will be elected, as other Presidents have been, and as maybe a hundred others will be, and there the farce will end. Does it pay to amuse themselves so very hard?"

"If we could be sure that it *would* end there!" answered my husband, with unexpected gravity. "The sky is red and lowering in the South. Between politicians, and the freedom of the press to play with all sorts of explosives, there is no telling what the rabble may do."

I looked up, startled.

"You are not in earnest? The good Ship of State has been driving straight on to the rocks ever since I can recollect, and she has not struck yet. Think of the Clay and Polk campaign!"

"Child's play compared with the fight that is on now!" was the curt retort.

Something—I know not what—in his manner moved me to put a leading question.

"Have you made up your mind how *you* will vote?"

"Yes."

"A month ago, you said you had not."

"A good deal has happened in that month."

It was not like him to be sententious with me, but I pushed the subject.

"I have never interfered with your political opinions, as you know, and I don't care to vote, myself; but if I had a vote, I should be in no doubt where to cast it. Lovers of peace and concord [361]
should unite upon Bell and Everett. That party seems to me to represent the sanest element in this mammoth muddle."

He smiled.

"To say nothing of your fondness for Mr. Everett. A charming gentleman, I grant. But the helm of state is not to be in his hands. Even, supposing"—grave again, and sighing slightly—"that they are strong enough to hold it in a storm."

There was a boding pause. Then I spoke, and unadvisedly:

"I ask no questions that I think you would not care to answer. But I do hope you are not thinking of voting for Abraham Lincoln? Think of him in the White House! Mr. Buchanan may be weak—and a Democrat. I heard father say, as the one drop of comfort he could express from his election: 'At any rate, he is a gentleman by birth and breeding.' Mr. Lincoln is low-born, and has no pretensions to breeding."

"Then, if I should be so far lost to the proprieties as to vote for him, I would better not let either of you know." And he glanced teasingly at Alice, who had just entered the room.

"I could never respect you if you did!" she said, spiritedly. "I am persuaded better things of you."

A teasing rejoinder was all she got out of him. The matter was never brought up again by any of us. When Election Day came, I was too proud to seem inquisitive. But in my inmost soul I was assured that reticence boded no good to my hope of one gallant gentleman's vote for Bell and Everett.

Months afterward, when we were once again of one mind with respect to the nation's peril and the nation's need, he told me that he had kept his own counsel, not only because the truth might

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grieve me, but that party feeling ran so high in his church he thought it best not to intimate to any one how he meant to vote.

“And, like Harry Percy’s wife, I could be trusted not to tell what I did not know?” said I.

“You might have been catechised,” he admitted. “There are times when the Know-nothing policy is the safest.”

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# XXXVII

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## THE PANIC OF ’61—A VIRGINIA VACATION—MUTTERINGS OF COMING STORM

Bayard Taylor said to me once of a publishing house, “An honest firm, but one that has an incorrigible habit of *failing!*”

The habit was epidemic in the first half of 1861. Among others who caught the trick were my publishers. Like a thunderbolt came the announcement, when I was expecting my February semi-annual remittance of fat royalties: “We regret to inform you that we have been compelled to succumb to the stringency of the times.”

The political heavens were black with storm-clouds, and, as was inevitable then, and is now, the monetary market shut its jaws tightly upon everything within reach. We could not reasonably have expected immunity, but we had. We had never known the pinch of financial “difficulties.” Prudent salaried men are the last to feel hard times, if their wage is paid regularly. I had three books in the hands of the “failing” firm. All were “good sellers,” and I had come to look upon royalties as my husband regarded his salary, as a sure and certain source of revenue.

We had other and what appeared to us graver anxieties. My sister Alice had passed the winter with us, and the climate had told unhappily upon her throat. My husband had not escaped injury from the pernicious sea-fogs and the malarial marshes, over which the breath of the Atlantic flowed in upon us. He had a bronchial cough that defied medical treatment; and March, the worst [364] month of the twelve for tender throats and susceptible lungs, would soon be upon us. His physician, a warm personal friend, ordered him South, and the church seconded the advice by a formal grant of an out-of-season vacation. We did not change our main plan in consequence of the disappointment as to funds. Nor did we noise our loss abroad. Somehow, the truth leaked out. Not a word of condolence was breathed to us. But on the afternoon of the day but one before that set for our departure, the daughter of a neighborly parishioner dropped in to leave a basket of flowers, and to say that her father and mother “would like to call that evening, if we were to be at home.” I answered that we should be glad to see them, and notified my husband of the impending call. The expected couple appeared at eight o’clock, and by nine the parlors were thronged with guests who “dropped in, in passing, to say ‘Good-bye.’” None stayed late, and before any took leave, there was the presentation of a parcel, through the hands of Edgar Farmer, a member of the Consistory, who, in days to come, was to be to my husband as David to Jonathan. He was young then, and of a goodly presence, with bright, kind eyes and a happy gift of speech. Neither Mr. Terhune nor I had any misgivings of what was in prospect, when he was asked to step forward and face the spokesman deputed to wish us *Bon voyage* and recovery of health in our old home. Mr. Farmer said this felicitously, and with genuine feeling. Then he asked the pastor’s acceptance of a parcel “containing reading-matter for the journey.”

The reading-matter was bank-bills, the amount of which made us open our eyes wide when the company had dispersed and we undid the ribbons binding the “literature.”

That was their way of doing things in the “Old First.” A way they never lost. In a dozen-and-a-half years we should have become used to it, but we never did. Each new manifestation of the [365] esteem in which they held their leader, and of the royally generous spirit that interfused the whole church, as it might the body and soul of one man, remained to the last a fresh and delicious surprise.

Ten days out of the six weeks of our vacation were spent in Charlotte. Mr. Terhune’s successor was Rev. Henry C. Alexander, one of a family of notable divines whose praise is in all the Presbyterian churches. He was a bachelor, and the “nest among the oaks” was rented to an acquaintance. I did not enter it then, or ever again. I even looked the other way when we drove or walked past the gate and grove. To let this weakness be seen would have been ungracious, in the face of the hospitalities enlapping us during every hour of our stay. We dined with one family, supped with another, spent the night and breakfasted with a third, and there was ever a houseful of old friends to meet us. My husband wrote to his father:

> “Swinging around the circle at a rate that would turn steadier heads. And talk of the fat of the land and groaning tables! These tables fairly *shriek*, and the fat flows like a river. Heaven send we may live through it! We *like* it, all the same!”

And enjoyed every hour, albeit senses less agreeably preoccupied might have detected the smell of gunpowder in the air.

I am often asked if we were not uneasy for the safety of the Union, while in the thick of sectional wordy strife, and how it was possible to enjoy visits when much of the talk must have jarred upon the sensibilities of loyal lovers of that Union.

The truth is that I had been used to political wrangling from my youth up. The fact that South Carolina and six other States had seceded in name from the control of the Federal government; [366] that, in every county and "Cross-Roads" hamlet, from the Gulf of Mexico to Chesapeake Bay, bands of volunteers were drilling daily and nightly, and that cargoes of arms were arriving from the North and in distribution among the enlisted militiamen; that the Southern papers sounded the tocsin of war to the death, and "Death in the last ditch!" and "Down with the Yankees!" with every red-hot issue; that a convention had been solemnly summoned to meet in Richmond to decide upon the action of the Old Dominion at the supreme moment of the nation's destiny—weighed marvellously little against the settled conviction, well-nigh sublime in its fatuousness, that the right must prevail, and that such furious folly must die ignominiously before the steadfast front maintained by the Union men of the infected section.

To my apprehension, so much that we heard was sheer gasconade, amusing for a time from its very unreason and illogical conclusions, and often indicative of such blatant ignorance of the spirit and the resources of the Federal government, that I failed to attach to it the importance the magnitude of the mischief deserved to have.

I refused stubbornly to let the clear joy of my holiday be clouded by the smoke from blank cartridges. So light was my spirit that I made capital for fun of bombastic threats and gloomy predictions, touching the stabling of Confederate cavalry in Faneuil Hall inside of three months from the day of the inauguration of the "Springfield Ape" at Washington. The Vice-President was a full-blooded negro, or, at the least, a mulatto, I was assured over and over. Wasn't his name damning evidence of the disgraceful fact? What white man ever called his child "Hannibal"?

I supplied other confirmation to one fiery orator:

"'*Ham*-lin' sounds suspicious, too. I wonder you have not thought of the color that gives to your theory."

The youth foamed at the mouth. He wore a Secession cockade on his breast, and proved, to a [367] demonstration, that any Southerner over fourteen years old was equal, on the battle-field, to five Yankees. Why not seven, I could never ascertain.

Such funny things were happening hourly, and such funnier things were said every minute, that I was in what we used to call, when I was a child, "a continual gale."

Let one bit of nonsense illustrate the frivolity that, in the retrospect, resembles the *pas seul* of a child on the edge of a reeking crater.

I was summoned to the drawing-room, one forenoon, to receive a call from the son of an old friend who had promised his mother to look me up, in passing through the city on his way to the "Republic of South Carolina." That was the letter-head of epistles received from the Palmetto State.

In descending the stairs, I heard the scamper of small boots over the floor of the square, central hall, and caught the flash of golden curls through the arched doorway leading into the narrower passage at the rear of the house. Knowing the infinite capacity of my son for ingenious mischief, I stayed my progress to the parlor, and looked about for some hint as to the nature of the present adventure. Sofa and chairs were in place, as was the mahogany table at the far corner. On this was a silver tray, and on the tray the pitcher of iced water, which was a fixture the year through. Two tumblers flanked it on one side, and my visitor had set on the other the sleekest tall silk hat I had ever seen outside of a shop window. There was absolutely no rational association of ideas between the iced water-pitcher and that stunning specimen of head-gear. Yet I glanced into the depths of both. One was half-full; the other was empty. Clutching the desecrated hat wildly, I sped to the sitting-room. "Oh, mother, what is to be done? Eddie has [368] emptied the water-pitcher into William M.'s hat!"

Whereupon, that gentlest, yet finest, of disciplinarians, who would have sent one of her own bairns to bed in the middle of the day, for an offence one-tenth as flagrant, dropped her sewing on her lap and went off into a speechless convulsion of laughter. A chuckle of intense delight from behind her rocking-chair, and a glimpse of dancing blue eyes under her elbow, put the finishing touches to a scene so discreditable to grandmotherly ideas of domestic management, that the family refused to believe the story told at the supper-table, when the culprit was safe in his crib.

Leaving the dishonored "tile" to the merciful manipulations of the laundress, who begged me to "keep the pore young gentleman a-talkin' 'tell she could dry it at the fire," I went to meet the unsuspecting victim.

It was not difficult to keep him talking, when once he was launched upon the topic paramount in the mind of what he denominated as "every truly loyal and chivalrous Son of the South." He had a plan of campaign so well concerted and so thoroughly digested, that it could have but one culmination.

"But why Faneuil Hall?" I demurred, plaintively. "You are the sixth man who has informed me that your cavalry are to tie and feed their horses there. Why not the City Hall in New York? There

must be stable-room short of Boston."

He flushed brick-red.

"It is no laughing matter to us who have been ground down so long under the iron heels of Yankee mud-sills!"

I found his mixed metaphors so diverting that I was near forgetting the ruined head-piece, and the inexorable necessity of confession.

Sobering under the thought, I let him go on, lending but half an ear, yet, in seeming, bowed by the weight of his discourse. Moved by my mournful silence, he stopped midway.

"I beg your pardon if my feelings and patriotism have carried me too far. I own that I am hot-headed—" [369]

Another such chance would not come in a life-time. I broke his sentence short.

"Oh, I am glad to know that! For my boy has filled your hat with iced water!"

*Eheu!* That night's supper was the last merry meal the old home was to know for many a long month and year. For, by breakfast-time next day, the news had come of the bombardment of Fort Sumter, and men's hearts were hot within them, and women's hearts were failing them for fear of battle, murder, and sudden death to sons, husbands, and brothers.

One might have fancied that a visible pall hung over the city, so universal and deep was the agony of suspense.

While the recollection of suspense and agony was fresh in my mind, I wrote of the awful awakening from my fool's paradise of incredulity and levity:

"For two days, the air was thick with rumors of war and bloodshed. For two days, the eyes and thoughts of the nation were fixed upon that fire-girt Southern island, with its brave but feeble garrison—the representative of that nation's majesty—testifying, in the defiant boom of every cannon's answer to the rebel bombardment, that resistance to armed treason is henceforward to be learned as one of the nation's laws. For two days, thousands and hundreds of thousands of loyal hearts all over this broad land, cried mightily unto our country's God to avert this last and direst trial—the humiliation of our Flag by hands that once helped to rear it in the sight of the world, as the ensign of national faith. And under the whole expanse of heaven, there was no answer to those prayers, except the reverberation of the cruel guns.

"On Saturday, April 14th, the End came!"

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# XXXVIII [370]

## THE FOURTEENTH OF APRIL, 1861, IN RICHMOND

We had planned to leave Richmond for home on Tuesday afternoon. At noon on Saturday, my husband asked me if I would not like to prolong my stay with my relatives, adding significantly:

"We do not know how long it may be before you can get South again. There is thunder in the air."

I looked up from the letter I was writing to Newark:

"Thunder—alone—is harmless. I take no stock in gasconade that is only thunder. And if trouble is coming, it is clear that our place is not here."

The letter-writing went on not uncheerfully. Far down in my soul was the belief that a peaceful issue must be in store for the land beloved of the Lord. Were we not brethren? When brought, face to face, with the fact that brothers' hands must be dipped in brothers' blood, reaction was inevitable.

So foolish was I, and ignorant of the excesses to which sectional fury can carry individuals and nations.

I was in my room, getting ready for our last walk among scenes endeared to us by thousands of associations, my husband standing by, hat in hand, when a terrific report split the brooding air and rent the very heavens. Another and another followed. We stood transfixed, without motion or speech, until we counted, silently, seven.

It was the number of the seceding States! As if pandemonium had waited for the seventh boom to die sullenly away among the hills, the pause succeeding the echo was ended by an outburst of [371] yells, cheers, and screams that beggars description. The streets in our quiet quarter were alive with men, women, and children. Fire-crackers, pistols, and guns were discharged into the throbbing air.

"The fort has fallen!" broke in one breath from our lips. And simultaneously: "The Lord have mercy upon the country!"

We ran down-stairs and into the street.

My sister “Mea” was upon the front porch, and the steps were thronged by children and servants, wild with curiosity.

I have not mentioned that my sister had married, two years before, Mr. John Miller, a Scotchman by birth. He was much liked and respected by us all, and it spoke volumes for his breeding and the genuine good feeling prevailing among us, that although he was the only “original secessionist” in our household band, our cordial relations remained unbroken in spite of the many political arguments we had had with him.

His wife was holding aloft her baby boy, a pretty year-old, in her arms. A Secession cockade was pinned upon his breast; in his chubby hand he flourished a rebel flag, and he laughed down into her radiant face.

We feigned not to see them as we hurried past. But a gulf seemed to open at my feet. As in a baleful dream, I comprehended, in the sick whirl of conflicting sensations, what Rebellion, active and in arms, would mean in hundreds of homes on both sides of the border.

“Is the world going mad?” muttered my husband, between his teeth, and I knew that the same horror was present with him.

Secession flags blossomed in windows and from roofs; were waved from doors and porches by girls and women; were shaken in mad exultation by boys on the sidewalks; hung upon lamp-posts, and were stretched from side to side of the street. It was like the magical upspringing of baneful [372]
fungi. Where had they all come from? And at what infernal behest had they leaped into being?

The living stream poured toward the Capitol Square, and it swept us with it. The grounds were filled with a tumultuous crowd. Upon the southern terrace was the park of artillery that had fired the salute of seven guns. As we entered the upper gate a long procession of men issued from the western door of the Capitol, and descended the steps.

“The convention has adjourned for the day,” remarked Mr. Terhune. We were at the base of the Washington monument, and he drew me up on the lower step of the base to avoid the press.

The delegates streamed by us in groups; some striding in excited haste; talking gleefully, and gesticulating wildly. Others were grave and slow, silent, or deep in low-toned conversation; others yet—and these were marked men already—walked with bent heads, and faces set in wordless sadness. One of these, recognizing Mr. Terhune, approached us, and with a brief apology to me, drew him a few paces apart.

Three years before, I had seen the ceremonies by which this monument—Crawford’s finest work in marble—was uncovered and dedicated. On the next day, Mr. Everett had repeated his oration on Washington in the Richmond theatre. The silver-tongued orator had joined hands, then and there, with Tyler, Wise, and Yancey, in proclaiming the unity of the nation. General Scott had sat in the centre of the stage, like a hoary keystone in the semi-circle of honorable men and counsellors.

Was it all a farce, even then, this talk of brotherhood and patriotism? And of what avail were wisdom and diplomacy and the multitude of counsels, if this were to be the end?

I was saying it to myself in disgustful bewilderment, when the crowd cheered itself mad over a [373]
fresh demonstration of popular passion. The rebel flag had been run up from the peak of the Capitol roof!

My husband came back to me instantly. He was pale, and the lines of his mouth were tense.

“Let us get out of this!” he said. “I cannot breathe!”

On the way to Gamble’s Hill—a long-loved walk with us—I heard how Sumter had fallen. We were not hopeless, yet, as to the final outcome of the tragical complication that had turned the heads of the populace. The outrage offered the Flag of our common country must open the eyes of true men, and all who had one spark of patriotism left in their souls. We could have no longer any doubt as to the real animus of the Rebellion. One thing was certain: To-day’s work would decide the question for Virginia. She could not hang back now.

Thus reasoning, we took our last look of the lovely panorama of river, islets, and hills; of the city of the dead—beautiful in wooded heights and streams and peaceful valleys, on our right—while on the left was the city of the living, noble and fair, and, in the distance, now as silent as Hollywood.

My companion lifted his arm abruptly and pointed northward.

A long, low line of cloud hung on the horizon—dun, with brassy edges—sullen and dense, save where a rainbow, vivid with emerald, rose-color, and gold, spanned the murky vapor.

“Fair weather cometh out of the North,” uttered the resolute optimist. “With the Lord is terrible majesty. After all, He is omnipotent. We will hope on!”

We were measurably cheered on our way back to the heart of the city by the sight of the Flag of Virginia flying serenely from the staff where had flaunted the Stars and Bars, an hour ago. At [374]
supper, my father related with gusto how a deputation of Secessionists had waited on the

Governor to offer congratulations upon the Confederate victory. How he had received them but sourly, being, as the deputation should have known, an “inveterate Unionist.” When felicitated upon the result of the siege, he returned that he “did not consider it a matter for any compliments.” At that instant he caught sight of the flag hoisted to the roof of the Capitol, demanded by whose order it was done, and straightway commanded it to be hauled down and the State flag, usually sported when the Legislature was in session, to be run up in its stead.

“Governor Letcher has a rough tongue when he chooses to use it,” commented my father. “He is honest, through and through.”

The talk of the evening could run in but one channel. Our nerves were keyed up to the highest tension, and the day’s events had gone deep into mind and heart. Two or three visitors dropped in, and both sides of the Great Controversy were brought forward, temperately, but with force born of conviction. If I go somewhat into the details of the conversation, it is because I would make clear the truth that each party in the struggle we feared might be imminent, believed honestly that justice and right were at the foundation of his faith. I wrote down the substance of the memorable discussion, as I recorded and published other incidents of the ever-to-be-remembered era, while the history of it was still in the making. I am, then, sure that I give the story correctly.

John Miller opened the ball by “hoping that the North was now convinced that the South was in earnest in maintaining her rights.”

I liked my Scotch brother-in-law, and we bandied jests safely and often. But it irked me that we should have a Secessionist in a loyal family, and I retorted flippantly, lest I should betray the underlying feeling: [375]

“There has been no madness equal to Secession since the swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea. The choking in the waves will come later.”

“Let wise men stand from under!” he retorted, smiling good-humoredly. “As to the choking, that may not be such an easy job as you think.”

A visitor took up the word, and seriously:

“The dissatisfaction of the South is no new thing. It is as old as the Constitution itself. John Randolph said of it: ‘I saw what Washington did not see. Two other men in Virginia saw it—the *poison under its wings*.’ Grayson, another far-sighted statesman, prophesied just what has come to pass. He said of the consolidation policy taught in the Constitution: ‘It will, in operation, be found unequal, grievous, and oppressive.’ He foresaw that the manufacturer of the North would dominate the agriculturist of the South; that there would be burdensome taxation without adequate representation; in short, that there would be numberless encroachments of the North upon the prerogatives of the Southern slaveholder.”

“He said nothing of the manifest injustice in a republic, of the election of a candidate by the votes of a petty faction, dominant for the time, because the other party split and ran several men?”

This was said by a young man who had not spoken until then.

My father replied: “Suppose Breckenridge had been elected? Would that have been the triumph of a faction?”

“Circumstances alter cases,” said my brother Horace, dryly.

Everybody laughed, except the man who had quoted Grayson and Randolph.

“It is not easy for the Mother of Presidents to submit to the rule of those whom, as Job says, they would have scorned to put with their cattle,” he said, with temper. [376]

I saw the blue fire in my husband’s eyes before he spoke; but his voice was even and full; every sentence was studiedly calm.

“For more than seventy years, the South has prospered under the Constitution, which, according to the renowned authorities cited just now, had poison under its wings. Hers have been the chief places in our national councils, and the most lucrative offices in the gift of the government. It is her boast, if we are to believe what this one of your leading papers says”—unfolding and reading from the editorial page—“that ‘since the organization of the Union, she has held the balance of power—*as it is her right to do*—her citizens being socially, morally, and intellectually, superior to those of the North.’”

My father filliped his cigar ash into the fire.

“Now you are improvising?”

“Not a word! Our editor goes on to say further: ‘Our whilom servants have lately strangely forgotten their places. They now aspire to an equal share in the administration of the government. They have presumed to elect from their own ranks an illiterate, base-born, sectional tool, whom they rely upon to do their foul work of subverting our sovereignty. It is high time the real masters awoke from their fatal lethargy, and forced their insubordinate hinds to stand once more, cap in hand, at their behest.’”

The stump of my father's cigar followed the ash.

"Come, come, my dear boy! it isn't fair to take the ravings of one fool as the sentiment of the section in which that stuff is printed. I could quote talk, as intemperate and incendiary, from your Northern papers. You wouldn't have us suppose that you and other sane voters indorse them?"

"I grant what you say, sir. And, as I long ago affirmed, the shortest and best way to put out the [377]
fire that threatens the integrity of the government, would be to muzzle every political ranter in the country, and suppress every newspaper for six months. The conflagration would die for want of fuel."

My mother interposed here:

"Good people, don't you think there is 'somewhat too much of this'? I, for one, refuse to believe that anything but smoke will come of the alarm that is frightening weak brothers out of their wits. The good Ship of State will 'sail on, strong and great,' when our children's children are in their graves."

She changed the current of talk, but not of thought. After the rest had gone, there lingered a young fellow whose case was so striking an example of a host of others, who were forced into the forefront of the battle, that I take leave to relate it.

He still lives, an honored citizen of the State he loved as a son loves the mother who bore and nursed him. Therefore I shall not use his real name. Eric S., as I shall call him, was an intimate friend of my brother Herbert, and as much at home in our house as if he were, in very deed, one of the blood and name. He had visited us in Newark, and made warm friends there, during the past year. Mr. Terhune had had long and serious consultations with him since we came to Virginia, and, within a few days, as the war-cloud took form, had urged him to accompany us to New Jersey, or, at least, to promise to come to us should hostilities actually begin between the two sections. The lad (scarcely twenty-one) was an ardent Unionist, and, although a member of a crack volunteer company in Richmond, had declared to us that nothing would ever induce him to bear arms under the Rebel government. Mea and her spouse went up-stairs early, and the rest of us were in hearty sympathy with our guest. He had not taken an active share in the discussion, [378]
and his distrait manner and sober face prepared us, in part, for the disclosure that followed the departure of the others.

He had been credibly and confidentially informed that a mighty pressure would be brought to bear upon the convention, at their next sitting, to force the Ordinance of Secession. If it were carried, by fair means or foul, every man who could bear arms would be called into the field.

While he talked, the boy stood against the mantel—erect, lithe, and handsome—the typical mother's and sister's darling, yet manly in every look and lineament. The thought tore through my imagination while I looked at him:

"And it is material like *this* that will go to feed the maw of War!—such flesh and blood as his that will be mangled by bullet and shell!"

I had never had the ghastly reality brought so near to me until that moment.

"Oh-h!" I shuddered. "You won't stay to be shot at like a mad dog!"

The first bright smile that had lighted his face was on it. "It isn't being shot at that I am thinking of." The gleam faded suddenly. "I don't think I am a coward. It doesn't run in the blood. But"—flinging out his arm with a passionate gesture that said more than his words—"I think *that* would be paralyzed if I were to lift it against the dear old flag!"

Before he left it was agreed privately, between him and my husband, that he would try his fortune on the other side of Mason and Dixon's line, should the axe fall that would sever Virginia from the Union her sons had been mainly instrumental in creating.

Sunday came and went. Such a strange, sad Sunday as it was! with the marked omission, in every pulpit, of the prayer for the President of the United States and others in authority; with [379]
scanty congregations in the churches, and growing throngs of excited talkers at the street corners, and knots of dark-browed men in hotel lobbies, and the porches of private houses.

In the length and breadth of the town but one Union flag was visible. Nicholas Mills, a wealthy citizen of high character and fearless temper, defied public opinion and risked popular wrath, by keeping a superb flag flying at the head of a tall staff in his garden on Leigh Street. We went out of our way, in returning from afternoon service, to refresh eyes and spirits with the sight.

On Monday, the mutterings of rebellion waxed into a roar of angry revolt over the published proclamation of the President, calling for an army of seventy-five thousand men to quell the insurrection. The quota from Virginia was, I think, five thousand.

"A fatal blunder!" said my father, in stern disapproval.

My husband's answer was prompt:

"To omit her name from the roll would be an accusation of disloyalty."

The senior shook his head.

“It may have been a choice of evils. I hope he has chosen the less! But I doubt it! I doubt it!”

So might Eli have looked and spoken when his heart trembled for the ark of the Lord.

That afternoon, the flagstaff in the Mills garden was empty. The Stars and Stripes were banned as an unholy ensign.

Eric S. paid us a flying visit that evening. His parents urged his going. The father was especially anxious that he should not risk the probability of impressment, and, should he refuse to serve, of imprisonment. Already Union men were regarded with suspicion. The exodus of the disaffected could not be long delayed. He had influential family connections at the North who [380] would see to it that he found occupation. When we parted that night, it was with a definite understanding that he would be our travelling companion.

Tuesday noon, he appeared, haggard and well-nigh desperate. Going, like the honorable gentleman he was, to the Colonel of his regiment early in the day, to tender his resignation and declare his intentions, he was stricken by the news that the State had seceded in secret session Monday night.

Whereupon the Colonel had offered the services of his regiment to the authorities of the Confederate States. They were accepted.

“You are now in the Confederate army,” added the superior officer, “and, from present indications, we will not be idle long.”

“But,” stammered the stunned subaltern, “I am going North this very afternoon with friends, and I shall not consent to serve.”

“If you attempt to leave, you will be reckoned as a deserter from the regular army, and dealt with accordingly.”

I do not attempt to estimate what proportion of men, who would have remained loyal to flag and government if they could, were coerced, or cajoled, into bearing arms under a government they abhorred. I tell the plain facts in the instance before me.

Eric S. fought in fifteen general engagements, and came out with his life when the cruel war was over. He told with deep satisfaction, in after-years, that he had never worn the Confederate uniform, but always that of his own regiment.

It is easy for us to prate, at this distance from those times of trial to brave men’s souls, of the high and sacred duty of living and, if need be, of dying for the right. From our standpoint, it is as [381] clear as the noonday sun, that allegiance to the general government should outrank allegiance to the State in which one has chanced to be born and to live. We have had an awful object-lesson in the study of that creed since the day when the Virginian, who saw his native State invaded, believed that he had no alternative but to “strike for his altars and his fires.”

Upon the gallant fellows who, seeing this, and no further, risked their lives unto the death, fell the penalty of the demagogues’ sin.

*We* may surely lay the blame where it belongs.

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## XXXIX [382]

## “THE LAST THROUGH TRAIN FOR FOUR YEARS”

I COPY in substance, and sometimes verbatim, the account written in 1861, and published later, of our journey northward in the last train that went through to Washington before the outbreak of hostilities.

I preface the narrative by saying that, by the merciful provision of the Divine Father, Who will not try us beyond our strength, we, one and all, kept up to our own hearts the sanguine incredulity in the possibility of the worst coming to pass, which was characteristic of Union lovers at the South, up to the battle of Manassas.

After that, the scales fell from all eyes. Had not my mother hoped confidently that the war-cloud would blow over, and that, before long, she would not have allowed Alice to go back to Newark with us? My place was with my husband, but this young daughter she had the right to keep with her.

Had I not hoped for a peaceful solution of the national problem, if only through the awakening of the fraternal love of those whose fathers had fought, shoulder to shoulder, to wrest their country from a common oppressor, I could not have said “Good-bye” smilingly to home and kindred. When I said to my mother: “We shall have you with us at the seashore, this summer,” it was not in bravado, to cheat her into belief in my cheerfulness.

Our party of Mr. Terhune, Alice, our boy and baby Christine, with their nurse and myself, was comfortably bestowed in the train that was to meet the boat at Acquia Creek. Luggage and [383] luncheon were looked after as sedulously as if there were no superior interest in our minds. The

very commonplaceness of the details of getting ready and sending us off, exactly as had been done, time and time again, were in themselves heartening. What had been, would be. To-morrow should be as to-day.

When we and our appurtenances were comfortably bestowed in the ladies' car (there were no parlor cars or sleepers, as yet), I had leisure to note what was passing without. The scene should be that which always attends the departure of a passenger train from a provincial city. Yet I felt, at once, that there was a difference.

I noticed, and not without an undefined sense of uneasiness, the unusual number of strollers that lounged up and down the sidewalks, and loitered about the train, and that some of these were evidently listening to the guarded subtones to which the voices of all—even the rudest of the loungers—were modulated. With this shade of uneasiness there stole upon me a strange, indescribable sense of the unreality of all that I saw and heard. The familiar streets and houses were seen, as through the bewildering vapors of a dream; men and women glided by like phantoms, and there was a shimmer of red-and-orange light in the air—the reflection of the glowing west—that was vague and dazing, not dazzling.

The train slid away from the station. My father and my brother Horace lifted their hats to us from the pavement; we held the children up to the open window to kiss their hands to them; I leaned forward for one last, fond look into the dear eyes, and our journey had begun.

Not a word was exchanged between the members of our party, while we rumbled slowly up Broad Street toward the open country.

I was unaccountably indisposed to talk, and this feeling seemed to pervade the company of [384]
passengers. The dreamy haze enveloped me again. The car was very full and very quiet. The languorous hues of the west swooned into twilight, and here and there a star peeped through the gray veil of the sky.

We had cleared the city limits, and the blending of daylight and the falling darkness were most confusing to the eye, when I became aware that the train was slowing up where there was no sign of a switch or "turn-out." If it actually halted, it was but for a second, just long enough to enable two men, standing close to the track, to board the train. They entered our car, and my husband pressed my arm as they passed down the aisle to seats diagonally opposite to us.

Under cover of the rattle and roar of the speeding train, he told me presently—after cautioning me not to glance in their direction—that they were Messrs. Carlisle and Dent—well known to visitors to the convention as most prominent among the leaders of the Union party.

On through the gathering gloom rolled the ponderous train—the only moving thing abroad, on that enchanted night. Within it there was none of the hum of social intercourse one might have expected in the circumstances. Adult passengers were not drowsy, for every figure was upright, and the few faces, dimly visible in the low light of the lamps overhead, were wakeful—one might have imagined, watchful. I learned subsequently that the insufficient light was purposely contrived by conductor and brakemen, and why. But for the touch of my husband's hand, laid in sympathy or reassurance upon mine, and the sight of my babies, sleeping peacefully—one in the nurse's arms, the other on the seat beside her, his head in her lap—I might have believed the weird light within, the darkness without, and the motionless shapes and saddened faces about [385]
me, accessories to the fantasy that gained steadily upon me.

The spell was broken rudely—terribly—at Fredericksburg. We steamed right into the heart of a crowd, assembled to await the arrival of the train, which halted there for wood and water. It was a tumultuous throng, and evidently drawn thither with a purpose understood by all. The babel of queries and exclamations smote the breezeless night-air like a hail-storm. It was apparent that the railway officials returned curt and unsatisfactory replies, for the noise gathered volume, and uncomplimentary expletives flew freely. All at once, a rush was made in the direction of the ladies' car. Eager and angry visages, dusky in shadow, or ruddied by torch-light, were pressed against closed windows, and thrust impudently into the few that were open.

"Three cheers for the Southern Confederacy!" yelled stentorian tones.

Three-times-three roars of triumph deafened us.

"Three cheers for Jefferson Davis—the savior of Southern liberties!" shouted the fugleman.

Again a burst of frenzied acclamation that made the windows rattle.

I could see the leader of the riot—a big fellow who stood close to our window. He was bareheaded, and he rested one hand on the side of the car, swinging his hat with the other, far above his head.

"Three groans for Carlisle!"

Nothing else that has ever pained my ears has given me the impression of brute ferocity that stopped the beating of my heart for one awful moment.

From the mob went up a responsive bellow of execration and derision.

"All aboard!" shouted conductor and trainmen.

The hoarse call and the shriek of the engine were welcome music to the travellers. [386]

My husband's eyes met mine.

"What Eric S. told us was then true," he said, without forming the words with his lips. "Virginia has joined her sisters. And the people have got hold of the news. Are they blind, not to see that their State will be the battle-ground, if war should be declared?"

How dearly and for how long she was to pay for her blindness, let the history of the next four years say!

Leaving the boat at Washington, we were conveyed by stages across the city to the Baltimore station. It was two o'clock in the spring morning, when we passed the Capitol. It was lighted from basement to roof, but, to passers-by, as still as a tomb. Nothing had brought home to us the fact and the imminence of the peril to our national existence, as did the sight of that lighted pile. For, as we had been informed, it was filled with armed men, on guard against surprise or open attack. On the train, we heard how troops had been hurried from all quarters of the still loyal States into Washington. The war was on!

Full appreciation of what the Great Awakening was, and what it portended, came to us in Philadelphia. I had not known there was so much bunting on this side of the Atlantic as fluttered in the breeze in the city of staid homes and brotherly loves. It was a veritable bourgeoning of patriotism. From church-spires; from shop-windows; from stately dwellings, and from the lowliest house in the meanest street—they

"All uttered forth a glorious voice."

Successful rebellion seemed an impossibility in the face of the demonstration.

Every village, town, and farm-house along the route proclaimed the same thing. So convinced were we that the mere knowledge of the strength and unity of the North, East, and West would [387] carry conviction to the minds of the led, and strike terror to the hearts of the leaders in the gigantic Treason, that we rallied marvellously the spirits which had flagged last night.

The train ran into Newark at eight o'clock that evening. By the time it stopped, we had a glimpse of familiar and anxious faces. We stepped off into the arms of four of our parishioners, all on the alert for the first sight of the man of their hour. They received us as they might welcome friends rescued from great and sore perils.

Carriage and baggage-wagon were waiting. We were tucked into our seats tenderly, and with what would have been exaggerated solicitude in men less single of heart and motive.

"But you knew that we would surely come back?" I said to Mr. Farmer, at the third repetition of his—"Thank Heaven you are here!"

The quartette of heads wagged gravely.

"We knew you would, if you could get here. But there is no telling what may not happen in these times."

Their thanksgivings were echoed by ourselves, when, that very week, a Massachusetts regiment, *en route* for Washington, was assailed by a Baltimore mob, several killed and more wounded, and the railway tracks torn up, to prevent the progress of troops to the national capital.

We laughed a little, and were much moved to see a handsome flag projecting from a second-story window of our house, as we alighted at the door. It was a mute token of confidence in our loyalty. Smiles and softness chased each other when the proud cook, left in charge during our absence, related how the "beautiful supper," smoking hot, and redolent of all manner of appetizing viands, was the gift of two neighbors, and that pantry and larder were "just packed [388] full" of useful and dainty edibles, sent and brought by ladies who had forbidden her to tell their names.

Thus began the four years of separation from my early home and those who had hallowed it for all time. That eventful journey was the dividing line between the Old Time and the New. With it, also dawned apprehension of the gracious dealings of the All-wise and All-merciful with us—His ignorant, and ofttimes captious, children. It would have been impossible for my husband, with his staunch principles of fidelity to the government, and uncompromising adherence to what he believed to be the right in the lamentable sectional strife, to remain in the seceding State. Dearly as he loved Virginia—and romantic and tender as was his attachment to the brave old days that were to him the poetry of domestic and social life—he must have severed his connection with a parish in which he would have been accounted a "suspect." Before the storm broke, we were gently lifted out of the "nest among the oaks" and established, as tenderly, in the "pleasant places" the Father—not we—had chosen.

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## XL

## DOMESTIC SORROWS AND NATIONAL STORM AND STRESS—FRIENDS, TRIED AND TRUE

We were to need all the fulness of consolation that could be expressed from divine grace and human friendships, in the years immediately succeeding the events recorded in the last chapter.

The Muse of American History has set a bloody and fire-blackened cross against 1861. To us, it was darkened, through three-quarters of its weary length, by the shadows of graves. One death after another among the friends to whom we clung the more gratefully, because of the gulf—fast filling with blood—that parted us from kindred and early companions, followed our home-coming. In the last week of August, my husband recorded, in his pastor's notebook, that he had stood, in fourteen weeks, at the open graves of as many parishioners, among them some who had been most forward in welcoming him to his new field, and most faithful in their support of him in it.

"It is literally walking in the valley of the shadow of death!" he sighed, closing the melancholy pages. "I ask myself tremblingly, after each funeral—Who next?"

At noon on September second—the fifth anniversary of our wedding-day—our boy came home from a drive with his father, feverish and drowsy, and fell asleep in my arms. On the fourteenth of the same month, he was folded in an embrace, yet more fond and safe, beyond the touch of mortal sorrow.

My bonnie, bonnie boy! who had never had a day's illness until he was stricken by that from [390]
which there was no recovery! Diphtheria was comparatively new at that time, even to the able physician who was our devoted personal friend. The boy faded before it, as a lily in drought. Four days before he left us, his baby sister was smitten by the same disease. Two days after the funeral, their father fell ill with it. Why neither Alice, I, nor the faithful nurse who assisted us in the care of the three patients, did not take the infection is a mystery. There were no quarantine regulations to prevent the spread of what is now recognized as one of the most virulent of epidemics. We took absolutely no precautions; friends flocked to us as freely as if there were no danger. Our fearlessness may have been a catholicon. We nursed the sufferers back to health, and, looking to God for strength, took our places again in the ranks.

Such a trite, every-day story as it is! To the soul for which the task is set, it is as novel and crucial as death itself. It is not the young mother who finds comfort and tonic in the inspired assurance:

"For while we bear it, we can bear;
Past that—we lay it down!"

For four months, we had not a letter from Richmond. The cordon was drawn closely about the chief seat of the Rebellion—now the capital of the Confederacy. It was hard to smuggle private letters through the lines. We wrote by every possible opportunity, and were certain that my family were as watchful of chances, likely and improbable. At Christmas, we had a packet that had been run through by way of Kentucky, by a man who wrote to say that he had been ill in a Richmond hospital and received great kindness from my mother. When he was well enough to rejoin his regiment, he had offered to get her letters to me, if it were in the power of man to do it. [391]
His plan, he said, was to entrust the parcel to a trusty negro, who would swim the Ohio River on horseback at a point where the stream was narrow, and post letters on the other side. If I should receive them, I might know that he had fulfilled his pledge to my mother. If I did not get them, I would never know how hard he had tried to keep his word.

I have often wondered if he received the answers we dispatched to the post-office from which our precious letters were mailed. I never heard from him again.

Home-bulletins brought the news of the death of my stern old grandmother at the advanced age of eighty-four. She had never given her sanction to the war, disapproving of military operations with the whole might of her rugged nature. On a certain Sunday in June, news was brought by fast express, while the people were in church, that the war-vessel *Pawnee* was on its way up the river to bombard the town. Owing to the old lady's deafness, she did not fully comprehend why the services were closed summarily, and the streets were too full of people hurrying to and fro, for my father to explain the state of affairs on the way home. On the front steps they met my brother Horace in the uniform of the Richmond Howitzers, to which he belonged. They had been ordered summarily to repair to the point from which the expected attack was to be repelled. A few hasty sentences put her into possession of leading facts; the boy kissed her; shook hands with his father, and ran down the street.

The old Massachusetts dame, whose father and husband had fought in the Revolutionary War, stood still and looked after him until he was out of sight.

He was her favorite of the boys—we fancied because he resembled the Edwin she had wished to adopt, and who died in her arms.

The lad she followed with puzzled and griefful eyes was of a goodly presence, and never [392]
goodlier than in his uniform. Did she bethink herself of the probability that she might never see him again? What she thought, and what she felt, will never be known. When my father addressed her, she gazed at him with uncomprehending eyes, turned, and walked feebly up the stairs.

"I am afraid mother is not well," said my father to my mother, after they had talked a few minutes of the alarm and Horace's departure. "She looked shaken by the boy's going. Will you go up and look after her?"

She had undressed and gone to bed. She had taken her seat in church that morning, a fine-looking dame of the old school; erect and strong; alert of wits and firm of purpose. My mother looked into the face of a shrunken, dull-eyed crone, who asked, in quavering accents, “Who she was, and what was her business?” Then she began to moan and beg to be taken “home.” That was her cry, whenever she spoke at all, all summer long. But once did she quit her bed. That was when the nurse left her, as they supposed, sleeping, and discovered her half an hour later, fumbling at the lock of the front door, and in her nightgown. She “wanted to go home! she would go home!” She went on September 5th, while we, hundreds of miles away, were watching over our sick boy.

“The war killed off most of our old people,” said an ex-Confederate officer once to me. “Almost as many died of sheer brokenheartedness, as on the battle-field! *That’s* an account somebody has got to settle some day, if there is any justice in heaven.”

In the autumn of 1862, the state of my sister Alice’s health demanded a change of climate so imperatively that we had no option in the consideration of the emergency. Her throat was seriously affected; she had not spoken above a whisper for six months. To keep her in Newark for [393] another winter was not to be thought of. Our parents were writing by every available flag of truce strenuous orders that she should “come home.” In early October, Mr. Terhune took her down to an obscure village in Maryland directly upon Chesapeake Bay. It was, in fact, a smuggling-station, from which merchandise of various sorts was ferried into Virginia, in direct violation of embargo laws. Southern sympathizers, whom loyalists were beginning to brand as “Copperheads”—a name that stuck fast to them throughout the war—ran the enterprise and profited by it. Through one of these, information sifted to us of which we made use. When necessity drives, it will not do to be fastidious as to instruments that will save us.

At dead of night my young sister was put into a boat, warmly wrapped from the river-fogs, and, in charge of a Richmond gentleman who was returning home, sent across the unlicensed ferry. Her father awaited her on the other shore. A mile above and a mile below, lurid gleams, like the eyes of river-monsters watching for their prey, showed where United States gunboats lay in mid-stream to intercept unlawful commerce and to arrest offenders. My husband did not impart to me the details of the adventure until we had heard of the child’s restoration to her father’s arms. Then he told of the fearful anxiety with which he waited on the Maryland shore, under starless skies, scanning the menacing lights up and down the river, and straining his ears for the ripple against the sides of the boat making its way, cautiously, with muffled oars, across the watery track. To deflect from the viewless course would be to awaken the sleeping dogs of war. The lonely watcher feared every minute to see from either of the gunboats a flash of fire, followed by the boom of a cannon, signalling the discovery of the attempt to evade the embargo.

“The dreariest vigil imaginable!” he said. “I stayed there for two hours, until I was sure the [394] boat must have made the landing. Had it been intercepted, I should have seen some change in the position of those red eyes and heard a shot.”

Before she embarked he had given the fugitive a self-addressed envelope enclosing a card, on which was written: “Arrived safely.” She pencilled below—“Alice,” and sent it back by the boatman. It was a week old when he got it, and creased and soiled by much handling.

Then fell silence, that was felt every waking hour, and lasted for four long months. On the first day of February, my husband being absent from home, I walked down to the city post-office with Mrs. Greenleaf, my eldest sister-in-law, who was visiting us, and took from our box a thin letter addressed in my mother’s hand, and stamped “Flag of Truce.”

It was but one page in length. Flag-of-truce communications were limited to that. The first line branded itself upon my brain:

“*I have written to you several times since our precious Alice’s death!*”

She had rallied finely in her native air, and was, apparently, on the highroad to health when smallpox broke out in Richmond military hospitals. It spread to the citizens. The town was crowded, and quarantine laws were lax. Dr. Haxall called and insisted that the entire family be re-vaccinated. He had his way with all save one. Alice put him off with a jest, and my mother bade him “call again, when she may be more reasonable.” I fancy none of them put much faith in the honest physician’s assertion that the precautionary measure was a necessity. In those days a “good vaccination scar” was supposed to last a lifetime. My sister fell ill a fortnight afterward, and the seizure was pronounced to be “varioloid.”

A girl’s wilful whim! A mother’s indulgence! These may, or may not, have been the opening [395] acts of the tragedy. God knows!

Alice was in her twenty-second year, and in mind the most brilliant of the family. She was an ardent student for learning’s sake, and an accomplished English scholar; wrote and spoke French fluently, and was proficient in the Latin classics. The one sketch from her pen ever published appeared in *The Southern Literary Messenger* while she was ill. It proved what we had known already, that her talent for composition was of a high order. Had she lived, the reading world would have ratified our judgment.

On March 7th of that dark and bloody year, the low tide of hope with the nation, our home was brightened by the birth of a second daughter—our first brunette bairnie. Her brother and sister had the Terhune blue eyes and sunny hair. She came on a wild, snowy day, and brought such

wealth of balm and blessing with her as seldom endows parents and home by reason of a single birth. From the hour of her advent, Baby Alice was her father's idol. Why, we could not say then. The fact—amusing at times—always patent—of the peculiar tenderness binding together the hearts of the father and the girl-child—remained, and was gradually accepted, without comment, by us all.

It was an unspeakable comfort to be able once more to talk of "the children." One never divines the depth of sweetness and significance in the term until one has been robbed of the right to use it, through months of missing what has been.

Other, if minor, distractions from personal sorrow and public solicitudes were not wanting that year. I had been drawn into charitable organizations born of the times. Our noble church was forward in co-operation with municipal and State authorities in relieving the distress of the [396] thousands who were reduced to poverty by the loss of the Southern trade and the stagnation of home industries. Prices went up, and wages went down; soldiers' widows and orphans must be cared for; the soldiers in camps and hospitals were but ill-provided with the comforts they had a right to expect from the government and their fellow-citizens. We had Soldiers' Relief Societies, and Auxiliary Societies to the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, and by-and-by, as the monetary situation told fiercely upon the women and children of unemployed operatives, associations that supplied their wives with sewing.

But for active participation in each of these benevolent organizations, I do not see how I could have kept my reason while the fratricidal conflict gathered force and heat.

My situation was peculiar, and, among my daily associates, unique. Loving the Union with a passion of patriotism inconceivable by those who have never had what they call by that name put to such test of rack and flame as the martyrs of old endured, I yet had no personal interest in one soldier who fought for the Cause as dear to me as life itself. My prayers and hopes went out to the Federal army as a glorious engine, consecrated to a sublime and holy purpose—even the salvation of the nation by the preservation of the Union. And all the while, my best-beloved brother was in the fiercest of the fight down there, in the State dearer to me than any other could ever be. Cousins by the score, and friends and valued acquaintances by the hundred, were with Lee and Jackson, Early, Stuart, and Hill, exposed to shot and shell and sword. My brother Herbert had gone home in '61, after he was graduated from the Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, and received a license to preach.

Shortly after his installation in a country parish, he had married a girl he had fallen in love with while studying with my husband in Charlotte. Although a non-combatant, he might be forced [397] by circumstances to take up arms, as many of the profession were doing. His home was raided more than once by predatory bands of stragglers from the Federal army, and twice by cavalry dashes under leaders whose names were a terror throughout southern and central Virginia. My brother Percy, at fourteen, enlisted, and quickly gained reputation as a courier under Lee's own eye, being a daring rider, courting, instead of shunning, danger, and, like his father and brothers, an utter stranger to physical fear in any shape whatsoever.

When—as happened almost daily—our papers published lists of the killed and wounded in Lee's army, my hand shook so violently in holding the sheet, that I had to lay it on the table to steady the lines into legibility, my heart rolling over with sick thuds, while my eyes ran down the line of names. Add to this ceaseless horror of suspense the long, awful spaces of silence between the flag-of-truce letters—and is it to be wondered at that I plunged into routine work—domestic, literary, religious, charitable, and patriotic—with feverish energy, as the only hope of maintaining a tolerable degree of sanity?

And how *good* "our people" were to me through it all! The simple act of setting the flag above our door-steps when we returned from Rebeldom, was emblematic of the position taken and held by them, as a body, during that trial-period. They trusted us without reservation. Moreover, never, howsoever high might run the tide of popular feeling at the tidings of defeat or victory to the national Cause, was one of them ever betrayed into a word of vituperation of my native South, or ungenerous exultation over her downfall. The tact and delicacy in this respect displayed by them, without an exception, deserves higher praise than I can award in this humble chronicle.

Loving loyalty of this type was a panoply and a stimulant to my sorely-taxed spirit. Sheer [398] gratitude should have bound me to them as a co-worker.

When men like Peter and John Ballantine—than whom God never made a nobler pair of brothers—and Edgar Farmer—all the busiest of men—would go out of their way, in business hours, to make a special call upon me, after the news of a battle had set the town on fire with excitement, to "hope," in brotherly solicitude, that "this does not mean a heartache for you?"—when the safety of my brothers, and the welfare of my parents, was the subject of affectionate inquiry, whenever we met friend or acquaintance connected with church or parish, I used to say to my husband and myself, that the world had never seen more truly chivalrous natures than those of these practical Middle States men, who never thought of themselves as knightly.

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## XLI

[399]

# FORT DELAWARE—"OLD GLORY"—LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION—THE RELEASED PRISONER OF WAR

In the last week of May, 1864, I had a letter from my brother Horace, now a Lieutenant in the Richmond Howitzers, C.S.A.

It bore the heading: "*Under the walls of Fort Delaware*," and was scribbled upon the deck of a United States transport.

With the gay courage that was his characteristic, and without waste of words in preliminaries, directness in action and speech being another prominent trait with him, he informed me that "General Hancock, by making an ungenerously early start at Spottsylvania Court-House—before breakfast, in fact—on the morning of May 21st, captured part of our division."

The letter wound up with: "We are now approaching Fort Delaware, which is, we are told, our destination. I am well. Don't take this to heart. *I* don't!"

I was so far from taking it to heart that I called upon my soul, and all that was within me, to return thanks to Him who had delivered my darling boy from the battle that was against him. He was now out of the reach of bullet and bayonet.

If I did not summon neighbors and friends to rejoice with me over my brother's capture, the news spread fast, and congratulatory calls were the order of the next few days. Not satisfied with words of good-will, every bit of political machinery at the command of our friends was put in [400] motion to secure for me the great joy of visiting him.

One of these plans so nearly succeeded that I went, under the escort of the plotter, as far as Delaware City, within sight of the gloomy fortress, to be turned back by a new order—incited by a rumored attempt at escape of the prisoners—prohibiting any visitors from entering the fort.

In the tranquil assurance of the captive s security from the chances of war, I bore up under the failure better than could have been expected, solacing myself by writing, regularly, long letters, and the preparation of boxes of books and provisions, which I was allowed to forward weekly. It was "almost as good," I wrote to him, gleefully, "as having a son at school, for whom I could get up boxes of goodies."

Twice I had direct intelligence of him from army officers, who sought him out and talked to him of us.

One wrote: "Fine-looking fellow—hearty as a buck! In good heart, and in good looks." Another: "Never met a nicer fellow. I wish he had been on our side!"

While I was comforting myself with these mitigating incidents, the line of communication was abruptly severed by the transfer of prisoners from Fort Delaware to Hilton, South Carolina. I had no letter for a month, and began to think—I might say, to fear—that an exchange of prisoners had returned him to Virginia. He gave the reason for his silence finally:

> "In pursuance of the retaliatory policy determined upon by the Federal authorities, we were brought here and placed, for three weeks, under the fire of our own guns from the shore. Our fare was pickles and corn-meal, for the same time. I did not write while this state of things prevailed. It would have distressed you uselessly."

He went on to say that the order of retaliation for the cruelties inflicted upon Federal captives [401] in Confederate prisons, had been rescinded. The Confederates, now at Hilton Head, could hardly be said to be lodged luxuriously; but they were no longer animated targets.

Through the intercession of a friend with Gen. Stewart L. Woodford, then in command in South Carolina, I gained permission to supply my brother with "plain clothing, books, papers, food, and small sums of money." The latter went to him by the kind and safe hand of Richard Ryerson, a young Jerseyman, holding office in the Commissary Department at Hilton Head. My letters were forwarded under cover to the same generous intermediary.

Thus was another crooked way made straight.

The news of the evacuation; of my brother's removal back to Fort Delaware, and a letter from my father, sent by private hand to Mr. Terhune, came simultaneously. My husband had had a verbal message through a trusty "refugee," as long ago as January, to the effect that the fall of the city could not, in my father's judgment, be long delayed. Since confiscation was sure to follow the collapse of the Confederacy, he instructed my husband to repair to Richmond, at the earliest possible moment after the way was cut open by the victorious army, and claim the family estate in the name of his wife, our loyalty being unquestionable.

In the light of what really happened when the city was occupied by the invaders, the precaution seems absurdly useless. Then, it was prudent in the estimation of those best acquainted with the current of public affairs. Every dollar belonging, in fact, or constructively, to Northern citizens, that the Confederate authorities could reach, had been confiscated early in the action. My husband was a non-combatant in the eye of the law, by reason of his profession. Yet the few thousands we had invested in various ways in Virginia had gone the way of all the rest. It [402]

was but fair to suppose that the rebels would be stripped of houses, lands, and money.

On New-Year's day, we had a call from Dr. J. J. Craven, Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac, a warm personal friend of Mr. Terhune. He was stationed at Fort Monroe, the key to the James River. Him, my husband took into confidence, and it was arranged between them that the latter was to be notified of the practicability of entering the city in the track of the troops, when the inevitable hour should arrive.

On one and the same day in April, Mr. Terhune had a telegram from Fort Monroe, containing three words: "Come at once," and I a letter from my faithful ally, Ossian Ashley, enclosing an introductory note from General Butterfield to the Commandant at Fort Delaware, requesting him to permit me to see my brother.

Mr. Farmer, my husband's companion in many expeditions and journeyings, consented gladly to go with him now. We three left next morning for Philadelphia, and the two gentlemen accompanied me in the afternoon to Fort Delaware.

We were courteously received by the officials, the Commandant voluntarily relaxing the rules at our parting, to let my brother walk across the drawbridge and down to the wharf with me. High good-humor reigned in all branches of the service. The war was virtually over. As we sailed out into the bay, and I threw a last salute to the soldierly figure standing on the pier, it was with a bound of hope at my heart to which it had been long a stranger. "My boy" would join us in our home before many days. He had never been a rebel, indeed; he had gone reluctantly into the service, as had thousands of others. The chance to take the oath of allegiance to the Federal government would be readily embraced by him and his comrades. And my husband had engaged [403]
to see to it that the opportunity should not be long delayed. We parted in Philadelphia, I passing the night with friends there, the two men going on to Fort Monroe. By Doctor Craven's kindly management, they found a transport awaiting their arrival. They were, thus, the first civilians to enter Richmond after the military took possession.

A hasty note from Fort Monroe apprised me of the success of the expedition, up to that point. Beyond that place there were no postal or telegraphic facilities. I must wait patiently until they touched Old Point on the return journey.

With a thankful spirit and busy hands, I fell to work, making ready for the home-coming of husband and brother. It was as if the world and the house were swept and garnished together.

In the early dawn of April 15th, too happily excited to sleep, I arose and looked from my dressing-room window over intervening buildings and streets, to the spire of Old Trinity Church.

Church's picture, *Our Banner in the Sky*, was painted during the Rebellion, and every print-shop window displayed a copy of it. Some of my older readers may recollect it. A tall, and at the summit, leafless, pine stood up, stark and gaunt, against a sky barred with crimson-and-white. Above, a cluster of stars glimmered faintly in the dusky blue. It was a weird "impressionist" picture, that fired the imagination and thrilled the heart of the lover of our glorious Union.

From my window, I saw it now in fulness of detail. I had heard the story of "Old Glory," a little while before. The words leaped from my lips at the sight of the splendid flag on the staff towering from the church-spire. Straight and strong, it streamed over the sleeping city in the fresh breeze [404]
from the sea, emblem of the triumphant right—of a saved nation!

"Old Glory!" I cried aloud, and fell upon my knees to thank God for what it meant.

Had another woman in the land—now, more than ever and forever, "God's Country"—such cause as I to return thanks for what had been in the last month?

The glow of exultation still warmed my inmost being, when I halted on the upper stair on my way down to breakfast. Hearing a ring at the door-bell, with the thought of a telegram, as probable explanation of the untimely call, I leaned breathlessly over the balustrade as the maid opened the door.

It was a parishioner, and a neighbor. He spoke hurriedly:

"Will you say to Mrs. Terhune that the President was assassinated in Ford's Theatre in Washington last night?"

When, hours and hours afterward, I looked, with eyes dimmed by weeping, upon "Old Glory," it hung limp at half-mast, and the background was dull with rain-clouds.

I had many visitors that day. My nearest neighbor, and, to this hour, one of my closest friends, ran in to "see how I was bearing it. I must not get overexcited!" Then she broke down, and wept stormily, as for a murdered father.

"We never knew how we loved him until now!" she sobbed.

That was the cry of every torn heart. At last, we knew the patient, tender-hearted, magnificent patriot-hero for what he was—the second Father of his Country. At least a dozen men dropped in to "talk over" the bereavement. One, as rugged of feature and as soft of heart as our martyred head, said, huskily, holding my hand in our "good-bye":

"Somehow, it does me good to hear you talk, in your Southern accent, of our common grief. I [405]
can't exactly express what it means to me. Words come hard to-day. But it may be a sign that this

awful sorrow may, in God's hands, be the means of bringing us brothers together again. *He* always felt kindly toward them. Some day, they may be brought to see that they have lost their best friend. God knows!"

I thank Him that, in the fulness of time, the old man's hope has been fulfilled.

My husband brought home with him my youngest sister, Myrtle.

One of the incongruities that strike oddly across our moments of intensest emotion was, that, in the excitement of welcome and surprise (for I had had no intimation of her coming), I bethought myself that I had never known, until I heard her call my name, that girls' voices change as boys' do, in passing from childhood into youth. I left her a little girl in short dresses. In four years she had passed the delta

"Where the brook and river meet."

Girls and boys matured fast under the influences that had ripened her character.

It was a rare and lovely product which linked itself into the chain of my life, for the score of years beyond our reunion. To say that her companionship was a comfort and joy unspeakable, that summer, would be to describe feebly what her coming brought into my existence. The burden of solicitudes and suspense, of actual bereavement and dreads of the morrow's happenings, slid from my shoulders, as Christian's pack from him at the Cross. I grew young again.

My third baby-girl, Virginia Belle, was ten days old when my liberated brother was added, like a beautiful clasp, to the golden circle of our reunited family. He came directly to us, and lingered [406] longer than I had dared expect, for recuperation, and for enjoyment of the society from which he had been so long exiled.

A pretty love-story, the initial chapters of which had been rudely broken into by the war, was resumed and continued at this visit. That the girl-friend who had grown into a sister's place in our home and affections, should marry my dearest brother, was a dream too fair of complexion and too symmetrical in proportions, to be indulged under conditions that had prevailed since his visit to Newark, almost five years ago. Yet this was the vision that began to define itself into a blessed reality, by the time the soldier-returned-from-the-war packed the outfit of civilized and civilian clothing—the getting-together of which had been one ostensible excuse for extending the visit—and took his way southward.

It was a divine breathing-spell for us and for the country—that summer of peace and plenty.

For three years past, we had spent each July and August in a roomy farm-house among the Jersey hills. For the first season, we were the only boarders. Then, perhaps because we boasted somewhat too freely of the healthfulness of the region, and the excellent country fare set before us by good Mrs. Blauvelt, the retreat from malaria and mosquitoes became too popular for our comfort. When there were three babies, a nurse, a visiting sister, our two selves, and a horse, to be accommodated, we found the once ample quarters too strait for us.

For baby Belle's sake we migrated late in June of this year. We were discussing the seriousness of the problem consequent upon a growing family, as we drove up a long hill, one July day, Alice on a cricket between us in the foot of the buggy, when an exclamation from my husband stopped a sentence in the middle. He drew the horse to a sudden halt.

Woodmen were busy with destructive axes upon a body of native trees at the left of our road. [407] They had opened to our sight a view heretofore hidden by the wood. A lake, blue and tranquil as the heavens it mirrored; green slopes, running down to the water; wooded heights, bordering the thither banks, and around, as far as the eye could reach, mountains, benignant in outline and verdant to their summits, billowing, range beyond range, against the horizon—why had we never seen this before? It was like a section of the Delectable Mountains, gently lowered from Bunyan's Beulah Land, and set down within thirty miles of the biggest city in America.

The rapt silence was ended by one word from my companion:

"Alabama!"

He passed the reins into my hands, and leaped over the wheel. Making his way down the hill, he stopped to talk with the workmen for ten minutes. Then he came back, held up a hand to help me out of the carriage, and lifted "Brownie" in his arms. Next, he tied the horse to a tree, and, saying to me—"Come!" led the way to the lake.

We bought the tract, in imagination, and decided upon the site of our cottage, in the next half-hour. On the way home we called upon the owner of the tract, paid a hundred dollars down to bind the bargain, and left orders that not another tree was to be felled until further notice.

It would have been expecting too much of human nature had we been required to go back to the farm-house dinner, without driving again by "Our Land." The happy silence of the second survey culminated in my declaration and the instant assent of my companion to the same:

"And we will name it '*Sunnybank*'!"

# XLII

## A CHRISTMAS REUNION—A MIDNIGHT WARNING—HOW A GOOD MAN CAME TO "THE HAPPIEST DAY OF HIS LIFE"

[408]

"Skies bright, and brightening!" was the clan watchword, in passing along the summons for a rally in the old home at Christmas-time, 1866, that should include three generations of the name and blood.

On Sunday, December 23d, we attended church in a body, in morning and afternoon. Not one was missing from the band except my brother Herbert, whose professional duties detained him over Sunday. He was pledged to be with us early on Monday morning.

That evening, we grouped about the fire in the parlor, a wide circle that left room for the babyest of the party to disport themselves upon the rug, in the glow of the grate piled with cannel coal. My father, entering last of all, stooped to pick up a granddaughter and kiss her, in remarking:

"I had intended to go down to hear Doctor Moore to-night. I am very fond of him as man and preacher. But"—a comprehensive glance around the room, pointing the demurrer—"you look so comfortable here that I am tempted to change my mind."

A chorus of entreaties broke forth. It had been so long since we had had—"all of us together—a Sunday evening at home; there was so much to talk of; Christmas was so near; the night was damp and raw; there would be snow by ten o'clock," etc.—all in a breath, until the dear man put [409] his hands to his ears, ready to promise anything and everything, for the sake of peace.

This was before supper, a jolly meal, over which we lingered until the mothers of the company had to hustle the younglings off to bed by the time we left the table.

Returning to the drawing-room after hearing my girls' prayers, and assuaging their impatience at the lagging flight of time, by telling them that, in twenty-two hours more, they would be hanging up their stockings, I found my father alone. He stood on the rug, looking down into the scarlet depths of the coals, his hands behind him and his head bent—in thought, not in sadness, for he turned a bright face to me as my voice awoke him from his revery:

"'A penny for your thoughts!'"

I said it gayly, laying my hand on his shoulder. He turned his cheek to meet it.

"My thoughts were running upon what has kept them busy all day. I suppose I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but I lost one 'head' of Doctor Hoge's sermon this afternoon. I was thinking of—*my children!*"

His voice sank into a tender cadence it seldom took. He was reckoned an undemonstrative man, and he had a full strain of the New England Puritan in his blood.

I waited to steady my own voice before asking, softly, "And what of them, father?"

The query was never answered. The opening door let in a stream of happy humanity—mother, brothers, and sisters—Mea and her husband, Horace and Percy, Myrtle and her *fiancé*, "Will" Robertson, who would, ere long, be one of us in fact, as he was now in heart. They were full of Christmas plans and talk. Among other items one was fixed in my memory by subsequent events. In consequence of the intervention of Sunday, the business of decorating the house had to be postponed until Monday. The evergreens were to be sent in from the country early on the [410] morrow. Percy reported that the snow had begun to fall. If the roads were heavy by morning, would the countryman who had promised a liberal store of running cedar, pine, and juniper, in addition to the Christmas-tree, keep his word?

"I will see that the evergreens are provided," my father laid the disquiet by saying. "There will be no harm in engaging a double supply."

Then Mea went to the piano, and we had the olden-time Sunday-evening concert, all the dear old hymns we could recall, among them two called for by our father:

"God moves in a mysterious way,"

and,

"There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To weary wanderers given;
There is a joy for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast,—
'Tis found alone in Heaven!"

We sang, last of all, *The Shining Shore*, and talked of the time when the composer set the MS. upon the piano-rack, with the ink hardly dried upon the score, and trial was made of the music in that very room—could it be just eleven years ago?

My father left us as the clock struck ten. My mother lingered half an hour later. We all knew, although none of us spoke of it, that he liked to have a little time for devotional reading on Sunday evening, before he went to bed. He had not demitted the habit in fifty-odd years, yet I doubt if he had ever mentioned, even to his wife, why he kept it up and what it meant to him.

Our mother told me afterward that when she joined him in their chamber, the Bible was still open on the stand before him. He closed it at her entrance and glanced around, a smile of serene happiness lighting up his face. [411]

"We have had a delightful Sunday!" he observed. "It is like renewing my youth to have all the children about us once more."

He had had his breakfast and gone down-town, when we came into the dining-room next morning. At my exclamation of regretful surprise, our mother told us how he had hurried the meal for himself, pleading that he had much to attend to that forenoon. The snow was not deep, but it was sodden by the fine rain that had succeeded it toward the dawn of the gray December day, and he feared the evergreens might not be forthcoming.

"I shall send a couple of carts into the country at once," were his parting words. "I would not have the children disappointed for ten times the worth of the evergreens."

It was to be a busy morning with us all. As soon as breakfast was dispatched, the long table—pulled out to its utmost limit to accommodate the tribe—was cleared of dishes, plates, and cloth, and we fell to tying up parcels for the tree, sorting *bonbons*, and other light tasks. Mince-pies, concocted according to the incomparable recipe handed down from mother to daughter, in the Montrose and Olney families, for a century-and-a-half, had been baked last week, and loaded the pantry-shelves. My mother's unsurpassable crullers, superintended by herself at Christmas, and at no other season, were packed away in stone jars; and, that no distinctive feature of Yule-tide might be missing from the morrow's dinner, the whitest, plumpest, tenderest sucking pig the market could offer, lay at length in a platter in the store-room. Before he could go into the oven, he would be buttered from nose to toes, and coated with bread-crumbs. When he appeared on the table, he would be adorned with a necklace of sausages, cranberries would fill out the sunken eyes, and a lemon be thrust into his mouth. A mammoth gobbler, fattened for the occasion, would support him at the other end of the board. [412]

I had offered last Friday to make pumpkin-pies—the genuine New England brand, such as my father had eaten at Thanksgiving in the Dorchester homestead.

The colored cooks could not compass the delicacy. He had sent home four bouncing pumpkins on Saturday, and two had been pared, eviscerated, and stewed. I sat at the far end of the table, beating, seasoning, and tasting. My mother was filling candy-bags at the other, when Myrtle rallied her upon not tasting the confectionery, of which she was extravagantly fond.

"Mother is saving up her appetite for the Christmas pig!" she asserted.

"I never eat sweets when I have a headache," was the answer. "I did not sleep well last night."

This led to her account of a "queer fright" she had had at midnight, or thereabouts. Awakened from her first sound sleep by the unaccountable thrill of alarm each of us has felt, in the impression that some one or something that has no right to be there, is in the darkened chamber, she lay still with beating heart and listened for further proof of the intrusion. In a few minutes she heard a faint rustle that ran from the farthest window toward her bed, and passed to the door leading into the hall. Thoroughly startled, she shook my father's shoulder and whispered to him that there was some one in the room. He sprang up, lighted the gas, and made a thorough search of the chamber and the dressing-room. The door was locked, and, besides themselves, there was no occupant of the apartment. He had fallen asleep again, when she heard the same rustling noise, louder and more definite than before. There was no mistaking the direction of the movement. It began at the window, swept by the bed, and was lost at the door. The terrified wife again awoke her husband, and he made the round a second time, with the same result as before. [413]

When the mysterious movement seemed to brush her at the third coming, she aroused her companion in an agony of nervousness:

"I am terribly ashamed of my foolishness," she told him, shivering with nameless fears; "but there really is something here, now!" He was, as I have said in a former part of my true story, usually so intolerant of nervous whimsies that we forbore to express them in his hearing. He had mellowed and sweetened marvellously within the last few years, as rare vintages are sure to ripen. Arising now, with a good-humored laugh, he made a third exploration of the premises, and with no better result. When he lay down again, he put his hand affectionately upon my mother's arm with a soothing word:

"I will hold *you* fast! You are the most precious thing in the house. Neither burglar nor bogie shall get you."

"What was it?" we asked.

"Oh, probably the wind blowing the shade, or making free with something else that was loose. It was a stormy night. We agreed, this morning, that it must have been that."

She spoke carelessly, and we took the incident as little to heart. Passing through the hall,

awhile later, I espied my maid Ellen, who had lived with me for five years, whispering with a mulatto woman in a corner. They fell apart at seeing me, and Ellen followed me to the sitting-room.

“Rhoda was saying that the colored people think what happened last night was a warnin’,” she observed, with affected lightness. “They are awful superstitious, ma’am, ain’t they?”

“Very superstitious and very ignorant!” I returned, severely. [414]

The trifling episode was gone, like a vapor passing from a mirror, before my brother Herbert appeared. He had arisen at daybreak, driven to Petersburg, and taken there the train to Richmond, arriving by nine o’clock.

At the same hour our father reached his office. I have heard the story of his walk down-town so minutely described that I can trace each step. It was more than a mile from his house to the office. There were no street-cars or omnibuses in the city, at that time. Sometimes he drove to his place of business; sometimes he rode on horseback. Generally, he chose to walk. He was a fine horseman and a fearless driver, from his youth up. At sixty-eight he carried himself as erect as at thirty, and made less of tramping miles in all weathers than men of half his age thought of pacing a dozen squares on a sunny day. As he had reminded his wife, in excusing his hurried breakfast, there were errands, many and important, to be looked after. He stopped at Pizzini’s, the noted confectioner of the town, to interview that dignitary in person, anent a cake of noble proportions and brave with ornate icing—Christmas fruit-cake—of Pizzini’s own composition, for which the order was given a week ago. To the man of sweets he said that nothing must hinder the delivery of the cake beyond that evening.

“We are planning a royal, old-fashioned family Christmas,” he subjoined, “and there must be no disappointments.”

The evergreens were ordered as stringently. Two cart-loads, as he had said, and two more Christmas-trees, in case one was not satisfactory. “There must be no disappointments.”

Not far from Pizzini’s he met Doctor Haxall, also “Christmasing.” The two silver-haired men shook hands, standing in the damp snow on the corner, and exchanged the compliments of the season. [415]

“What has come to you?” queried the doctor, eying his friend curiously. “You are renewing your youth. You have the color, the step, and the eyes of a boy!”

“Doctor!” letting his hand drop upon the other’s shoulder, “to-morrow will be the happiest day of my life! After four terrible years of war and separation, I am to have in the old home all my children and grandchildren—a united and loving family. It will be the first time in eight years! My cup runneth over!”

He strode into his office with the springing step that had brought him all the long mile and a half; spoke cheerily to two or three employees who were on hand; remarked upon the weather, and his confidence that we would have a fine day to-morrow, and laid aside his overcoat and hat. Then he stepped to the outer door to issue an order to two colored men standing there, began to speak, put his hand to his head, and fell forward. The men caught him, saved him from falling, and supported him to a chair. He pointed to the door, and spoke one word:

“Horace!”

My brother was his partner in business, and he could not be far away. The messenger met him within a short distance of the door. The dulling eyes brightened at sight of him; with an inarticulate murmur, the stricken man raised his hand to his head, to indicate the seat of pain, leaned back upon the strong young arms that held him, and closed his eyes.

He was still breathing when they brought him home. Doctor Haxall had galloped on ahead of the carriage containing him and the attendants, to prepare us measurably for what was coming. The unconscious master of the home was brought through the hall between banks of evergreens, delivered in obedience to his order issued but three hours earlier. Two tall Christmas-trees and three wagon-loads of running cedar, pine, and spruce heaped the floor, and were pushed aside hastily by the servants to make way for the mournful procession. [416]

He did not speak or move after they laid him upon his own bed.

One more hour of anguished waiting, and we knew that he had entered upon the “happiest day of his life.”

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[417]

# XLIII

## TWO BRIDALS—A BIRTH AND A PASSING—“MY LITTLE LOVE”—“DRIFTING OUT”—A NONPAREIL PARISH

In October, 1867, I had the great happiness of seeing my favorite brother married to the woman he had loved so long and so faithfully that the marriage was the fitting and only sequel

the romance of the Civil War could have. From the day of our coming to Newark, she, who was now my sister, then a school-girl, had established herself in our hearts. She was my sister Alice's most intimate friend, and, after Alice left us, glided into the vacant place naturally. With the delicacy and discretion characteristic of a fine and noble nature, she never, during those dreary years of separation and silence, alluded, in her talks with me, to the tacit "understanding" existing between herself and my brother. When he visited us immediately upon his liberation from Fort Delaware, it was evident that both of the unacknowledged lovers took up the association where it had been severed four years ago.

They were wedded on October 5th. The next day Mr. (now "Doctor") Terhune, the three little girls, and myself, with their nurse, took the train for Richmond to assist in the preparations for the marriage of Myrtle and "Will" Robertson. The newly wedded pair returned from their bridal tour in season to witness the second marriage, on October 17th.

On February 4, 1869, my little Myrtle opened her beautiful eyes upon the world in which she was to have an abiding-place for so short a time that the fast, bright months of her sojourn are as [418] a dream to me at this distance from that spring and summer. She was a splendid baby, finely developed, perfect in feature, as in form, and grew so rapidly in size and strength that my fashionable friends pointed to her as a lively refutation of my theory that "bottle babies" were never so strong as those who had their natural nourishment. A tedious spell of intermittent fever that laid hold of me, when she was but two months old, deprived her of her rightful nutriment. When she was four months old, we removed for the summer to Sunnybank, and set aside one cow expressly for her use. She throve gloriously until, in September, dentition sapped her vitality, and, as I had dreaded might ensue upon the system of artificial feeding, none of the various substitutes for nature's own provision for the young of the human race, were assimilated by the digestive organs. On the last day of the month she passed into safer hands than ours.

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I have told the story of our Alice's wonderful life in *My Little Love*. Now that my mind and nerves have regained a more healthful tone than they could claim during the months when I found a sad solace in the portraiture of our lost darling, I cannot trust myself to dwell at length upon the rich endowments of mind and heart that made the ten-year-old girl the idol of her home, and a favorite with playmates and acquaintances. Although thirty-five years have set that beautiful life among the things of a former generation, I still meet those who recollect and speak of her as one might of a round and perfect star.

We, her parents, knew her for what she was, while she was spared to glorify our home. Once and again, we congratulated ourselves that we comprehended the value of our treasure while we held it—did not wait for the brightening of the fleeting blessing. When He who bestowed the [419] good and perfect gift recalled her to Himself, we thanked Him, from the sincere depths of broken hearts, that He had deemed us worthy to keep it for Him for almost eleven years.

She went from us January 1, 1874.

By the time the spring opened, repeated hemorrhages from lungs I had been vain enough to believe were exceptionally strong, had reduced me to a pitiable state of weakness.

If I have not spoken, at every stage of the narrative of these late years, of the unutterable goodness of Newark friends and parishioners, it is not that this had abated in degree, or weakened in quality. In all our afflictions they bore the part of comforters to whom our losses were theirs. Strong arms and hearts in our hours of weakness were ever at our call. When it became apparent that my health was seriously impaired, the "people," with one voice, insisted that Doctor Terhune should take a vacation of uncertain length, and go with me to the Adirondacks for as long a time as might be needed to restore me to health and vigor.

I had worked hard for the past five or six years. Besides my literary engagements, which were many, including the arrangement of material for, and publication of, *Common Sense in the Household*, I was deep in church and charitable work, and had a large visiting-list. Little account was made, at that date, of nervous prostration. I should have laughed that little to scorn had it been intimated by physician or friend that I was a victim to the disorder. I know now, to a certainty, that I was so near the "verge" that a touch would have toppled me over. My very ignorance of the peril may have saved me from the fall.

We were four months in the Adirondacks. Except that the sore lungs drew in the resinous airs [420] more freely than they had taken in the fog-laden salt air of the lowlands, and that I slept better, I could not discern any improvement in my condition when the shortening and cooling days called us southward.

In July, a telegram from Richmond had informed me of my mother's death. So battered and worn was I that the full import of the tidings did not reach my mind and heart, until my brother Herbert sought in the balsam forests relief from the cares of home and parish, and we talked together of our common loss in the quiet woods fringing the lake. I shall never forget the strange chill that froze my heart during one of these talks, when I bethought myself that I now belonged to the "passing generation." My mother's going had struck down a barrier which kept off the cold blast from the boundless Sea of Eternity. I could not shake off the fancy for many weeks. It recurred to me in wakeful midnights, and in the enforced rest succeeding toilful days, until it

threatened to become an obsession. Instead of accepting this and other, to me, novel and distressing sensations, as features of confirmed invalidism, I fought them with all the might of a will that was not used to submission.

The next winter was one of ceaseless conflict. I grew insanely sensitive on the subject of my failing health. When, after walking quickly up the stairs, or climbing the hill from the lower town to our home, a fit of coughing brought the blood to my lips, I stanched it with my handkerchief and kept the incident to myself. I went into a shop, or turned a corner, to avoid meeting any one who would be likely to question me as to my health, or remark upon my pallor. At home, the routine of work knew no break; I attended and presided at charitable and parish meetings, as if nervous prostration were a figment of the hypochondriacal imagination.

So well did I play the part to the members of my own household, that my husband himself [421]
believed me to be on the low, if not the high, road to recovery. He was as busy in his line as I pretended to be in mine, and certain projects affecting the future welfare of his parish were on foot, enlisting his lively interest. How far the pious deception may have gone, was not to be tested. The active intervention of one plain-spoken woman was the pivotal point of our two lives.

I mentioned, some chapters back, the call of one of my best friends and the best neighbor I ever had, on the day of Mr. Lincoln's death. Although we had removed, by medical advice, to the higher part of the city, and a full mile away from her home, she never relaxed her neighborly kindness. I had not been aware of her close surveillance of myself; still less did I suspect at what conclusion she had arrived. She had reasons, cogent and sad, for surveillance and conclusions. Several members of her own family had died of consumption, and she was familiar with the indications of the Great White Plague. When she came, day after day, to take me to drive at noon, when, as she phrased it, "the world was properly aired," and, when she could not come, sent carriage and coachman with the request that I would use the conveyance at pleasure—I was touched and a little amused at what was, I conceived, exaggerated solicitude for me, whose indisposition was only temporary. Meanwhile, her quick eyes and keen wits were busy. Not a change of color, not a flutter of the breath escaped her, and in the fulness of time she opened her mouth and spoke.

My husband had a habit, of many years' standing, of winding up a busy, harassing day by dropping into the home of our whilom neighbors, and having a tranquillizing cigar with the husband. I never expected him home before midnight when he did this, and on one particular [422]
evening, knowing that he was at the B.'s, and feeling more than usually fatigued, I went to bed at ten. Awakened, by-and-by, by the glare of a gas-burner full in my face, I unclosed my eyes upon a visage so full of anxiety, so haggard with emotion, that I started up in alarm.

"Don't be frightened!" he said, soothingly. "Nothing has happened. But, is it true that you are so ill as Mrs. B. would have me believe? And have I been blind?"

The energetic little lady had, as she confessed to me when I charged her with it, freed her burdened mind without reserve or fear:

"It was time somebody opened his eyes, and I felt myself called to do it."

Within twenty-four hours a consultation of physicians was held.

They, too, made no secret of their verdict. The apex of the right lung was gone, and it was doubtful whether anything could prevent the rapid waste of both. When Doctor Terhune, ever a stanch believer in the efficacy of change of air and place, declared his determination to take me abroad, without the delay of a month, two of the Galens affirmed that it would be of no use. I "had not three months of life left to me, under the most favorable circumstances."

The ghastly truth was withheld from me at the time. I was told that I must not spend another winter in Newark, and that we would, if possible, go to the south of Europe for the winter. "To go abroad" had been the dream of my life. Yet, under the anticipation of the labor and bustle of closing the house, perhaps breaking up our home for good, and going forth into a new world, my strength failed utterly. Now that my husband knew the worst, there was no more need of keeping up appearances. I became aware that I had, all along, been holding on to life with will-power that had no physical underpinning. Each day found me weaker and more spiritless. The idea that I [423]
was clinging to a shred of existence by a thinning thread, seized upon me like a nightmare. And I was tired! *tired!* TIRED!

There came a day when I resolved to let go and drift out.

That was the way I put it to my husband when he approached my bed, from which I never arose until nine or ten o'clock, and inquired how I felt.

"I am worn out, holding on!" I informed him. "I shall not get up to-day. All that is needed to end the useless fight is to let go and drift out. I shall drift!"

He sat down on the side of the bed and looked at me. Not gloomily, but thoughtfully. There was not a suspicion of sentimentality in the gaze, or in the tone in which he remarked, reflectively:

"I appreciate fully what you mean, and how hard it is for you to keep on living. And I say nothing of the inconvenience it would cause your girls and myself were you to die. It is asking a great deal of you—" (bringing out the words slowly and with seeming reluctance). "But if you *could* bring yourself to live until Bert is through college, it would be a great kindness all around.

The boy will go to the devil without his mother. Think of it—won't you? Just hold on until your boy is safely launched in life."

With that he left me to "think of it."

My boy! My baby! Just four years old, on my last birthday! The man-child, of whom I was wont to say proudly that he was the handsomest birthday gift I ever had, and that no young man could ever pay his mother a more delicate and gracious compliment than he had paid me in timing his advent upon December 21st. The baby that had Alice's eyes and brunette coloring! I lay still, staring up at the ceiling, and doing the fastest thinking I had ever accomplished. I saw the [424] motherless boy, sensitive and high-spirited, affectionate and clever, the butt of rude lads, and misinterpreted by brutish teachers; exposed to fiery temptations at school and in college, and yielding to them for the lack of a mother's training and the ægis of a mother's love.

"The boy will go to the devil without his mother!"

Hard words those, and curtly uttered, but they struck home as coaxings and arguments and pettings could not have done.

In half an hour my husband looked in upon me again. I intercepted remark or query by saying:

"Will you ring the bell for Rose to help me dress? I have made up my mind to hold on for a while longer."

The tactful ruse had given me a new lease of life.

One more circumstance connected with our first foreign trip may be worth mentioning here.

During the summer of 1855, which I spent in Boston and the vicinity, I consulted Ossian Ashley with regard to a project that had engaged my mind for some months—*viz.*, indulging my long-cherished desire to visit Europe, and to spend a year there. There was no reason, that I could see, why I should wait longer to put the plan into execution. My parents were living, and were in the prime of healthy maturity; I had plenty of money of my own, and, if I had not, my father would cheerfully defray the expenses of the trip. We discussed the scheme at length, and with growing zest. Then he made the proposition that his wife should accompany me, taking her boy and girl along (she had but two children then), and that he would join us in time to journey with us for a few months, and bring us home.

With this well-digested scheme in my mind, I returned to Richmond. There I met with strenuous opposition from an unexpected quarter:

"If you will stay at home and marry me, I guarantee to take you abroad within seven years," [425] was one of the few promises the speaker ever broke to me.

Just twenty-one years from the day in which Ossian Ashley and I blocked out the route his wife and I would take on the other side, I looked into his New York office to say that we had engaged passage for Liverpool for October 15th, and that we expected to be absent for two years at the least.

His look was something to be remembered. His son was in a Berlin University, and Mrs. Ashley and her two young daughters would sail on September 15th for Liverpool, intending to go thence to Germany. They would remain there for two years.

On the morrow, we had a letter from him, notifying us that they had exchanged the date of sailing for October 15th, and the boat for the *City of Berlin*, in which we were to sail.

"A trifling delay of twenty-one years!" observed my husband, philosophically. "If all human projects came as near prompt fulfilment as that, there would be fewer grumblers."

We took with us our three children and my maid, who had been the boy's nurse. In *Loiterings in Pleasant Paths*, written in part while we sojourned abroad, she figures as "The Invaluable." Never was title more justly earned. In that book the events of the next two years are recorded at greater length than they could be set down here.

I made no note there of the pain that seemed to pluck out our heartstrings, consequent upon our parting with our Newark parish and fellow-citizens. We had grown with the place, which was a mere village, eighteen years ago, by comparison with the large city we left. Her interests were ours. Doctor Terhune was identified with her public and private enterprises, and known by sight and by reputation throughout the town and its environs. His church stubbornly refused to consider his resignation as final. He might have an indefinite leave of absence—two, four, six [426] years—provided he would engage to come to them when he could bring me back well. He wisely refused to listen to the proposal. The business quarter of the thriving city was encroaching upon the neighborhood of the church. It was likely to be abandoned as "a residential locality" within a few years. In which event, the removal of building and congregation would be a necessity. The history of such changes in the character of sections of fast-enlarging cities is familiar to all urbanites. It was essential, in the opinion of the retiring incumbent, that the church should select another pastor speedily, if it would retain its integrity and identity.

The love and loyalty that had enveloped us, like a vitalizing atmosphere, for almost a score of winters and summers, wrapped us warmly to the last. There were public receptions and private house-parties, by the dozen, and

“Partings such as press
The life from out the heart,”—

and a gathering on the steamer on sailing-day that made us homesick in anticipation of the actual rending of ties that were living flesh and blood—and we were afloat.

As one of the leading men in the church shook my husband’s hand, in leaving the deck, he pressed into it an envelope. We were well down the bay when it was opened. It contained a supplementary letter of credit of three thousand dollars—the farewell gift of a few men whose names accompanied the token.

“Faithful to the end!” murmured the recipient, reading the short list through mists that thickened between his eyes and the paper. “Had ever another man such a parish?”

I answered “No!” then, emphatically.

My response would be the same to-day.

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# XLIV

[427]

## TWO YEARS OVERSEAS—LIFE IN ROME AND GENEVA

The main events of the two years spent abroad by our small family, including “The Invaluable,” as we soon came to call Rose O’Neill, are set down in *Loiterings in Pleasant Paths*, a chatty volume of travel and sojourn, published soon after our return to America. The private record of those two dozen months would far surpass the book in bulk. It will never be written except as it is stamped upon “the fleshly tables of the hearts” of those who lived and loved, studied, and revelled with us.

We had meant to pass the first winter in Paris, but the most beautiful city of the world was unfriendly to my sore and aching lung. After an experiment of six weeks, we broke camp and sped southward. Ten days in the fair Florence I was to learn in after years to love as a second home, repeated the doleful tale of fog, rain, and chill that pierced our bones.

An old Richmond friend, with whom I had had many a jolly frolic in my early girlhood, was now Reverend Doctor Taylor, a resident of Rome. After the exchange of several letters, we adopted his friendly advice that we should give the Eternal City a trial as the refuge we sought—so much less hopefully than at first, that I entreated my husband, on the rainy evening of our arrival in Rome, not to push inquiries further, but to let me go home, and die in comfort there.

[428]

Doctor Taylor had ordered rooms for us in a family hotel well spoken of by Americans, and was at the station to conduct us to our quarters.

I was deposited upon a sofa, when my wraps were removed, and lay there, fairly wearied out by the railway journey. The room was fireless and carpetless. I could feel the chill of the stone flooring and the bare walls through the blankets in which I was swathed by distressful Rose, who “guessed these Eyetalians hadn’t the first notion of what American comfort is!” Three long French casements afforded a full view of leaden, low-stooping skies and straight sheets of rain. When a fire of sticks, besmeared with resin, was coaxed into a spiteful flare, the smoke puffed as spitefully into the room, and drifted up to the ceiling twenty feet overhead. Invited by my ever-hospitable husband to seat himself near an apology for a cheery hearthstone—less pitiful to him after his ten years’ residence in Italy than to us, the new arrivals—our friend fell into social chat of ways and means. The carpet would be down to-morrow; the sun would shine to-morrow; I would be rested to-morrow.

He broke off with a genial laugh there, to impart a bit of information we were to prove true to the utmost during the next year:

“Everything is ‘*domano*’ with Italians. I think the babies are born with it in their mouths. One falls into the habit with mortifying ease.”

I am afraid I dozed for a few minutes, lulled by the patter of rain and the low-toned talk going on at the far (literally) side of the apartment. A lively visitor used to wonder if we “could see across it on cloudy days without an opera-glass.”

This was the next sentence that reached me:

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“Thus far, we have met with discouragement. March is the most trying month to weak lungs in America. And ever since we landed in Liverpool we have had nothing but March weather. I think now we shall push on to Algiers”—glancing ruefully at the murky windows. “Upon one thing I am determined—to find a land where there is no March, as we know the month. For one year I want to secure that for my wife’s breathing apparatus.”

“I know of but one such region.” The answer was in the slight drawl natural to the George Taylor I used to know; the speaker stared sombrely into the peevish fire.

“And that?” interrogated the other, eagerly.

The drawl had now a nasal touch befitting the question:

“‘No chilling winds, no poisonous breath
Can reach that healthful shore!’”

“Heavens and earth, man! *That* is just where I don’t want her to go yet! Nor for many a long year!”

The laugh I could not suppress helped to warm and brighten us all. Do any of us suspect how much we owe to the funny side of life?

Thus began my Roman winter. With “*domano*” came the sunshine and the carpet, and the first of the hundred drives in and about the storied city, that were to bring healing and vigor, such as even my optimistic husband had scarcely dared to anticipate. That I am alive upon this wonderful, beautiful earth at this good hour, I owe, under God, to those divine four months among the Seven Hills. Doctor Terhune had received the appointment to the Chaplaincy of the American Chapel in Rome before we left Paris. He decided to accept it within a week after our arrival in the Eternal City. It was a cosey corner for pastor and flock—that little church in Piazza Poli, belonging to an Italian Protestant corporation, and occupied by them for half of each Sunday, by American tourists and transient residents of Rome for the other half. All my memories of the wonderful and bewitching winter are happy. None have a gentler charm than those which renew the scenes of quiet Sunday forenoons when visitors from the dear home-land, who had [430] never before looked upon the faces of their fellow-worshippers, gathered by common consent in the place “where prayer was wont to be made” in their own tongue. There were no strangers in the assembly that lingered in the tiny vestibule and blocked the aisle when the service was over. The spirit of mutual helpfulness spoke in eye and speech. It should not have been considered singular that those thus convened were, almost without exception, refined and educated, and so unlike the commonly accepted type of travelling American, that we often commented upon the fact in conferences with familiar friends. We felicitated ourselves that we caught the cream of the flow of tourists, that season.

“It is a breath of the dear old home-life!” said more than one attendant upon the simple services, where the congregation was kaleidoscopic in outward seeming, the same in spirit.

I cannot pass over this period of our foreign life without a tribute to one whose friendship and able co-operation in the work laid to Doctor Terhune’s hand, did more than any other one influence to make for him a home in Rome. Dr. Leroy M. Vernon, who subsequently became Dean of the University of Syracuse, in New York State, was the rarest combination of strength and gentleness I have ever seen. He had been for some years resident in Rome; was an enthusiastic archæologist and art-student, speaking Italian with fluency and grace, and thoroughly *au fait* to the best literature of that tongue. From the beginning of their acquaintanceship, the two men fraternized heartily. In the ripening of liking into intimacy, they walked, rode, talked, and studied together. What the association was to the younger of the two, may be imagined by one who has had the privilege of close communion with a beloved comrade who held the key to the treasure- [431] house one has longed all his life to enter.

“The winter in Italy with Vernon was worth more to me than a course in the Academy of Fine Arts, combined with ten years of archæological lectures from experts,” was the testimony of the survivor, twenty years later, when the news of the dean’s death was brought to us.

They loved each other tenderly to the end of mortal companionship.

Who can doubt that it has been renewed in the City where eager minds are never checked by physical weakness, and aspiration is identical with fulfilment?

In mid-May, when the Pincio put on its beautiful garments in the purple flowering of the Judas-trees, and the tawny Tiber rolled between hills of living green, we turned our backs upon what those marvellous months had wrought into our own familiar dwelling-place, and took our sad, reluctant way to Florence. Five weeks there were varied by excursions to Fiesole, Bologna, and Venice. Our next move was to Lucerne. Leaving the children in care of “The Invaluable,” we ran up to Heidelberg, joining there our kinspeople, the Ashleys, and travelling with them leisurely over mountain and through pass, until we brought up in Geneva.

We were hardly settled, as we supposed for the season, in the bright little town of Calvin and Voltaire, when a summons came from the American Chapel in Paris for Doctor Terhune’s services, pending the absence of the regular incumbent in America, whither he had been summoned by the illness of his mother. We had no thought that the separation of the head from our transplanted family would be a matter of even a few weeks, whereas it lasted for four months. There was visiting back and fro; a reunion at Christmas under the massive crowns of mistletoe, such as grow nowhere else—not even in the Britain of the Druids—and a memorable [432] New-Year’s dinner at the Hôtel Metropole, arranged under American auspices, the chief pride of the feast being mince-pies, concocted by Yankee housewives, and misspelled among the French dishes on the gorgeously illuminated menus. In February, my eldest daughter and myself went to Paris for a fortnight—a tentative trip which proved beyond a question that the air of the city on the Seine was rank poison to the healing lungs. We hurried back to jolly, friendly Geneva, where I

could walk five miles *per diem* in air that was the very elixir of life to my system, physical, mental, and moral. Even the lusty winds from Mont Blanc, and the rough gales that lashed Lake Leman into yeasty ridges for a week at a time, wrought strength, instead of harm. That bodily strength grew apace was but one element in the fulness of content in which we basked throughout the eight months we spent in the lakeside city, behind which the Alps stood in sublime calmness that was in itself tonic and inspiration. We had a pleasant *appartement* in the *Pension Magnenat*, directly upon the quay. From our drawing-room windows we looked across the lake upon the Juras, capped with snow, and made beautiful exceedingly all day long, by changeful lights and shadows, reflected in the waters in opaline, prismatic hues we had never seen surpassed, even in Italy.

The American colony in Geneva has a stable reputation for intelligence and good-breeding. One expects to find these in university towns abroad, as at home. It may not have been unusually delightful that winter. Perhaps climate and health combined with our peaceful domestic life, to incline us to be more than satisfied with our social environment. Certain it is that the circle of congenial associates, that had widened to take us in, as a part of a harmonious corporate whole, was, to our apprehension, ideally charming. Everybody had some specific work or pursuit to [433]
explain his, or her residence in Geneva. The younger men were in the university, or in preparation for it, with “coaches”; the girls were studying French, German, and Italian, or painting from nature under such instructors as Madame Vouga, whose renown as a painter of wild flowers was international. We matrons had a reading-class, enlivened by the membership of our daughters, that met weekly at the house of some one of the party. To it we brought our easels, boards, and paint-boxes, our embroidery, or other fancy-work. One of the girls read aloud for two hours—history, biography, or essay—and at five o’clock what had been read was discussed freely over afternoon tea. A club of young people of both sexes read German, alternately with Italian and French plays, on Wednesday night, in my *salon*, I playing chaperon at my embroidery-frame at a side-table, and admitted to the merry chat that went around with coffee and cake, when the reading was concluded. Some of the members of that informal “Club” have made their mark in the large outer world since that care-free, all-satisfying sojourn in what we forgot to call an alien land, so happily did we blend with the classic influences, lapping us about so softly that we were never conscious of the acclimating process.

The tall youth, who submitted meekly (or gallantly) to correction of lingual lapses in his rendering of Molière or Wallenstein or Ariosto, from the girl at his elbow—revenging himself by a brisk fire of badinage in honest English after the books were closed—is an eminent metropolitan lawyer, whose income runs up well into the tens of thousands; another, a Berlin graduate, is the dignified dean of a law school attached to an American university; another is a college professor; another, a Genevan graduate, is rising in fame and fortune in an English city; one, beloved by all, completed a brilliant course at Harvard, and when hope and life were in their prime, laid his noble head down for his last sleep in Mount Auburn. The gay girls are staid matrons and mothers [434]
now, with sons and daughters of their own, as old as themselves were in that far-off, care-free time.

I have written “care-free” twice upon one page, and because I can conjure up no other phrase that so aptly describes what that veritable arbor on the Hill Difficulty we call “Life,” was to me. Household cares were an unknown quantity in the well-conducted pension. Our breakfast of French rolls, coffee, tea, boiled eggs, honey, and, for the younger children, creamy milk, was brought to our *salon* every morning. A substantial luncheon (the *déjeuner à la fourchette*) was served in the pension *salle à manger* at one, and a dinner of six or seven courses, at seven. Our fellow-guests were, for the most part, unobjectionable; a fair proportion were agreeable and desirable acquaintances. About one-third were Americans; another third were English; the rest were Italians, Germans, Russians, and French. A table at one end of the room was assigned to English-speaking boarders, and we soon made up a pleasant clique that did not, however, exclude several foreigners. Thus we persisted in calling them to ourselves. There were excursions every few days to places of interest within easy reach. Coppet, the home and burial-place of Madame de Staël; the Villa Diodati, where Byron and Shelley lived and wrote; Ferney the château from which Voltaire wrote letters to the magnates of the world, and within the walls of which he entertained all the famous wits and many of the beauties of his stirring times; Chillon, immortalized by Bonnivard and the poem founded upon his captivity—were some of the memorable haunts with which frequent visits made us familiar.

Exercise was a luxury in the ozone-fraught air, fresh every morning, and work was the natural result of the abounding vitality thus engendered. In no other quarter of the globe have I found [435]
such sustained vigor of mental and physical forces as during our residence in Switzerland. I record the fact gratefully, and as a possible helpful suggestion to other sufferers from the overstimulating climate and prevalent energy of American life. Rome was a gracious rest; Geneva was upbuilding.

It was a positive wrench to the heartstrings to leave her in May, and take our course leisurely northward.

The summer was given, and happily, to England, our headquarters being, successively, the Isle of Wight, Leamington, and Brighton.

Late in September, we sailed for New York.

# XLV

## SUNNYBANK—A NEW ENGLAND PARISH—“MY BOYS”—TWO “STARRED” NAMES

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With no more idea as to our permanent abiding-place than had the Father of the Faithful, when he turned his back upon Ur of the Chaldees, and his face toward a land he knew not of, “still journeying toward the south,” in obedience to daily marching orders—we sought, upon reaching our native shores, the one *pied-à-terre* left to us on the continent.

Sunnybank had been left in charge of the gardener, who, with his comely English wife and four children, had now occupied the lodge at the gate of our domain for ten years. He was Pompton-born and bred, and so unromantic in sentiment and undemonstrative in demeanor, that we were not prepared to behold a triumphal wreath on the gate when we drove into the grounds. No human creature was visible until, winding through the grove that hides the house from the highway, we saw the whole family collected about the door. All were in holiday garb; wreaths of goldenrod hung in the windows, and above the porch was tacked a scroll with the word “Welcome” wrought upon it in the same flowers. Yet more amazed were we when, as Doctor Terhune stepped from the carriage, Conrad knelt suddenly and embraced the knees of his employer, with an inarticulate shout of joy, tears raining down his tanned cheeks.

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“Just like a scene in an English play!” commented Christine, afterward. “But not a bit like what one would expect in Pompton, New Jersey, U. S. A.”

The unexpectedness of it all, especially the involuntary outbreak in a man who had never seen a play in his life, and despised “foolishness” of whatsoever description, moved us to answering softness, and brought the first rush of home-gladness we had felt since landing. For, to be honest, I confess that none of us were as yet reconciled to exchanging the life we had luxuriated in for the past two years—full, rich, and varied—for a toilful routine of parish duties, we knew not where. Without confiding the weakness to the others, each of us, as we owned subsequently with a twinge of shame, had been wofully dashed in spirit by the circumstances attending our arrival. Clarence Ashley had met us upon the wharf, his mother and sisters being at their country-place; the day was unseasonably warm for late September, and New York was in its least attractive out-of-season dress and mood. The docks were dirty, and littered with trunks, crates, and boxes; the custom-house officers were slow, and most of them sulky. We parted on the wharf with a dear friend from Virginia, who had travelled with us for nearly a year, and had taken return passage in the same ship. She had a home to which to go. We felt like pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land. As the carriage into which we had packed ourselves threaded its way through the grimy purlieus of the lower city, I found myself saying over mentally the unpatriotic doggerel I used to declare was unworthy of any true American:

“The streets are narrow and the buildings mean—
Did I, or fancy, leave them broad and clean?”

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Then, the fields and roads past which the train (yclept “an accommodation”) bumped and swung, were ragged and dusty; the hedge-rows were unkempt, the trees untrimmed. Fresh as we were from the verdure of English parks, the shaven lawns, and blossoming hedges that make a garden-spot of the tight little island we proudly recognized as our Old Home, the effect of that sultry afternoon was distinctly depressing. Our lakeside cottage, the one nook in all the broad land we could call “Home,” on this side of the water, was another disappointment. Mrs. Haycock and her girls had wrought zealously to make it comfortable, and even festive. The wee rooms (as they looked to us) were shining clean; flowers were set here and there, white curtains, white bedspreads, and bright brasses betokened loving solicitude for our welfare and contentment, and the good woman had ready a hot supper, enriched with such Pompton dainties as she knew we loved. “The Invaluable” bustled over luggage, and added finishing touches to bedrooms and nursery. I am sure she was the only one of the returned exiles who was really happy that night.

I am thus frank in relating our experiences, because I believe them to be identical with those of a majority of tourists, upon resuming home-habits in their native country. After excitement and novelty comes the ebb-tide of reaction for the bravest and the most loving. Home is home, but readjustment precedes real enjoyment of the old scenes and ways.

We were hardly settled in the nest before we paid a promised visit to Richmond. There were resident there, now, three families of the clan. My brother Horace and the noble wife with whom my intimacy continued unshadowed by a cloud of distrust until her death in 1894; my sister Myrtle, more my daughter than sister, her husband, and the boy who was my husband’s namesake; and Percy, the youngling of the brood, with a dainty little spouse and their first-born son—made up the group that welcomed us to dear old Richmond in early December.

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To this was added, a week or so later, our eldest sister, who journeyed all the way from her Missouri home to join in the greetings to the whilom wanderers. We had one more Christmas-week together—the last that was to collect the unbroken band under one roof-tree. Then Mea went westward, and we took our way toward the north, leaving Christine to make her début in society under the auspices of her uncles and aunts, and where her mother had first tasted the pleasures of young-ladyhood.

It was, as I wrote to her, history repeating itself, and that I felt as if I had taken root again in my native soil, and was budding anew into a second springtime.

In May I wrote to the girl whose first winter "out" had, thanks to the affectionate adoption of uncles and aunts, fulfilled her rosiest dreams:

> "Do you recollect that I quoted to you at our parting in January, what a quaint old lady said to me in my girlhood: 'My dear, you may be an angel some day! You will never be young again. Therefore, make the most of youth.'
>
> "I paraphrase her counsel now, and to you: Make the most of your present freedom, for you are going to be a pastor's daughter again. As you know, your father has been preaching hither and yon all winter, and has had four calls to as many different churches: two in New Jersey, one in New Haven, and, lastly, in Springfield, Massachusetts. For reasons that seem good and sufficient to him, he has accepted the last-named invitation, and he will enter upon the duties connected therewith, this month.
>
> "The 'Old First' is the most ancient church in Springfield, if not the oldest in the Connecticut Valley. It has had an honorable history, in more than two hundred years of existence. If you have read Doctor Holland's *Bay Path*, you will recollect Mr. Moxon, the then pastor of this church. Perhaps because I have read the book, and maybe because my old Massachusetts grandmother (a Puritan of the Puritans, and preciously uncomfortable to live with, she was!) talked to me of the straitlaced notions, works, and ways of the [440]
> 'orthodox' New-Englander, which she thought 'blazed' the only road to heaven—I have an idea that we will find the atmosphere of Springfield very different from any other in which we have lived. If I am right, it will be a change even from Presbyterian Richmond. However this may be, I counsel you to enjoy the remaining weeks of your stay there to the utmost."

If I were called upon to describe what was the real "atmosphere" of the loveliest of New England towns, in which we lived for five busy years, I should say that it was "stratified," and that in a fashion that puzzled us grievously up to the latest day of our sojourn. Public spirit of the best and most enlightened sort; refinement and taste in art and literature; social manners and usages that were metropolitan, and neighborliness which made the stranger and sojourner welcome and at ease—all this was "shot," if I may so express it, with strata of bigotry; with stubborn convictions that the holders thereof were right, and the insignificant residue of the world utterly wrong, and with primitive modes of daily life and speech, that never ceased to surprise and baffle us. Yet we flattered ourselves that we knew something of the world and the inhabitants thereof!

In the process of acclimation we had occasion, if we had never had it before, to be thankful for the unfailing and robust sense of humor that had stood our friend in many straits which would else have been annoyances. Before long, we recognized that certain contradictory phases of conduct and language, hard to comprehend and hard to endure, had their keynote in what one of the best of my new friends once aptly defined to me as "an agony of incommunicableness," inherent in the New-Englander's composition. He may have drawn the strain through nearly three centuries from his early English ancestry. I have seen the same paradox in the Briton of this generation. Of one such man I said, later in life, when I was alone with my sick son, [441]
thousands of miles from home: "The ice was slow in breaking up; but it gave way all at once, and there was warm water under it."

"Agony of incommunicableness!" Over and over, during those five years, I blessed the man who put that key into my hand.

I cannot better illustrate what I am trying to explain than by relating what is, to me, one of the most precious and altogether satisfactory memories connected with our Springfield experiences.

Four months after our removal to the beautiful city, I received a formal request (everything up to that time had a smack of formality to my apprehension) that I would take charge of a young men's Bible-class, the teacher of which had left the town. The application was startling, for not one of the young fellows had ever called on me, or evinced other consciousness of the insignificant fact of my existence than was implied in a grave salutation at the church-door and on the street. After consultation with my husband I accepted the position, and on the next Sabbath was duly inducted into office by the superintendent. That is, he took me to the door of the class-room and announced: "Mrs. Terhune, young gentlemen, who will conduct your class in the place of Mr. L., resigned."

I walked up the room to face eight bearded men, the youngest twenty-two years of age, drawn up in line of battle at the far end. I bowed and said "Good-afternoon," in taking the seat and table set for me in front of the line. They bowed in silence. I began the attack by disclaiming the idea of "teaching" them, concealing as best I could my consternation at finding men where I had looked for lads. I asked "the privilege of studying with them," and thanked them for the compliment of the invitation to do this. Then I opened the Bible and delivered a familiar running lecture upon [442]
the lesson for the day. Not a question was asked by one of the dumb eight, and not a comment was made at the close of the "exercises" upon what had been said. I went through the miserable form of shaking hands with them all as we separated, and carried home a thoroughly discouraged

spirit. By the following Sunday I hit upon the idea of calling upon each student to read a reference text, as it occurred in the course of the lecture, and I took care there should be plenty of them. That was the first crack in the ice. Encouraged by the sound of their own voices, the young fellows put a query or two, and I used these as nails upon which to hang observations not indicated in the "lesson-papers." Next week there were sixteen in line. Before the first year was out there were forty, and they gave a dramatic entertainment in a neighboring hall, which netted a sum large enough to enlarge the class-room to double the original size. They decorated it with their own hands, and I was with them every evening thus employed.

Still, there was never a syllable to indicate that this was anything but a business venture. I love boys with my whole heart, and I had said this and more in their hearing, eliciting no response.

At the end of the second year, when there were fifty members in the class, one of the eldest of the number removed from Springfield to a distant city. One of the greatest surprises of my life was in the form of a letter I had the week after he had bidden me good-bye as coolly as if he had expected to see me next Sunday as usual.

He began by telling me how often he had wished he could express what those Sunday afternoons had been in his life. He "feared that I might have thought him unresponsive and ungrateful."

"If indeed you ever troubled yourself to bestow more than a passing thought upon this one of the many to whom you have ministered," he went on, "I don't believe you ever noticed that I let [443] nobody else take the seat next to you on the left? I used to go very early to make sure of it. I shall unite with the church here next Sunday. You have a right to know of a purpose, formed weeks ago, in that class-room—the most sacred spot to me on earth."

He wrote to me of his marriage two years later, then of the coming of his first-born son. About once a year I heard from him, and that he was prospering in business and happy in his home. Ten years ago I had a paper containing a marked obituary-notice bearing his name.

The same story, with variations that do not affect the general purport of the class-history, might be repeated here. I hear of "my boys" from all parts of the world. All are gray-haired now who have not preceded their grateful leader to the Changeless Home.

There were sixty-six of them when I told them, one Sunday afternoon, five years after our first meeting, that Doctor Terhune had accepted a pressing call to a Brooklyn church, and that I must leave them. The news was absolutely unexpected, and a dead silence ensued. Then one fellow, who had been received into the church with ten others of our class, at the preceding communion season, arose in his place:

"Is there anything *we* could do to keep him—and you?" he asked, huskily. "Has anybody done anything to make your residence here unpleasant? If so"—stammering now, and a defiant scowl gathering upon his handsome face—"Say! can't we fellows just *clean them out*, and keep you and the Doctor?"

It was impossible not to laugh. It was as impossible to hold back the tears at the odd demonstration of the "boys'" claim to membership in the Church Militant. He may have forgotten the upgushing of the warm water under the ice. I shall never lose the memory.

Nor yet of the farewell reception to which the boys rallied in force, excluding all other guests [444] from the pleasant class-room we had built, and in which I spent some of the happiest hours vouchsafed to me in the city I had called "a cold-storage vault," before I got under the ice of English reserve and Puritanical self-consciousness—engendered, as I am fain to believe, by the rigid self-examination enjoined by the founders of State and Church. In those rude and strenuous days, self-examination took the place, with tortured, naked souls, of the penances prescribed in the communion they had left to find

"Freedom to worship God,"

and

"A church without a bishop,
A state without a king."

The class-room was wreathed with flowers; there was music by the boys, and social chat; a collation of their own devising: then the eldest of the band, a married man for years, goodly of form and feature, and with a nature as lovely as his face, arose to make a farewell "presentation address." He never finished it, although it began bravely enough. The handsome set of brasses he passed over to me were labelled, as he showed me, "From Your Boys."

"You will have another class in your new home," the speaker broke into the carefully prepared peroration to say, "but please let us always call ourselves, 'Your Boys!'"

They are that still, and they will be evermore! A finer, more loyal body of young men it would be hard to find in New England, or elsewhere. It has happened so often that I have come to look for it, that, on steamer or train, on the street or in hotel, I am accosted by a middle-aged man—invariably highly respectable in appearance—with—

“I beg your pardon. Let me recall myself to your memory. I belonged to your Bible-class in Springfield.”

If, as usually happens, he adds to his name, “One of your boys”—the ashes are blown away from the embers of long-past acquaintanceship. The talk that ensues invariably emphasizes the pleasing fact that, if there were a black sheep in our fold, he has, up to date, escaped detection. [445]

God bless each and every one of them!

I cannot close the chapter that has to do with our Springfield days, without paying a brief tribute to two who played important parts in the drama of our family life. Both have passed from mortal vision, and I may, therefore, name them freely.

The house built for us by a parishioner in the pleasantest part of the city, was in the immediate neighborhood of the homestead of the late Samuel Bowles, the well-known proprietor of the *Springfield Republican*. The house was now occupied by his widow and family. To the warm friendship that grew up between Mrs. Bowles and myself I owe more than I can trust my pen to express here. From our earliest meeting, the “middle wall of partition” of strangerhood ceased to be to either of us. Hers, as I often reminded her, was the one and only house in the place into which I could drop, between the lights, unannounced, when the humor seized me, and without putting on hat or coat. The ascent of the half-block of space dividing our doors is ever associated in my mind with the gloaming and moonlight, and slipping away from duties to relax thought and tongue, for one calming and sweetening half-hour, in the society of one “who knew.” It was not alone that, as one who had been born, and had lived out her girlhood in the Middle States, her range of ideas and sympathies was not limited by the circle of hills binding Springfield into a close corporation. Her great, warm heart took in the homesick stranger that I was, for many a month after transplantation, and gave me a corner of my very own. She was a safe, as well as an appreciative listener, and gave me many a hint respecting my new environment that wrought out good to me. Her fine sense of humor was another bond that drew us together. The snug sitting-room, looking upon the quiet street, up which the shadows gathered slowly on summer evenings, and where the sleigh-bells jingled shrilly in the early winter twilight, echoed to bursts of laughter better befitting a pair of school-girls than two matrons who were both on the shady side of fifty. I was in the earthly Jerusalem, with my son, when the gates of the Celestial City opened to receive her faithful, loving spirit. I am sure that, as Bunyan affirmed when another travel-worn pilgrim entered into rest, “All the bells of the city rang for joy.” [446]

In April, 1884, our eldest daughter became the wife of James Frederick Herrick, one of the *Republican’s* editorial staff. We left her in Springfield when, in the same year, we returned to the Middle States to take up our abode for the next twelve years in Brooklyn. We could not have left her in safer, tenderer keeping. A brother-editor said of him once that he “had a heart of fire in a case of ice.” The simile did not do justice to the gentle courtesy and dignity that lent a touch of old-school courtliness to manner and address. In all the intimate association of the next ten years, I never saw in him an act, or heard a word that approximated unkindness or incivility. I wrote him down then, as I do now, as in all respects, the thorough gentleman in what makes the much-abused word a badge of honor. His ideals were high and pure; his life, private and professional, above reproach.

“The stuff martyrs and heroes are made of,” said one who knew him well and long.

He would have died for the truth; he would have laid down his life with a smile for his wife and children. Such harmonious blending of strength and sweetness as were found in the life of this man—modest to a fault, and resolute to a proverb—I have never seen in another. [447]

“*I have fought the good fight*” is the wording of his epitaph. I could have wished to add, “*Of whom the world was not worthy*.”

In 1886 he received an appointment that brought him to New York. There he yielded up a blameless life in 1893. If his last illness were not the direct result of steady, unremitting work, it is yet true that he wrought gallantly after the fatal fever fastened upon him, standing patiently in his lot until prostrated by delirium.

I shall part with reason and memory before I forget that his last thought was of the young wife kneeling at his pillow, and that the dying eyes, in losing their hold upon earth, committed her to me.

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## XLVI [448]

## RETURN TO MIDDLE STATES—THE HOLY LAND—MY FRIENDS THE MISSIONARIES—TWO CONSULS IN JERUSALEM

In the sketch of my husband’s life-work, written by a faithful co-laborer in the vineyard which is the world, and appended to this story, his reasons for returning to the Middle States are briefly given. As I near the latter chapters of my record, I am hampered by the necessity of treating cautiously of persons and incidents too near the present day to be spoken of with the freedom time made justifiable in earlier reminiscences. Those twelve years in the City of Churches were

crowded with events of more or less moment. They were busy, and not unhappy years. Our home-group, reduced to four by the marriage of our eldest daughter, was made still smaller by the marriage of her sister on March 5, 1889, to Frederic Van de Water, of Brooklyn. The choice was wise, and the union has been one of rare blessedness.

"In-laws" have no terrors in our circle. No sinister significance attaches to the term "mother-in-law." The adopted sons were loyal and loving to the parents of their wives. Not a cloud darkens the memory of our intercourse. The only obstacle to Belle's marriage was thus stated in whimsical vexation by her father:

"It is hard that, when there are said to be fifteen hundred proper names in the English language, my girls must select men who have the same. It leads to no end of confusion!"

[449] Our boy, now grown into an athletic six-footer, was graduated from Columbia University in 1893. We three had lived in great peace and contentment during his college course. We talk often, and wistfully, of those four years of church-work, social duties, literary tasks, and academic studies, which filled hands and heads. We spent our winters in town. Sunnybank grew to be more and more a home in the summer months. It was like a return to the time when our own babies filled house and verandas with merry prattle, and our hearts made music; for there were, at the date I name, four boys to repeat the history for the proud grandparents. But for the great sorrow that had broken up Christine's happy home in February, and brought her back to us with her two boys, and the birth, a fortnight thereafter, of Belle's second boy, the years slipped by brightly, without other signal event until "Bert's" graduation at the June Commencement. There was, for me, one notable exception to the gentle flow.

It was, I think, in mid-June, that I had a letter from the proprietor of the *Christian Herald*, a religious paper of wide circulation, asking me to write a serial that should run through six months' issues of that periodical. Just at that time my mind was working upon a projected story (published afterward in book-form under the caption *The Royal Road*), and this seemed a promising medium for circulating it among the classes I wished to reach. Accordingly, I called at the *Christian Herald* office to discuss the plan. My brief and satisfactory interview with the managing editor over, I arose to go when he invited me to step into the adjoining room, where the proprietor would like to speak with me for a minute. I was courteously received, and final arrangements for the publication of the serial were made. I was again on the point of departure, when the proprietor directed my attention to a new and handsome map of the city of Jerusalem, spread out upon his desk, inquiring, in an offhand way:

[450] "Have you ever visited the Holy Land?"

"Never," I replied, adding involuntarily, "It has been one of my dearest dreams that I might go some day."

"It would be a very easy matter for you to fulfil the wish," in the same easy, unpremeditated tone.

"Easy?" I repeated. "Yes; in my dreams!"

"In the flesh, and in reality. Will you sit down for a moment, please?"

He proceeded then, in less time than it will take me to write it, to unfold a plan in which I soon saw, although he did not say it, that the serial story, my call, and the map of Jerusalem, conspicuously displayed on his desk, were so many stages of a carefully concerted scheme. He wanted me to go to Syria, with the express purpose of investigating the condition of the women of that land, and getting an insight into their domestic life, and at the same time incidentally gleaning material for sketches of historical localities—in short, to gather material for such "familiar talks" as I had held with American women upon household and social topics. These were to be supplied to his paper, week by week. His provision for travelling expenses would include those of my husband, or any other escort I might select. The sum he named as remuneration for the work was handsome, but this circumstance made a slight impression upon me at the time. Our dialogue ended in my promise to take the matter into consideration, and to let him have my decision in a day or two. I hope he never guessed at the whirl of emotions lying back of a sober face and calm demeanor.

I recollect walking out into the bustling streets as if I trod upon air, my head ringing as if nerves were taut harpstrings, my heart throbbing tumultuously. I scarcely knew where I was, or whither I was going. Something, somewhere—it seemed in the upper ether, yet so near that I heard words and music—was singing rapturously:

[451]

"Jerusalem the Golden!
Methinks each flower that blows,
And every bird a-singing
Of that sweet secret knows.
I know not what the flowers
May feel, or singers see,
But all these summer raptures
Are prophecies of thee!"

It was my favorite hymn, but it was nothing in me that sang it then.

“One of my dearest dreams!”—ever since, as a child, I had fed a perfervid imagination upon Bible stories, and chanted David’s psalms aloud in the Virginia woods, to tunes of my own making. One of them broke into the jubilant *Jerusalem the Golden* pealing in the ether overhead:

“My feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!”

Was I, then, so near the fulfilment of the heavenly dream?

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We sailed for the Holy City in September—my big boy and I. Doctor Terhune could not go, and we had always promised that our son should have a foreign trip when his university work was done. The opportunity was auspicious.

Each of us told as much of the story of the memorable seven months abroad as we were willing the public should read—I, in the letters published first in the *Christian Herald*, subsequently in book-form under the title, *The Home of the Bible;* Bert, in a smaller volume, *Syria from the Saddle*, a breezy chronicle of a young man’s impressions of what he saw and heard while in Syria. I considered it then, and I think it now, a remarkable book, coming, as it did, from the pen of a boy of twenty-one. He celebrated his majority in the desert-places between Damascus and [452] Jerusalem.

Two or three incidents, eventful forever to us, may be mentioned briefly in this personal narrative.

I am not a believer in dreams. I do attach importance to “coincidences,” holding some that have fallen into my life in reverence the more sincere because I cannot explain them away.

One night in Paris, where we spent a fortnight on the way to Syria *via* Egypt, I had a long and distressing dream of carrying a poor ailing baby along dark streets and over fences and fields. My arms ached under the weight of the limp body; my heart and ears ached with the piteous wailing of the sufferer, for whom I could do nothing. I awoke in the morning, utterly worn out in nerve, and depressed unreasonably in spirit. That forenoon I wrote my daughter:

> “It was an ugly, gruesome dream. Your aunt Myrtle would see in it an omen of evil. She says that a death in the family has always followed her dream of the sick baby she cannot put out of her arms. It is an old superstition. You may recollect that Charlotte Brontë alludes to it in *Jane Eyre*. I have so such dreads. Yet I find myself wishing that I had not had that ‘visitation.’ It has left a very unpleasant impression on my mind—a sort of bad taste in my mental mouth. I am thankful that it came to me, and not to Myrtle.”

My sister had been ill before we left home, but was convalescent when we sailed, and a letter from her husband awaited us in Paris, conveying the cheerful assurance of her confirmed improvement in health and strength, and bidding me have no further anxiety on her account.

It was, therefore, a terrible shock when a letter, forwarded from place to place, overtook us in Northern Syria, informing us that my dear little “sister-daughter,” as she loved to call herself, [453] had died on the night of November 3, 1893—the very night through which the “gruesome” dream had pursued me from midnight until dawn. Christine wrote in reply:

> “When we read your letter of that date, Belle’s eyes met mine in silent, awesome questioning. Merely a coincidence? Perhaps, but strange!”

I can add no other comment.

My second eventful incident hinges upon a short severe illness that prostrated me, the third day after we landed in Beirut from the steamer we had taken at Port Saïd. I had already made acquaintance with President Bliss and some of the professors in the American College, crowning one of the heights of the beautiful town, and I sent at once for Doctor Schauffler, whom I had known slightly in Springfield, Massachusetts.

On the fourth day of my illness I asked him, plaintively:

“Do you know there is not a woman-servant in this hotel? The person who ‘does’ my room has a long white beard and wears a skull-cap. Bert calls the photograph he has made of the nondescript: ‘*Le femme de chambre!*’ It is very funny—and rather dreadful!”

“The beloved physician” eyed me in thoughtful compassion.

“We are so used to that sort of thing here that we rarely think of it as out of the way. No decent woman would take a position in a house where she must work with men. She would lose caste and reputation, forthwith. Hence, ‘*le femme de chambre*.’ I can see that it must be intensely disagreeable to you.”

There the matter dropped. I was still in bed when, at four o’clock that afternoon, he paid his second visit. He wasted no time in apology or solicitation. His carriage was at the door, packed [454] with cushions. I must be taken out of bed, rolled up in rugs and shawls, carried down-stairs by my son and my dragoman, deposited in the carriage and driven up to his house.

“Where there are women-servants,” he added, laughingly, “and where a cordial American

welcome awaits you. Doctor and Mrs. Webster, of Haifa, are visiting us, and you will be well looked after. And Mrs. Bliss is coming over to drink afternoon tea with you. So, we have no time to lose."

That was the beginning of ten days of such luxurious rest and continuous petting as I had never expected to find out of my native land and my own home. I rallied fast under the new conditions of invalidism. In two days, I left my bed and lay, for most of the forenoon and all the latter part of the day, upon a luxurious lounge in the square central hall, from which doors led on all sides to the other parts of the house. The ceilings were twenty feet above me; the casements opened down to the tiled floors; palms, and other tall plants rounded the corners of the hall, and vases of cut flowers filled the cooled air with fragrance. As I lay, I could see trees laden with oranges and tangerines in the gardens below; hedges of cactus and geraniums, the latter in the fulness of scarlet bloom, intersecting the grounds of the college and the neighboring dwellings. The colony of President and professors was one united family, and they took me—sick, and a stranger—into the heart of the household. I recall, with pride, that not a day passed that did not bring me a call from Doctor Bliss, the genial and honored head of the noble institution, while Mrs. Bliss's neighborly attentions were maternally tender. I had not been at the hotel in the lower town for an hour before she appeared, laden with flowers and an offering of "American apples, such as one cannot buy in the East." The next day, and for every day following, before Doctor [455] Schauffler carried me off with benevolent violence, she sent to me home-made bread, having heard (as was true) that the hotel bread was generally sour.

I looked forward with especial pleasure to the afternoon-tea hour. The gathering about my lounge would have graced any *salon* where wits do congregate. The silver-haired President never failed to put in an appearance; Doctor Post, the distinguished senior of the medical professors, and his charming daughter, afterward my cicerone in the visits I paid to Syrian women in their own homes; Doctor and Mrs. Eddy, whose daughter was just then surprising the social world of Constantinople by taking her degree in medicine, and with honor; the Jessup brothers and their families, known to all readers of church and charitable literature by their achievements in the mission-field; Doctor and Mrs. Porter, in whose house we had celebrated Thanksgiving Day the evening succeeding our arrival in Beirut, singing, at the close of the joyous festivities, "My country, 'tis of thee," with all the might of our lungs, and with hearts aglow with patriotism distance and expatriation could not abate—these, with a group of younger professors, tutors, and winsome girls, were the ministering genii that buoyed me speedily back to robust health.

They gave me a concert, a night or two before our parting. The light in the great hall was a pleasant *chiaro-oscuro*, the music-room opening out of it being brilliantly illuminated for the performers upon piano, violin, violoncello, guitar, and flute. From my sofa I had a full view of them all, and through one long window a moon, but four days old, looked at us through the orange-trees.

Is it strange that the chapter in my *Home of the Bible*, headed "*My Friends the Missionaries*," was penned with grateful memories too tender for speech?

We had in Jerusalem another true, hearty, and affectionate home-welcome. Dr. Selah Merrill, [456] the well-known archæologist and Oriental scholar, had then been United States Consul at Jerusalem for nine years. The change of administration in Washington had put in his place Rev. Edwin Wallace, and we found both consuls still in residence upon our arrival. It was a happy combination for us. The consuls and their wives were settled in the one good hotel in the city—the "Grand New"—to which our incomparable dragoman, David Jamal, conducted us. We fraternized at sight. Doctor Merrill and his successor were upon most amicable terms, the senior and late incumbent doing all in his power to lessen the labors of the novice. The fatherly kindness of one, and the gentle deference of the junior, were beautiful to behold. We two travellers shared the advantages enjoyed by Mr. Wallace in his first visits to memorable places in the new home, of which he has written eloquently in his book—*Jerusalem the Holy*. I shall always esteem as one of the rarest bits of good-fortune which befell us in our wanderings in storied lands, that Doctor Merrill was emphatically our "guide, philosopher, and friend," during our stay in Southern Syria. He, it was, who made out our itinerary when he could not conduct us personally, as he did in our expeditions in and about Jerusalem.

I reckon the four, who made the City of the Great King home to us, among the friends to whom my obligations are not to be described in words. And what royally "good times" we had together! Had it been in the power of Mrs. Merrill and Mrs. Wallace to spare me every possible inconvenience of tent-life and Eastern transit, I should have been lapped in luxury throughout our tour of village and desert.

Of these I have written elsewhere, and at length.

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# XLVII

[457]

## LUCERNE—GOOD SAMARITANS AND AN ENGLISHMAN—A LECTURE TOUR—OHIOAN HOSPITALITY—MR. AND MRS. McKINLEY

Our homeward journey was performed in a delicious, leisurely fashion. We had worked hard

for three months, collecting material for our prospective books. Once and again, when we would fain have had heart and imagination free to take in, at their full value, associations connected with, and emotions excited by, this or that sacred spot—did we remind ourselves of the plaint of the poet, who could never give himself up to the enjoyment of nature, because he saw, stamped upon sea and sky, mountain and river, in huge capitals—"MATERIAL." Neither of us meant to write up Egypt, Rome, Florence, Switzerland, and the British Isles. With very much the joyous sense of relief with which children scamper home, when school is out, we roamed and lingered to our hearts' content for the ten weeks that were left of our vacation. We fell in with congenial travelling companions in Egypt, joining parties for the run through Greece and Lower Italy. In Florence, we were reunited to friends with whom we had crossed the ocean, and did not part from them until, in Lucerne, they were summoned to Paris, while we planned a stay of some days in romantic regions endeared to us by former experiences, when the "Boy" of *Loitering in Pleasant Paths* was too young to appreciate the grandeur of mountain passes, snow-capped heights, azure lakes, and historic cantons.

[458] Anticipation received a cruel blow in the beautiful lakeside city in which we had passed the heart of a memorable summer, fifteen years before. My son was stricken down with appendicitis in Lucerne, and I knew not a human creature beside himself in all Switzerland! By rare good-fortune, I recalled the name of a physician with whom my husband had become acquainted in our former stay here, and sent for him at once. He had retired from the active duties of his profession, resigning his practice to his son, who was, I learned, at the head of the hospital in Lucerne.

To my infinite relief, he informed me that there would be no need of an operation unless more serious symptoms should intervene. I subjoin the addenda to the verdict for the benefit of those whom it may concern:

"You Americans are too fond of the knife! It is not always necessary to cut out an inflamed appendix. In my hospital we have had four hundred cases of appendicitis within the last ten years, and have operated just forty times! The patients recovered without the use of the knife."

If I had ever leaned, never so slightly, to misanthropic judgment of my fellow-mortals, I must have been shamed out of them by the incidents of the next fortnight of cruel anxiety, and what would have been unutterable loneliness but for the exceeding and abounding charity of the strangers by whom I was surrounded.

"It is my opinion," pronounced the patient, when, on Easter morning, his chamber was fragrant with flowers and brightened by cards and messages of cheer and sympathy—"my decided and well-grounded conviction—that this Canton is peopled by the posterity of the Good Samaritan. Even the innkeeper has taken a hand in the mission to the traveller on the Jericho Road!"

[459] The last remark was drawn out by the opening of a great box of violets, richly purple, and so freshly gathered that the odor floated into the air, like clouds of incense, with the lifting of the cover.

And, as a sudden thought struck him: "Have the blasted Britishers spoken yet?"

"No! Their conversation is confined to their own party."

I had brought the like report every day for a week. "The blasted Britishers," for whom he had no milder name, were a young man, his wife, and sister, who were at the end of my table and my nearest neighbors. The hotel was very full. A fair sprinkling of Americans, a few English, and a mixture of French, Swiss, Germans, and Italians made up a crowd that changed daily in some of its features. From the proprietor down to the porter, there was not an employé or official connected with the house who did not inquire, whenever I showed myself in hall or *salle à manger*, "how the young gentleman was getting on?" and express the hope of his early recovery. The entire working-staff of the Hotel de Cygne was at our feet, and the guests in the house were assiduous in offers of assistance and assurances of sympathy. Strangers inquired across the table as to the patient's condition, and if there were any way in which they could be of service. The "B. B.'s"—as the object of this kindly solicitude contemptuously abbreviated the appellation—held aloof, apparently ignorant of my existence, much less of the cause of inquiry and response. They chatted together pleasantly, in subdued, refined tones betokening the gentle-folk they were, but, for all the sign they gave of consciousness of the existence of the afflicted Americans, they might have been—to quote again from the indignant youth above-stairs—"priest and Levite, rolled into one mass of incarnate selfishness."

[460] So matters went on until next to the last day we spent in Lucerne. My patient was on his feet in his room, and had been down-stairs twice to drive for an hour, and test his strength for the journey to Paris, which he was impatient to begin. I had heard that there was a sleeping-car—a "*wagon-au-lit*," as the Swiss put it—upon one train each day. This I wished to take, if possible, and to break the journey by stopping overnight at least once, in the transit of fifteen hours that separated us from the French capital. It so chanced that the talk of the "B. B.'s" at luncheon that day turned upon this train, and, forgetful, for the moment, of their discourteous reserve, I addressed the man of the party with—"Pardon me! but can you tell me at what hour that train leaves Lucerne, and when it reaches Basle?"

"With great pleasure!" turning an eager face upon me. "But may I ask, first, how your son is to-day? We have inquired constantly of the proprietor, and of the doctor, when we could see him, how he was getting on. We were delighted to hear that he is improving, etc., etc., etcetera"—

while I was getting my breath, and rallying my fluttered wits. With this preamble, he proceeded to tell me all he knew of trains that were likely to be of service, volunteering to make direct inquiries at the station that afternoon, and begging to know in what way he could forward my purpose.

When I could escape, I carried a bewildered face and soul up to the convalescent.

Then it was that I made the remark I quoted in a former chapter, apropos of New England "incommunicableness":

"The ice is broken, and there is warm water under it!"

We had not finished discussing the idiosyncrasies of Old and New England when, half an hour later, there came a gentle tap at the door. I opened it, and nearly swooned with an access of amazement when I saw the young Englishman.

He had a paper in his hand, and began without preface:

"I have made so bold as to look up the trains, don't you know? And—oh, I say"—breaking off as [461]
he espied the figure on the lounge through the half-opened door—"mayn't I come in and see him? We are both young men, you know!"

He was at the sofa by this time, and shaking hands with the occupant. "Awfully glad to see you are doing so well! Oh, by Jove!" interrupting himself anew, with the frank boyishness that had marked his entrance. "I believe you are taller than I!"

He surveyed the recumbent figure with undisguised admiration.

"Six feet, two-and-a-half, gymnasium measure!" rejoined the other, laughing.

It was impossible to resist the cordial *bonhommie* of the self-invited guest.

"And I six, three!" complacently. "But a fellow looks longer when he is on his back. May I sit down?" drawing up a chair for me, and one for himself. "And would it tire you to talk a bit about routes and so on? Do you think you are really fit for the jaunt?"

The "bit" of talk lasted an hour, and the invalid brightened with every minute. The "Britisher" was an army man, at home on leave, after ten years in India. He had travelled far and used all his senses while *en route*. He was eloquent in praise of India, and so diligently was the time improved by both the young men that, in leaving, the elder exacted a promise that, when the other should visit India, he would apply to him—the "B. B."—for letters of introduction to "some fellows" who might be of use to him. He gave us his card, lest he might not see us again. It bore the name of a fashionable London hotel, at which he "hoped to see" his new acquaintance, since he was going to London within the month. He did see us again, calling on the morrow to ask if there were anything he could do to facilitate our departure. He brought, also, the compliments [462]
and good wishes of his wife and sister for our safe journey. The schedule of travel he had arranged for us was so carefully drawn up that a fool could not err therein.

We never saw or heard from him again. It was not convenient for Bert to call during the brief stay we made in London, on the very eve of sailing for home. And we have never yet been to India. The "B. B." seemed not to be able to conceive the possibility that any one who could get to that end of the earth could refrain from going.

I have seen enough of the English since to comprehend that this was not a phenomenal illustration of native reserve, that waits for the initiative from the other party to the meeting, and, like the traveller in the fable of the contest between the wind and sun, throws away the cloak of strangerhood as soon as the first step is taken by another. I have heard other anecdotes descriptive of a characteristic which belies the depth and warmth of the underlying heart, but none that bring it more prominently into view. It is strange—and interesting—to us of a more emotional race, to see the sudden leap of the unsealed fountain.

During the summer and autumn succeeding our return to America, I utilized much of the "material" collected in the East in a series of lectures delivered in seven different States. For two summers preceding my tour abroad, I had, in conjunction with Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster, conducted what we called "Women's Councils", in various Summer Schools modelled upon the famous Chautauquan Assemblies. I had hardly settled in the peaceful home-nest when applications from similar organizations began to arrive. Upon former expeditions, my husband, and sometimes our son, and Mrs. Sangster's nephew, Bert's classmate and chum, had accompanied us, and when the "Council" adjourned, we made up a jolly party to Mackinac Island [463]
(in which beautiful spot I laid the scene of *With the Best Intentions*), to Niagara Falls, the Adirondacks, and divers other summer resorts. Mrs. Sangster had no share in my present lecture engagements, and neither my husband nor son could spare the time to accompany me. In the comparatively secluded and carefully sheltered life of to-day, I marvel at the courage that enabled me to journey for thousands of miles, unattended, and to face audiences that numbered from one to two thousand women, with never a misgiving as to my reception, and perfect security from annoyance. Wherever I went, doors and hearts were opened to me. But once, in a series that comprised twenty towns and villages, was I ever allowed to stay at a hotel, and that was for a single night. The friends made then are cherished to this hour.

Time would fail me and the patience of the reader be exhausted, were I to attempt even a

catalogue of the localities in which I talked, as woman to woman, of what I had seen and heard in those seven months of wandering and study. If I had never loved women before, and held in especial and tender regard those of my own country, I must have learned the sweet lesson in the unescorted itineraries from Syracuse, N.Y., to Chicago; from Vermont to Michigan; from Richmond, Va., to Cincinnati. And in all the thousands of miles, and in the intercourse with tens of thousands of people whose faces I had never seen before, I had, in the three lecture seasons in which I took part, not one unkind word—received nothing but kindness, and that continually. Hospitality and brotherly (and sisterly) love have had new and deeper meaning to me, ever since. I permit myself the recital of two "happenings" in Ohio, that have historic interest in consideration of subsequent events.

After fulfilling a delightful engagement at Monona Lake—near Madison, Wisconsin—I set out for Lakeview, Ohio, where I was to hold a Women's Council for the next week, beginning [464] Monday. This was Saturday noon, and I was to travel all night. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage, whom I had seen at Monona Lake, had told me of a branch road connecting the station, at which I was to leave the main line, early Sunday morning, with Lakeview. I would reach that place, he said, by seven o'clock, and have a quiet Sunday to myself. This was preferable to passing it in Chicago or any other large town. In the Madison station I was so fortunate as to meet Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie and Dr. Francis Maurice Egan, at that time Professor of English Literature in the Georgetown (R. C.) University, and, subsequently, United States Minister to Denmark. Both of these distinguished men had been lecturing at Monona Lake Assembly. The rest of the day passed swiftly and brightly. Mr. Mabie left us in Chicago, where we were detained until midnight, on account of some delay in incoming trains. Doctor Egan, whose spirits never flagged, proposed a walk through the illuminated streets, and a supper together, which "lark" we enjoyed with the zest of two school-children. Then we returned to the waiting train, and bade each other "Good-bye."

The journey had begun so auspiciously that I alighted from the sleeper in the early dawn, feeling, what the sporting Englishman would call "uncommonly fit," and with no prevision of what lay before me.

For not a symptom of the promised branch line was to be seen, as far as eye could reach. There were two houses at the terminus of my railway journey. One was the usual station and freight-house; the other, a neat cottage a stone's-throw away, was, I found, the dwelling of the station-agent. He was the one and only human thing in sight. Beyond lay woods and cultivated fields.

The man was very civil, but positive in the declaration that the branch line connecting with the Assembly grounds was ten miles further on; also, that no trains ran over it on Sunday. As at [465] Monona Lake, admission was denied to the public on that day. Otherwise, the ground would be overrun by the rabble of curious sight-seers. There was no hotel within five miles, and no conveyance to take me to it, or to Lakeview.

The predicament was serious, yet it provoked me to mirth. Doctor Talmage's directions to alight at this particular point (as he "had done not a week ago"); my cheerful confidence that the day would be as yesterday, if not more abundant in enjoyment; the immediate prospect of starvation and discomfort, since all the accommodations I could command were that one room of the country station—made up a picture at which any woman must laugh—or cry. The station-master looked relieved that I did not weep, or whine. When I laughed, he smiled sympathetically:

"If you will sit here for a few minutes," leading the way into the room behind us, "I'll step over and talk to my wife."

From that moment I had no apprehension of further misadventures.

If I had indulged a fleeting misgiving, it would have been dissipated by the sight of the woman to whom I was introduced when I had accepted the invitation to "step over" to the neat cottage a few rods down the road.

It was a veritable cottage—low-browed and cosey, vine-draped, and simply but comfortably furnished. The mistress met me in the door with a cordial welcome, and took me into her bedroom to wash away the dust of travel and lay off my hat. For I was to breakfast with them, after which her husband would get up the horse and buggy, and she would drive me over to the Assembly grounds. She looked, moved, and spoke like a gentlewoman. Against the background of my late predicament, she wore the guise of a ministering angel. The breakfast was just what she [466] had prepared for her husband. She proved the quality of her breeding there, too, in not lisping a syllable of apology. None was required for a meal so well-cooked and served, but few women would have let the occasion pass of informing the stranger within their gates how much better they might have done had they been notified of the coming of "company." On the road she told me that she had a season-ticket for the Summer School, and that she had attended the sessions regularly during the week that had passed since it opened. She was a pretty little body, becomingly attired, and intelligent beyond her apparent station. I was to learn more in time of the minds and manners of the average Ohio woman and man, and to be moved to wondering admiration thereby. The road, level as a floor for most of the way, lay between fields, orchards and vineyards so well cultivated that they recalled the husbandry of older lands. My companion was *au fait* to the agricultural interests of her native State, and descanted upon the resources of the region with modest complacency. The weather was delicious, the drive a pleasure. Not until we were in sight of the lake, on the shores of which the camp was located, did she suggest the

possible difficulty of gaining admission to the grounds. She had her ticket, which would pass her on Sunday, as on week-days. Perhaps I had one? I said, “No,” frankly. Were the rules very strict? She was “afraid they were.” It was evident that she had wholesome respect for the regulation barring out unlicensed intruders. My credentials, in the form of letters and contract, were in the trunk the station-master had engaged to send over on Monday. Up to this moment I was an anonymous wayfarer to my hosts, and I did not care to owe their hospitality to any prestige that might attach to an advertised name. So I said we would postpone uneasiness until I was actually refused admittance by the gate-keeper. When he halted us, my companion produced her [467] passport, and I offered, as warrant of my eligibility, to send for Doctor Lewis, the superintendent of the Assembly, to vouch for me. He gave me a searching glance, and stood back to let us pass.

I recognized my guardian angel in my audience on Monday, and made it my business and pleasure to seek her out at the conclusion of the lecture.

“We made up our minds last night, as we were talking it over, who you were,” she remarked, quietly. “I had my list of the speakers, and you were set down for to-day. I wished, then, that I had guessed the truth before.”

I did not echo the wish. My first taste of Ohio hospitality would have lost the fine flavor that lingers in my memory, like the aroma of old Falernian wine. A duchess of high degree might have taken lessons in breeding and Christian charity from the station-keeper’s wife.

During the week spent at Lakeview I had an opportunity, which I prize now beyond expression, of meeting Mr. McKinley, then the Governor of Ohio. He passed a day at the principal hotel of the place with his wife, and visited the Assembly. I was invited, with other visitors, to dine with him, and afterward to drive into the country with himself and Mrs. McKinley.

“The future President of the United States!” a friend had said to me when I told her of the projected drive.

“I don’t think so,” was my answer. “But a good man and an honest politician.”

As he lifted his invalid wife into the carriage, a packet of letters was handed to me.

In taking his place on the front seat he begged me to open them:

“Home letters should never be kept waiting.”

“I will avail myself of your kind permission so far as to look into one,” I answered. “It is the daily bulletin from my husband. A glance at the first paragraph will tell me how matters are at [468] home.”

“A daily bulletin!” repeated Mr. McKinley, as I refolded the epistle after the satisfactory glance.

“Yes—and we have been married nearly forty years!”

“A commendable example—” he began, when his wife caught him up:

“Which he does not need! He never fails to write to me every day when he is away; but when he was in Washington, some years ago, and I was not well enough to go with him, he telegraphed every morning to know how I was, besides writing a long letter to me in the afternoon.”

Laughingly putting the remark aside, he leaned forward to direct my attention to a row of hills on the horizon, and to talk of certain historical associations connected with that part of the State. She resumed the topic, awhile later, descanting in a low tone upon his unwearied regard for her health, his tender solicitude, his skill as a nurse, and similar themes, drawn on by my unfeigned interest in the story, until he checked her, with the same light laugh:

“Ida, my dear! you are making Mrs. Terhune lose the finest points in the landscape we brought her out to admire.”

“Permit me to remind you that there are moral beauties better worth my attention,” retorted I.

He lifted his hat, with a bright look that went from my face to dwell upon that of the fragile woman opposite him, with affectionate appreciation, and full confidence that I would comprehend the feeling that led her to praise him—a flashing smile, I despair of describing as it deserves. It transfigured his face into beauty I can never forget. In all my thoughts of the man who became the idol of his compatriots, dying, like a martyr-hero, with a plea for mercy for the insane assassin upon his lips, I recur to that incident in my brief personal acquaintanceship with him, as [469] a revelation of what was purest and sweetest in a nature singularly strong and gentle.

In relating the little by-play to my dear friend, Mrs. Waite, the widow of the Chief-Justice, then living in Washington, I said that it was a pity to see a man in Mr. McKinley’s exalted and responsible position tied to the arm-chair of a hopeless invalid, who could contribute nothing to his usefulness in any relation of life.

“He owes more to her than the public will ever suspect,” was the reply. “We knew him from a boy, and watched his early struggles upward. His wife was his guiding star, his right hand. She was, then, a woman of unusual personal and mental gifts, more ambitious for him than he was for himself. My husband often said that she was Mr. McKinley’s inspiration. Those who have never known her except as the fragile, nerveless creature she is now, cannot imagine what she was

before the deaths of her children and her terrible illness left her the wreck you see. But *he* does not forget what she was, and what she did for him."

I treasured the tribute gratefully, and I never failed to quote it when I heard—as was frequent during Mr. McKinley's administration—contemptuous criticism of the helpless, sickly woman—the poor shade of the First Lady of the Land—whose demands upon his time and care were unremittent and heavy. He was held up to the world by his eulogists as a Model Husband, a Knight of To-day, whose devotion never wavered. As my now sainted mentor said, few of the admiring multitude guessed at his debt of gratitude and at his chivalrous remembrance of the same.

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# XLVIII

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## THE CLOUDS RETURN AFTER THE RAIN—ABROAD AGAIN—HEALING AND HEALTH—IDYLLIC WINTER IN FLORENCE

WHAT one of Doctor Terhune's biographers has alluded to as his "splendid vitality," had been cruelly taxed by his professional labors in his first charge in Brooklyn. With a strong man's aversion to the acknowledgment of physical weakness, he had fought, with heroic courage and reserve, the inroads of a disease that was steadily sapping his constitution and vigor. None except his physician and myself dreamed of the gnawing pain that was never quiet during his waking hours, and robbed the nights of rest. The services of Sunday left him as weak as a child, and stretched him upon the rack all of that night. When, the work he had assigned to himself soon after accepting the pastorate of the Bedford Avenue Church having been accomplished, he resigned the position, and quoted his physician's advice that he should take a few months of rest and change of scene—the information was couched in terms so light that, with the exception of two or three of his chosen and most faithful friends, his parishioners had no suspicion of his real condition. The public press hazarded the wildest and most absurd guesses at the causes that had stirred the nest he had builded wisely and well during the last seven years.

Perhaps the theory that amused us most, and flew most widely from the mark, was "that his wife—known to the public as 'Marion Harland'—took no interest in church-work—in fact, never [471] attended church at all." My class of forty-four splendid "boys"—the youngest being twenty-one years of age—begged to be allowed to look up the imaginative reporter and, as the Springfield member of the Church Militant had proposed, "fire him out." Calmer counter-statements from older heads, and hearts as loyal, met the assertion in print and in private. To me, it weighed less than a grain of dust in the greater solicitude that engrossed my thoughts. For, in a week after the formal resignation of his office, the patient sufferer was under the surgeon's knife.

They called it "a minor operation," and enjoined complete rest, for a month or so, that ought to bring recuperation of energies so sadly depleted that those who knew him best were urgent in the entreaty that the mandate should be obeyed. He "rested" in the blessed quiet of Sunnybank for a couple of months; then set out for a leisurely jaunt westward. He had been invited to preach in Omaha, and thought that he would "take a look at the country" which he had never visited. He got no further than Chicago, falling in love with the warm-hearted people of a church which he agreed to supply for "a few weeks." The weeks grew into seven months of active and satisfying work among his new parishioners. Our eldest daughter was with him part of the time, and I went to him for a visit of considerable length, returning home with the sad conviction, deep down in my soul, that to accept the offered "call" to a permanent pastorate would be suicidal. He could never do half-way work, and he loved the duties of his profession with a love that never abated. By the beginning of the next summer, he was forced to admit to himself that his physical powers were inadequate to the task laid to his hand. Yet, on the way home, he was lured into agreeing to supply the pulpit of a friend, a St. Louis clergyman, during the vacation of the latter, preaching [472] zealously and eloquently for five weeks, and this in the heat of a Missourian summer.

It was but a wreck of his old, buoyant self that he brought back to us. Confident in his ability to rise above "temporary weakness," he insisted that "Sunnybank and home-rest were all he needed to set him up again as good as new."

I had said once, jestingly, in his hearing, after his quick recovery from a short and sharp attack of illness:

"It is hard to kill a Terhune. Nothing is really effectual except a stroke of lightning, and that will paralyze but one side. None of them die under ninety!"

He reminded me of the foolish speech, many and many a time, in the weeks that dragged themselves by us who watched the steady ebb of vital forces and the pitiable failure of all remedial agencies. He was the finest horseman I have ever known, and, as I have already said, sat his saddle as if he were a part of the spirited animal he bestrode. "Let me once get into the saddle again, and all will be right," had been his hopeful prognostication in every illness prior to this mysterious disorder. He mounted his horse a few times after he got home, and rode for a mile or two, but listlessly and with pain. Then he ceased to ask for the old-time tonic that had acted like a magic potion upon the exhausted body, in answer to the indomitable spirit. The spring of desire and courage was not broken, but it bent more and more visibly daily, until it was

a gray wraith of the former man that lay, hour after hour, upon the library sofa, uncomplaining and patient, utterly indifferent to things that once brought light to the eyes and ring to the voice. Even his voice—a marvel up to seventy-five, for sweetness, resonance, and strength—quavered and broke when he forced himself to speak.

In this, our sore and unprecedented extremity, we who watched him took counsel together and urged him to go to the city and consult Doctor McBurney, the ablest specialist and surgeon in [473] New York, and with no superior in America. The patient offered feeble opposition. It was easier to do as we wished, than to argue the point. Our eldest daughter was living in New York, and not far from the surgeon. We lost no time in securing an appointment, and the surgeon was prompt in decision. “The minor operation,” in which he had had no hand, was well enough as far as scalpel and probe had gone, but the seat of the malady was left untouched. There was a malignant internal growth which had already poisoned the blood. To delay a “major operation” a fortnight, would be to forfeit the one and only chance of life. It might already be too late.

In three days the almost dying man was in the Presbyterian Hospital, and under the knife.

I hasten past the month that followed. With clean blood, a temperate life, and a superb constitution as his backers, my brave husband stood once more upon his feet, and was apparently upon the highroad to recovery. When he was restored to our home-circle in season for the Christmas festivities, we rejoiced without a prevision of possible further ill from the hateful cause, now forever removed, as we fondly believed. Early in January, I had a sudden and violent hemorrhage from the lungs, superinduced, we were told by the eminent specialist summoned immediately, by the long-continued nervous strain and general weakening of the entire system.

Doctor Terhune took me to the train when I set out upon the southern trip prescribed strenuously by consulting practitioners. My dearest and faithful brother was to meet me on the last stage of my easy journey. When the late invalid waved his hat to me from the platform as the train began to move, I noted with pride and devout gratitude, how clear were his blue eyes, how healthful his complexion, and, looking back as far as I could catch sight of him, that his step had [474] the elasticity of a boy of twenty.

He wrote daily to me, and in the old, lively fashion, for three weeks. Then a letter dictated by him to Christine told of a boil upon his wrist that hindered pen-work. I “was not to be uneasy. It was probably a wholesome working out of the virus of original sin. He would be all the better when the system was freed from it.”

I wrote at once, begging that nothing might be concealed from me, and setting a day for my return.

A telegram from my husband forbade me to stir until the time originally named as the limit of my visit. And the daily letters continued to arrive. One, I recollect, began:

> “A second rising, farther up the arm, is ‘carrying on the work of purification.’ So says the poor Pater, with a rueful glance at his bandaged hand and arm. If it were only the left, and not the right hand, he would not have to put up with this unworthy amanuensis.”

Those six weeks in Richmond stand out in memory like sunlighted peaks seen between clouds that gathered below and all around it. My brother’s wife, the cherished girl-friend of our Newark life, was so far from well that we enacted the rôles of semi-invalids in company. Sometimes we breakfasted in her room, sometimes in mine, as the humor seized us. I lounged in one easy-chair, and she in another, all the forenoon, making no pretence of occupation. Had we not been straitly commanded to do nothing but get well? We drove out in company, every moderately fine day. When we tired of talking (which was seldom), we had our books. I sent to a book-store for a copy of Barrie’s *Margaret Ogilvie*—the matchless tribute of the brilliant son to the peasant woman from whom he drew all that was noblest and highest in himself—and gave it to my fellow-invalid [475] to read. Then we talked it over—we two mothers—tenderly and happily, as befitted the parents of grown children who were fulfilling our best hopes for them. I repeated to her once, in the twilight of a winter afternoon, as we sat before the blazing fire of soft coal that tinted the far corners of the library a soft, dusky red—a stanza of Elizabeth Akers Allen’s *Rock Me to Sleep, Mother:*

> “Over my heart in the days that have flown,
> No love like mother-love ever has shone;
> No other worship abides and endures,
> Faithful unselfish, and patient like yours.”

“That is one of my husband’s favorite songs,” I said. “I often sing it to him and to Bert in the twilights at home.” And with a little laugh, I added: “My boy asked me once to emphasize ‘patient.’ He says that is the strongest characteristic of the mother’s love.”

“They repay us for it all!” was the fervent reply.

And I returned as feelingly, “Yes, a thousandfold.”

She was ever the true, unselfish woman, generous in impulse and in action, sweet and sound to the very core of her great heart. We had loved each other without a shadow of changing for over thirty years. In all our intercourse there is nothing upon which I dwell with such fondness as on

the days that slipped by brightly and smoothly, that late January and early February. If I observed with regret that I rallied from my sudden seizure more rapidly than she threw off the languor and loss of appetite which, she assured us, over and over, “meant next to nothing”—I was not seriously uneasy at what I saw. She had not been strong for the last year. Time would restore her, surely. She had just arisen on the morning of my departure, when I went into her room to say, “Good-bye.” She smiled brightly as I put my arms about her and bade her, “Hurry up and return my visit.” [476]

“You will see me before long,” she said, confidently. “As soon as I can bear the journey I shall go to Newark. My native air always brings healing on its wings.”

My beloved friend Mrs. Waite had passed from earth, six months before. The visit I paid at her house, on the way back to New York, was the first I had made there since the beauty of her presence was withdrawn.

On the morning after my arrival I had a long letter from Christine. It began ominously:

> “I have a confession to make. Father has been far more indisposed than I would let you think. Do not blame me. I have acted under orders from him and from the doctor. Neither would hear of your recall. Not that this relapse is a dangerous matter. The ‘boils’ were a return of the old trouble. He has not left his bed for a fortnight. I thought it best to prepare you for seeing him there.”

An hour later I had a telegram from my brother:

> “M. is decidedly worse. We apprehend heart-failure.”

Again I say, I would shorten the recital of how the clouds returned after the rain which we had believed would clear the atmosphere.

I was seated at the bedside of my husband, who aroused himself with difficulty to speak to me, as one shakes off a stupor, relapsing into slumber with the murmured welcome on his fevered lips, when a dispatch was brought to me from Richmond.

My sister-in-love had died that afternoon.

Five months to a day, from the beginning of my husband’s serious illness, he was brought down-stairs in the arms of a stalwart attendant, and lifted into a carriage for his first ride. We drove to the neighboring Central Park, and were threading the leafy avenues before the convalescent offered to speak. Then the tone was of one dazed into disbelief of what was before his eyes: [477]

“The last time I was out of doors, the ground was covered with snow. I am like those that dream. I never knew until now what a beautiful place the world is!”

It was glorious in July verdure when we got him back to Sunnybank. There was no talk now of the saddle, and the briefest of drives fatigued him to faintness. Whatever the doctors might say as to the ultimate elimination of the hidden poison they had found so difficult to drive out, watchers, who had more at stake in the issue of his protracted illness, failed to see the proof that skill had effected what they claimed. After the glow of pleasure at getting home again subsided, he relapsed into the old lassitude and sad indifference to what was going on about him; his eyes were dull; his tone was lifeless; he seemed to have forgotten that he had ever had appetite for food.

At last, one day, as I sat fanning him, while he lay on the wicker sofa on the vine-clad veranda, regarding neither lake nor mountain, and smiling wanly at my chatter of the seven birds’-nests in the honeysuckle, from which the last fledgling had been coaxed away by their parents that morning—an inspiration came to me. I laid my hand on his to make sure that he would be aroused to listen, and stooped to the ear that shared in the deadening of the rest of the body.

“What do you say to going abroad again—and very soon?”

He opened his eyes wide, lifting his head to look directly at me.

“What did you say?”

I repeated the query.

He lay back with closed lids for so long I thought he was asleep. Then an echo of his own voice, as it was in the olden time, said: [478]

“I *think*, if I could once more hear the rush of the waves against the keel of the steamer, and feel the salt air on my face, it would bring me back to life. But—where’s the use of dreaming of it? I shall never be strong enough to go on board.”

“You will, and you shall! You saved my life by taking me abroad. We will try the efficacy of your own prescription.”

I think that not one of the crowd of friends who came down to the steamer to see us off, had any hope of seeing again his living face. I heard, afterward, that they said as much among themselves, when the resolutely cheerful farewells had been spoken, and they stood watching the

vessel's slow motion out of the dock, the eyes of all fixed upon one figure recumbent in a deck-chair, a thin hand responding to the fluttering handkerchiefs above the throng on the end of the pier.

Our son was there with his betrothed, who wrote to me afterward that he was "depressed to despondency." Belle, with her husband and boys, would occupy Sunnybank while we were away. Christine had insisted that it was not kind or safe to leave to me the sole care of the invalid. In the three weeks that elapsed between the "inspiration" and our embarkation, the brave girl had wound up all affairs that would detain her in America, and made herself and two sons ready to accompany us. The party was completed by the faithful maid who had nursed her children from infancy, and who was quite competent to aid me in nursely offices to the patient for whose sake the desperate expedition was undertaken.

He averred, in later life, that he felt an impulse of new life with the first revolution of the paddle-wheel. Certain it is that he showed signs of rallying before twenty-four hours had passed, [479] spending all the daylight hours upon deck, and, before the voyage was half over, joining in our promenades from bow to stern. Always an excellent sailor, he drank in the sea-breeze as he might have quaffed so much nectar. The only complaint that escaped him was that, "whereas he had been promised an eleven days' voyage, we steamed up the Clyde on the afternoon of the ninth day."

A series of jaunts in Scotland and England was the prelude to our settling down in Florence for the winter.

Had I no other reason to urge for my deep and abiding love for that fairest and dearest of Italian cities, it would suffice me to recollect the unutterable peace and full content of that memorable half-year.

Friends, old and new, clustered about us, and lent the charm of home to the cosey apartment in Via San Giuseppe, where the gentle flow of domestic life was bright with the shining of present happiness and rekindled hope of the future. We learned to know "La Bella" at her best in those halcyon days. The boys were at a day-school; thanks to our efficient "padrona," there were no household anxieties, and we seniors were free to enjoy to the full all that makes up the inestimable riches of the storied city.

Doctor Terhune and I claimed the privilege of convalescent and custodian, in declining to accept invitations to evening functions, thus securing opportunity for what we loved far better than the gayest of "entertainments"—long, quiet hours spent in our sitting-room "under the evening lamp," I, busy with needle-work or knitting, while he read aloud, after the dear old fashion, works on Florentine history, art, and romance, all tending to enfold us more closely with the charméd atmosphere of the region. It would be laughable to one who has never fallen under the nameless spell of Florence to know how often, that season, we repeated aloud, as the book was laid aside for the night:

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"With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise."

Letters from home were frequent and regular. Much was happening across the water while we revelled in our dreams. The Spanish War was on. It was begun and ended during our peace-fraught exile. In January, our boy took unto himself the young wife to whom he had been troth-plight for a year, and we were the easier in mind for the knowledge that this, the last of our unwedded bairns, was no longer without a home of his own.

In the spring we travelled at pleasure through Switzerland and Belgium, and so to England—my husband and I now in the *solitude à deux* belovéd by congenial souls. Christine and her sons were left in Switzerland for a longer tour of that country.

Still wandering, lingering, and dreaming, in the long, delicious calm succeeding the darkest and stormiest period our united lives were ever to know, we revisited English villages and towns, and made acquaintance in Scotland with new and enchanting scenes, until the September day when we took passage from Glasgow for New York.

We steamed into our harbor on Sunday afternoon, just as the news of peace between the warring nations was acclaimed through the megaphone to incoming craft, and thundered from the mouths of rejoicing cannon.

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## XLIX

## THE GOING-OUT OF A YOUNG LIFE—PRESENT ACTIVITIES —"LITERARY HEARTHSTONES"—GRATEFUL REMINISCENCES

As upon our return from foreign lands nearly twenty years before this home-coming, Sunnybank was now our *pied á terre*. Our daughter, Mrs. Van de Water, and her family had

occupied it during our absence. It was, therefore, not merely swept and garnished for our reception, but the spirit of Home, sweet, radiant, and indescribable, was in full possession. We were settled in the nest within an hour after we drove up to the open door. A week later, the happy circle was widened by the arrival of our son and his young wife from the Adirondacks. A second attack of appendicitis had made an operation imperatively necessary. It was performed in July, and as soon as the patient was strong enough to travel, he was sent to the mountains for recuperation. The pair were our guests for four weeks. Then they returned to town to prepare for the housekeeping upon which they had planned to enter in October. Happy letters, telling of the preparations going briskly forward, and filled with domestic details, than which nothing in the wide world was more fascinating to the little wife, reminded us of the contented cooings of mating pigeons, or, as I told the prospective housewife, of the purring of the kittens she loved to fondle under the honeysuckles of the veranda, while with us.

[482] On October 5th an unexpected telegram brought the news of the premature birth of a baby daughter, and that "mother and child were doing well." Four days later, a second dispatch summoned us to New York. The tiny girl was but four days old when her gentle mother passed quietly out of the life, so rich in love and hope that, up to the hour when she laid herself down cheerfully upon her couch of pain, she was, to use her own words, "almost frightened at her own happiness."

She was married on January 10, 1898. We bore her to her last home October 12th of the same year. She sleeps in the quiet "God's Acre," back of the old colonial church in Pompton, in the heart of the fairest of New Jersey valleys. A peaceful spot it is, cradled by the everlasting hills. There were but three graves in our family plot when we took her there. There are five, now.

We spent that winter in the city, and our boy was again one of our small household. But for the care and the blesséd comfort of the baby daughter, the light and life of hearts and house, we might have fancied the events of the last five years a dream, and that we were once more the busy trio with whom time had sped so swiftly and brightly while "Bert" was in college. We were busy now as then. Doctor Terhune preached with tolerable regularity in different churches, and he was ever a diligent student. Bert wrought faithfully in his chosen profession of journalism, and I accepted in, 1901, the charge of a Woman's Syndicate page established by *The North American*, in Philadelphia. I had never been idle. Month after month, work was laid to my hands that pleased my taste, and occupied all the time I could devote to literary tasks. When I agreed to take on the new burden, it was with no forecasting of what proportions it might assume.

"What do these women write to you about?" asked the proprietor of the paper under the auspices of which the syndicate was carried on.

[483] I answered, laughingly, "Everything—from Marmalade to Matrimony."

When he put the question, I was representing the need of an assistant, since I was getting twenty letters per diem. Four years later, a secretary and a stenographer shared the labor of keeping in touch with writers who poured in upon my desk an average mail of one hundred letters a day. Two years afterward, the average was over a thousand a week.

I have been asked often why I expend energies and fill my days in what my critics are pleased to depreciate as "hack-work." Nobody believes my assertion that I heartily enjoy being thus brought into intimate association with the women of America. The Syndicate has extended its territory into twenty-five States, and it is still growing. Women, boys, and girls, and housefathers —no less than housemothers—tell me of their lives, their successes, their failures, their trials, and their several problems. From the mighty mass of correspondence I select letters dealing with topics of general interest, or that seem to call for free and friendly discussion, and base upon them daily articles for the Syndicate public. Thousands of letters contain stamps for replies by mail. Out of this germ of "hack-work" has grown "The Helping-Hand Club," an informal organization, with no "plant" except my desk and the postal service that transports applications for books, magazines, and such useful articles as correspondents know will be welcome to the indigent, the shut-in, the aged, charitable societies and missions in waste places. Quietly, and without parade, our volunteer agents visit the needy, and report to us. We distribute, by correspondence, thousands of volumes and periodicals annually; we bring together supply and demand, "without money and without price," and in ways that would appear ridiculous to some, and incredible to many.

[484] "For Love's Sake" is our motto, and it is caught up eagerly, from Canada to California. "The Big Family," they call themselves—these dear co-workers of mine whose faces I shall never see on earth. When, as happens daily, I read, "Dear Mother of us all," from those I have been permitted to help in mind, body, or estate, I thank the Master and take courage.

After eight years' active service in the field so strangely appointed to me that I cannot but recognize (and with humble gratitude) the direct leading of the Divine Hand, I say, frankly, that I have never had such fulness of satisfaction in any other sphere of labor.

"But it is not Literature!" cried a friend to me, the other day, voicing the sentiment of many.

"No," I answered, "but it is *Influence*, and that of the best kind."

I have, with all this, made time—or it has been made for me—to write half a dozen books in the last ten years.

*Where Ghosts Walk* (1898) was a joy in the writing, as was the collection of material. It reproduces for me—as I turn the pages, in maternal fashion, lingering upon a scene here, and snatching a phrase there—our strayings in storied climes, rambles into enchanted nooks untrodden by the conventional tourist, but full of mystery and charm for us. In those dim paths I still walk with the ghosts that were once visible and sentient things like ourselves.

*Literary Hearthstones* (1899-1902) was, even more emphatically, a labor of delight. I had made studies of Charlotte Brontë and Hannah More, of John Knox and William Cowper, in the homes and haunts they glorified into shrines for the reading and the religious world. Other hallowed names are yet on my memorandum-book, and in my portfolio are the notes made in other homes and haunts, and pictures collected for the illustrations of four more volumes of the series.

If I live and hold my strength and health of body and of mind, I shall, please God, complete the [485]
tale of worthies I have singled out for study. If not—they are yet mine own brain-children. None may rob me of the pleasure of having and of holding them—until death us do part.

I should be ungrateful, and do my own feelings a wrong, were I to fail, in this connection, to acknowledge my obligations to those who kindly seconded my efforts to accumulate the material for the *Hearthstones*.

Our pilgrimages to Haworth, Olney, Wrington, and Edinburgh, are starred in the reminiscence by hospitable intent and deed, by such real sympathy in my mission, and friendly aid in the prosecution of my design, that I cannot pass them over with casual mention.

For Charlotte Brontë I had, since my early girlhood, nourished admiration that ripened into reverence, as I read with avidity every page and line relating to the marvellous sisters. I had conned her books until I knew them, from cover to cover. Her *dramatis personæ* were friends more familiar to the dreaming girl than our next-door neighbors. It was a bitter disappointment to me that the unforeseen miscarriage of our plans frustrated my longing to go to Haworth, at our first visit to the Old World. So, when my son and I set out for our Eastern trip, Haworth stood first upon our memorandum of places that *must* be seen in England. I had letters from four men who had engaged to facilitate my attempts to enter the Parsonage. One and all, they assured me that I would find the door inhospitably closed in my face. Nevertheless, they advised me to go to Haworth, and put up at “that resort of the thirsty—the Black Bull.” Thus one of the quartette, and who had lately published a book on the Brontës:

“The present incumbent of the parish is an ogre, a veritable dragon!” he went on to say. “He
savagely refused to let me set foot upon his threshhold, and he turns hundreds of pilgrims away [486]
empty every year. But go to Haworth, by all means! Put up at the ancient hostelry; walk about the old stone house and tell well its windows, and take pleasure in Emily’s moors. The dragon has restored (?) the Brontë church, and consigned the remains of the wonderful family to a genteel crypt under the renovated pavement. All the same, go to Haworth! The hills and the moors and the heather are unchanged.”

In my *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, I have related how I fared in the pilgrimage that stands out clearly in my memory as one of the sunniest spots of that memorable seven months’ tour. I have not told how simple and direct were the means by which I gained the fulfilment of my desires. Within an hour after we had registered our names in the shabby book kept for guests and transients at the Black Bull, I wrote a note to Mr. Wade, the rector of Haworth Church, asking permission to “stand, for a few minutes, within the doors of the house that had been the home of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.” I added that I should not blame him if he objected to the intrusion of strangers upon domestic privacy.

The messenger returned speedily with word that Mr. Wade had that hour returned from London, and that he could not then write a note. He would, however, be happy to see me at the Rectory on the morrow (Sunday), and would write in the morning, naming the hour for our call. His note came while we were at breakfast, to say that he would be at liberty to receive us between services. We attended morning service, but, when it was over, refrained from making ourselves known to the rector, lingering, instead, in the church to see the tablet above the Brontë vault, and the fine window, set in the restored wall by an anonymous American, “To the glory of God, and in pleasant memory of Charlotte Brontë.” Emerging from the church, with the intention
of strolling up to the Parsonage, we were met by Mr. Wade, who had gone home, expecting to [487]
find us there, and was on his way to the inn to look us up. His cordial hand-clasp and genial smile were so opposed to our preconceptions of the “dragon,” that we exchanged furtive glances of relief. He took us back to the Parsonage, and showed us everything we had wished to see, with much we had not thought of, telling us, in the same hospitable way, that, although he was the only member of the family at home that day, he would be happy to have us partake of a bachelor’s luncheon. When we declined, gratefully, he accompanied us to the church, and unlocked the case in which is kept the register of Charlotte Brontë’s marriage, signed by herself —the last time she wrote her maiden name.

Several letters passed between us, in the course of the next four years, and he opened to me, on our second visit to Haworth, in 1898, unexpected avenues of information respecting her whose biography I was writing, which were of incalculable value to me. When he retired from the active duties of his profession to Hurley, in another county, he wrote to me a long, interesting letter, enclosing a copy of the resolutions passed by the Yorkshire parish he had served faithfully for forty-seven years.

Besides the precious stock of building “material” for the construction of my story of Charlotte, which I could have gained in no other way than through his kindly offices, this odd friendship taught me a lesson of faith in my kind, and of distrust of hearsay evidence and of popular disfavor, that will last me forever. I dedicated the biography to “Rev. J. Wade, for forty-seven years incumbent of Haworth, in cordial appreciation of the unfailing courtesy and kindly aid extended by him to the American stranger within his gates.”

A dedication that brought me many letters of surprised dissent from English and American tourists, and writers whose experience was less pleasant than my own. I tell the tale, in brief, as an act of simple justice to a much-abused man. [488]

“You have been told that I am a vandal and a bear,” he said to me on that Sunday. “I found church and Parsonage almost in ruins. I was not appointed to this parish as the curator of a museum, but to do my best for the cure of souls. When I tell you that, for ten years after Mr. Brontë’s death, the average number of sight-seers who called at the Parsonage was three thousand a year, and that they still mount up to a third of that number, you may be more lenient in judgment than the touring public and the press proved themselves to be.”

From Rev. Mr. Langley—incumbent of Olney, and resident in the quaintly beautiful parsonage that was the home of Lady Austin, Cowper’s friend and disciple—we met with courtesy as fine. And in seeking details of Hannah More’s private life, I found an able and enthusiastic assistant in Rev. Mr. Wright, of Wrington, in the church-yard of which the “Queen of Barleywood” is buried.

Cherished reminiscences are these, which neither the mists of years nor the clouds of sorrow have dimmed. In dwelling upon them, as I near the close of my annals of an every-day woman’s life, I comprehend what the Psalmist meant when he said, “They have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.”

Perhaps I erred in writing, “every-day life.” Or, it may be because so few women have recorded the lights and shadows of their lives as frankly and as fully as I am doing, that I am asking myself whether it may not be that the chequered scene I survey from the hill-top—which gives me on clear days a fine view of the Delectable Mountains—has been exceptionally eventful, as it has been affluent in God’s choicest gifts of home-joys and home-loves, and in opportunities of proving, by word and in deed, my love for fellow-travellers along the King’s Highway. [489]

The reader who has followed me patiently, because sympathetically, from the beginning of the narrative, will comprehend, through the depth of that sympathy, why I now leave to other pens the recital of what remains to be said. The hands that guided the pen were tender of touch, the hearts were true that dictated the report of the Golden Wedding and the abstract of a noble life, now developing throughout the ages into the stature of the Perfect Man. The voluntary tributes they combined to offer are dear beyond expression, to wife and children and to a great host of friends.

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# APPENDIX

[490]
[491]

## THE REV. EDWARD PAYSON TERHUNE, D.D.

BY REV. JOSEPH R. DURYEE, D.D.

Permit one who has loved Doctor Terhune for fifty years, to pay tribute to his character and outline his attainments.

He was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, November 22, 1830. It does not seem possible that this was his birth-year, he was so vigorous and his spirit was so youthful to the end. The best things in life were his rich inheritance. His father, Judge John Terhune, for fifty-four years an elder in the Presbyterian Church, was a rare man, and for generations the family had led in the moral and material development of New Jersey. He was named for Edward Payson, his father’s friend, a saintly Christian leader still remembered in the American church. Few boys have had a happier childhood. It was partly spent with his grandmother in Princeton. Her house was a centre of influence. Doctors Alexander, Hodge, Miller, and other professors were her intimate friends, and the boy was welcomed at their homes. Members of their families were life-long companions. Entering Rutgers, he was graduated in the class of 1850 with Doctors Elmendorf and Sheperd, Judges Lawrence and Ludlow, and others who became equally distinguished. His heart was set on becoming a physician, and for nearly two years he studied medicine. Then he obeyed the higher call and consecrated himself to the Christian ministry.

On graduating from the New Brunswick Seminary, several calls came. He accepted that of the Presbyterian Church of Charlotte Court-House, Virginia, and in the spring of 1855 began his pastorate. It was an ideal charge for any man. The best blood of the Old Dominion was in the congregation. No less than eighty-six of the members were college graduates. In 1856 he married Miss Mary Virginia Hawes, of Richmond. Their home became as near the ideal as any this earth has known—beautiful in its comradeship, beneficent in its influence. [492]

In 1858, Doctor Terhune was called to the pastorate of the First Reformed Dutch Church, of Newark. To decide as he did, must have been a singular test of faith and courage. The claims of

material comfort, intellectual fellowship, and family ties on one side, on the other a depleted church, in a community almost entirely dependent for support on manufacturing interests, most of which were then bankrupt. But Doctor Terhune was a soldier of the cross, and the red fighting blood ran too strong in him to resist the opportunity that called for heroic self-denial, constraint, toil and trials of faith and patience that would, for years, tax to the utmost every power of heart and mind. Few men have possessed as clear a vision of life; for him there were no illusions in the Newark outlook. He knew that, in the modern city life, then just beginning, must be fought the main battle of Christianity with the powers of evil. His commission was to lead, and he accepted the detail. For eighteen years Doctor Terhune remained at his post. Immediately his work began to tell for blessing, nor was this confined to his parish;—the entire city felt his presence. While his work in all its many parts was of the highest order, the man was always greater than his work. Men, women, and children instinctively loved him. They brought to him their problems, then felt his impression on their hearts. And it was abiding. To-day a great company scattered throughout the earth thank God for what he wrought in them.

In 1876, in consequence of the state of Mrs. Terhune's health, Doctor Terhune resigned his Newark charge, and went abroad. His ministry did not lapse, for all the time he labored as chaplain, first in Rome and then in Paris, having entire charge of the American churches there.

Immediately on his return, in 1878, he received calls from leading churches in Newark, [493]
Plainfield, New Haven, and Springfield, Massachusetts. The last named he accepted. There he remained for five years, honored and loved throughout the city. Then came another call. The Williamsburg Reformed Church in Brooklyn had had a remarkable history. At times prosperous, then on the verge of collapse. In the centre of a great population, with a plant capable of accommodating an enormous congregation, it had never fulfilled its promise. Unless an unusual man, with rare gifts, not merely eloquence and ordinary leadership, but with almost divine tact, patience, and unselfishness, came to save it, the church would disband. Doctor Terhune loved the Old Dutch Church as loyally as any man who has ever served her, but this call must have taxed his sense of proportion. I am sure it was his Master's higher call that decided him to go to Williamsburg. He had never cared for wealth except for its uses, was generous in every direction, and needed all the salary he could win; and the church was $80,000 in debt; its membership was scattered, and its attendants divided into antagonistic groups. More than one friend urged him to refuse such a sacrifice. What the seven years' labor there cost him only God knew. He became twenty years older in appearance, and he lost much of the splendid vitality that had never before failed him for any length of time. But he left the church united, entirely free from debt, and with a promise for the future never before so bright. A year abroad was needed to establish his broken health.

Since then Doctor Terhune, while refusing another pastorate, has been a constant laborer. Large churches in Chicago and St. Louis called him. In these, he became for upward of a year a stated supply, but he knew that his physical strength was waning. A few years ago, he underwent a serious surgical operation, and for nearly six months lay helpless from its effect. Indeed, his life was despaired of. I talked with his surgeon, who told me that, in his long experience, he had "never known a patient endure greater or more constant suffering; I cannot understand his marvellous self-control. He is always bright, always thinking of others, and never of himself." It [494]
was characteristic. After his recovery Doctor Terhune led an active life. The churches sought his help, and he was a frequent preacher in New York, Newark, and elsewhere. More than forty years ago, he purchased a tract of land on Pompton Lake, New Jersey. It was then a primitive region, to which he was attracted by the scenery and the opportunity to satisfy his special recreation; for from boyhood he was a great fisherman. As time and means permitted, he made "Sunnybank" blossom into rare beauty. How he loved this home! There he lived close to nature, and the trees, flowers, streams, and sky rested and refreshed him. Because a true child of nature, she gave back to him rich treasures that are denied to most; a joy in her communion; knowledge of her secrets; a vision of God through her revelation. There dear friends gathered about him, and the ideal beauty of a country home was, through his inspiration, revealed to some for the first time.

A year ago, Doctor and Mrs. Terhune celebrated their golden wedding. After a day of loving congratulations from friends almost innumerable, who, in body or spirit, gathered about them, they took their wedding journey in their carriage, driving horses born on their place, through the country of his boyhood and elsewhere. The refreshment of this fortnight of perfect happiness lingered on for all the remaining days of earth.

More than forty years ago, while a pastor in Newark, Doctor Terhune united with Alpha Delta, an association limited to twelve active members, meeting monthly at their homes. With its founders in 1855, among whom were Drs. G. W. Berthune, Robert Davidson, A. R. Van Nest, A. B. Van Zandt, and others, he was intimate. After the death of Doctor Chambers he became the senior member, and in 1900 prepared its history, a copy of which is before me now. In the brief studies of the character of nearly two score friends, there is revealed the secret of his power. He possessed the genius of friendship as few have done.

Ten days before the end came, he read to Alpha Delta a paper prepared at our request, "The [495]
Story of the Jamestown, Virginia, Settlement and the James River Estates." Every monograph of Doctor Terhune had its special value, but into this last he poured the memories of happy years and an estimate of values in human life, as never before. All through there ran that subtle charm of style, tender pathos, and gentle humor of which he was master. And there was added a peculiar quality impossible to define. I think we all felt that, unconsciously, he had pictured

himself, always seeing, knowing, loving, and inspiring the best in men. Not feeling well, he left us suddenly. There was no good-bye. Perhaps it is better so. But Alpha Delta can never be the same to us here.

After a week of fever he fell asleep, to awaken in the Father's House, to the vision of the One he loved, and with Him, the children who had passed before.

More than once I have been asked to describe the distinctive characteristics of admirable men, and have named them "many-sided," and "standing four square." But as I think of Doctor Terhune, the trite phrases seem insufficient. Nor is it easy to differentiate his character. He was a strong man physically, intellectually, and morally. As few of his generation, he held his course through a long life of trial consistently. He had a definite hatred of sin, and when duty called, never hesitated to particularize the evil of which men were guilty. But in this he always aimed to discover to such the good they were capable of attaining. His fearless courage was balanced by the finest gentleness. His presence was gracious, and the charm of perfect manners was natural in him. Instinctively, men looked up to him and remembered his sayings. Doctor Terhune was a diligent man; all his life he was a student. He loved his books intelligently. His literary experience was unusual in its range and depth. Even more than books he studied men; their problems were his greatest interest. He thought these out so wisely and sympathetically that he seemed to possess the prophet's vision.

In the pulpit, Doctor Terhune was earnest, clear, direct, and simple. His teachers had been rare men in the school of eloquence that was the glory of America fifty years ago. On occasion he [496] was equal to the best of these. As I recall his presence in his Newark church, I seem now to hear his wonderful voice ring out words that moved men to purer thinking, nobler living, and greater loyalty to the Master he loved. As a pastor, he was devoted to every interest of his people; in their homes no guest was as welcome. These, and other traits I could name, found their spring in as tender a heart as ever beat; constantly he carried there all God gave him to love. Next to the members of his family, I think his ministerial brethren realized most this supreme value in their friend. They knew he loved them as few men could. I have never heard him speak an unkind word of a clergyman. His presence never failed to hearten and stimulate them in their work. So he honored his manhood and his calling. He has left behind not only a stainless name, but living and blesséd power.

## A GOLDEN WEDDING

In her beautiful home at Pompton, New Jersey, surrounded by the flowers she loves so dearly, "Marion Harland," the celebrated writer, held court, Saturday afternoon. More properly speaking, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Payson Terhune were "at home" from four to seven o'clock, the occasion being the celebration of their golden-wedding anniversary.

In front of the house, upon the prettiest bit of lawn for miles about, was set the present that children and grandchildren gave—a sundial made of Pompton granite, inscribed with the same pretty legend as that upon the famous one of Queen Alexandra at Sandringham:

"Let others tell of storm or showers,
I only mark the sunny hours."

The little room, set aside, as upon the occasion of a real wedding, for the presents, revealed plenty of sentiment. There was a cake, made from an old Virginia recipe, baked in the shape that [497] every Virginian bride in "Marion Harland's" girlhood days used to have. It had been made by an old friend. A great bowl of water-lilies stood near by—some one had got up at daybreak and scoured their haunts to get fifty of them to present.

Gold purses and gold-trimmed purses—some of them with gold pieces inside—a gold brooch for the wife and a gold scarf-pin for her husband, gold fruit-knives, and Austrian glassware were among the gifts.

In the receiving-party were Doctor and Mrs. Terhune's daughters and daughter-in-law—Mrs. Christine Terhune Herrick, Mrs. Van de Water, and Mrs. Albert Payson Terhune. The men of the family did honors as ushers, and the boys—the grandsons—patrolled the porches and lawn with ices and salads and delicious yellow-iced cakes.

Golden-rod and golden-glow were everywhere. The porch posts were hidden from sight by them, and the room where the receiving-party stood was banked and massed in a bewilderment of blooms.

And "Marion Harland" herself, in her beautiful gown of black lace, with violet orchids pinned upon her bosom, did honors, much after the manner of that famous hostess of old whose greeting was invariably "At last!" and whose parting word was "Already?" Only (unlike that famous hostess) through her greetings unmistakably rang the note of sincerity.

Everybody wandered about in delightfully informal fashion. Doctor Terhune and General Buffington gossiped of old times in one corner; "Marion Harland," Margaret E. Sangster, May Riley Smith, and two or three others made an interesting group in another, and reminiscences were so beautiful and so many—"Do you remember when we used to do this or that?"—the sentence most constantly heard—that unconsciously you began to regret that you, yourself, had

not lived in those days, so splendid seemed the sentiment and the honor of the times.

Everybody came who could. Some had travelled all day to get there, and must travel all night to get home again. Letters—there were hundreds of them, for it seemed that everybody who even knew her slightly, wanted to send some word of greeting to “Marion Harland.” [498]

Among the invited guests were Prof. and Mrs. John W. Burgess, Prof. and Mrs. William H. Carpenter, Prof. and Mrs. B. D. Woodward, of Columbia; Miss Laura D. Gill, Dean of Barnard College; Dr. and Mrs. G. H. Fox, Mrs. Henry Villard, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Scribner, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Putnam, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lauterbach, the Rev. Dr. George Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. Rossiter Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bigelow Paine, Mr. and Mrs. George Cary Eggleston, the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. James I. Vance, of Newark, New Jersey; Mr. and Mrs. Talcott Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Howard Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill Williams, of Philadelphia; Gen. and Mrs. A. R. Buffington, Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster, Miss Ida Tarbell, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Smith. —*Philadelphia North American*, September 2, 1906.

THE END

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**Transcriber’s Notes:**

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Page 179, “fireing” changed to “firing” (knowing who was firing)

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